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Tens of thousands rally for peace in Aceh

Tens of thousands of people from all parts of Aceh responded to a call to attend a Mass Rally for Peace issued by SIRA, the organisation which advocates the holding of a referendum in Aceh, but the vast majority were not allowed to reach their destination. The security forces were under orders to prevent people from travelling to Banda Aceh and opened fire in many districts, killing dozens of people

The Mass Rally for Peace was scheduled to take place on 11 November, to mark the first anniversary of the mass rally in Banda Aceh on 8 November 1999 when a crowd of up to half a million converged on the provincial capital. On that occasion, the event proceeded peacefully. There were no attempts to prevent anyone from travelling to Banda Aceh and the security forces in the capital stood back and left security to stewards appointed by SIRA, the Centre of Information for a Referendum in Aceh. This time round however, things were very different.

The plan was to hold a mass prayer in the precincts of the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh on Friday, 10 November to be followed by a Mass Rally for Peace on the next day.

Police under instructions to halt vehicles

On 5 November, the Aceh chief of police, Chairul Rasyidi issued an instruction to all units to use all means at their disposal to prevent people from travelling to Banda Aceh. Security operations in Aceh are under the overall command of POLRI, the police force, while regular territorial army units as well as special 'non-organic' forces regularly take part in operations.

The security forces were ordered to:

- * Patrol all public transport terminals.
- * Check passengers on all vehicles, private or public, including their personal possessions.
- * Vehicles travelling in the direction of Banda Aceh should be immobilised with gunfire to flatten the tires.
- * Sweeping operations should be conducted by all command posts to ensure that no public or private means of transport get through to Banda Aceh.

What actually happened went much farther than this. At the start of the week, people from outlying locations started to travel only to be confronted by units of Brimob, backed up by army troops. In many places they fired into the air, then shot at the crowds, killing or wounding unarmed and defenceless civilians. Thousands of people who tried to make their way to Banda Aceh by sea, mostly on small fishing vessels, were also shot at and ordered to turn back.

As the week proceeded, the number of casualties mounted

by the day. Reports were being received by human rights activists in Banda Aceh, claiming that there had been many deaths in a number of locations in all the seven districts of the province.

These reports suggested that the death toll had reached 178 by Friday, 10 November. However, in most cases, there was no detailed confirmation of the casualties.

Kontras-Aceh, the Commission for the Disappeared and the Victims of Violence, were more cautious and would only confirm casualties - deaths, wounded and detentions - based on detailed verification by witnesses, with the names of the victims, the circumstances of the incident and the security units involved. By the end of the week, they had monitored over 30 deaths. The final death toll is likely to be much higher but since the incidents occurred across such a wide area, it could take weeks before the final death toll is ascertained.

Brutality on a massive scale

As reports of what was happening everywhere started

ACEH

Tens of thousands join the rally	p1
Victims' Congress want the world to hear	p4
Military operations violate truce	p5

G-30-S TRAGEDY

Seeking the truth about G30S	p6
G30S, an army intelligence operation	p9
Contribution by Coen Holtzappel	p13

HUMAN RIGHTS

Kontras founder gets major rights award	p14
Justice on trial in Indonesia and East Timor	p16

WEST PAPUA

Hawk aircraft terrorise West Papua	p18
Police attack on flag-raisers in Wamena	p20
Self-determination raised at the United Nations	p22

EAST TIMOR

La'o Hamutuk : Monitoring the Transition	p15
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LABOUR

Police interfering in labour disputes	p24
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coming in, it became clear that the Indonesian armed forces were determined to prevent the Mass Rally from taking place, even if this meant confronting the entire population. In the event, they only helped to prove that almost the entire population of Aceh was on the move, wanting to go to Banda Aceh to attend the Mass Rally. The idea of supporting a referendum, as the only peaceful way to resolve the question of Aceh's future status, has clearly won overwhelming support in Aceh and has almost certainly been reinforced by the latest events.

The methods used included:

- * Opening fire on convoys, firing in the air and ordering people to turn back.
- * Immobilising means of transport by setting fire to vehicles which were forced to stop, ordering drivers to leave their vehicles in police premises or army compounds, flattening tires with gunshots, and confiscating driving licences.
- * Confiscating and destroying food supplies.
- * Forcing people to alight from vehicles and strip down to their underwear, and subjecting them to other forms of humiliation.
- * Blowing up bridges to prevent people from continuing with their journeys
- * Arresting people.
- * Halting and turning back people who try to approach the shore near the centre of Banda Aceh on boats.
- * Encircling villages and conducting raids to warn people not to depart for Banda Aceh.

Personal testimonies

One columnist who spoke to people who managed to reach Banda Aceh from Pidie wrote:

'Having been turned back on the main roads by the police's elite Mobile Brigade (Brimob) unit and the Indonesian military (TNI), they had travelled in trucks, buses and cars on the little known back roads of this beautiful rainforested province. One man said: "It took us seven hours to travel 80 kms from Saree. We tried to get through on the main road but Brimob turned us away and even shot the tires of some of the vehicles.

'A woman, two young children clinging to her, told me: "The military shot my husband in the rice field. Our convoy refused to go back and they (Brimob) started to shoot in the air. We all ran. Then they began to shoot at us. Several were injured and my husband died. We had no weapons, we are only farmers. They have the guns. I came with the convoy because my husband is already dead. What could I do? He would have wished me to come."

'I myself witnessed people being shot at as they ran through rice paddies for cover, being made to sit in the blistering sun and ordered at gunpoint, alternatively to sing and pray, and

tires of vehicles being shot at. This is the reality of democracy, Indonesian style.' [Jakarta Post, 14 November]

Gus Dur tries to halt violence

After five days of brutality, President Abdurrahman Wahid commented on the events in Aceh for the first time. Infuriated by the shooting to death of so many people, he said he would summon TNI commander Admiral Widodo and army chief of staff General Endriartono Sutarto to ask

why the security forces were shooting people in Aceh, 'just like the Dutch used to do. Do they think I'm afraid to sack anyone?' he asked rhetorically. He did indeed summon the TNI chiefs as well as the military commander and police chief in Aceh, to halt the shooting and allow the Acehnese to proceed with the rally in Banda Aceh. However, no one has been sacked.

Since June, the police force has been under the



Huge crowds joining the mass rally direct authority of the President so it should have

been quite straightforward for Gus Dur, as Wahid is popularly known, to have stepped in much earlier and at least sacked the provincial chief of police whose instruction led to the brutality, but no such thing happened.

This raises the crucial question about who is determining policy in Aceh. If not Gus Dur, then is it Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, whose closeness to top generals is well known and who opposed Gus Dur's conciliatory policy towards West Papua? As is her style, she has said nothing, but halfway through the week preceding the Mass Rally, Minister-Coordinator for Political and Security Affairs, retired Lt. General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, said on television that the rally for peace in Banda Aceh had not been banned. He later modified this statement by saying that 'if it is used to advocate separatism, it should be stopped'.

Hundreds of thousands reach Banda Aceh

By 11 November, hundreds of thousands of people had gathered in Banda Aceh, the majority of whom were from the city itself or from the district of Aceh Besar which surrounds the capital. Thousands had managed to get through the blockade but tens, probably hundreds, of thousands of people were still trapped by blockades in many parts of Aceh. The final Mass Rally was postponed for several days while speeches condemning the brutality were delivered. The crowds said they wanted to remain in the city centre until the rest of the population could reach Banda Aceh. But this plan was abandoned because of insuperable logistical problems and the people agreed to disperse and return home. On the following day, they rallied again and it was apparently the intention of the organisers to have rallies each day.

General strike called

At the final rally on 14 November, a decision adopted by leaders from all the districts was read out to rapturous applause.

The first point called for the withdrawal of all the security forces, army as well as police.

The second called for intervention by the UN or foreign countries to resolve the political, social and humanitarian problems in Aceh.

Point three demanded that the Government of Indonesia restore Aceh's sovereignty which had been unlawfully transferred to Indonesia as a result of the 1949 Round Table Conference agreement between Indonesia and Holland.

Point four was directed towards the Dutch government, calling for it to rescind the Netherlands' declaration of war on Aceh in 1873.

Point five called on the Indonesian Government to accept responsibilities for all past atrocities, in particular the killings that preceded the Mass Rally.

Finally, the leaders' declaration stated that if these demands were not met by 26 November, they would call for a general strike throughout the territory from 27 November until 3 December.

Having decided to end the Mass Rally on 14 November, Chairman of SIRA Mohammad Nazar said: 'We feel so bad. We organised a peaceful rally and it is resulting in the slaughter of innocent civilians. We have sent word to the villagers. Please do not try to come to Banda Aceh. We know you want to be here but please do not risk the lives of yourselves and your children. We cannot guarantee your safety as you travel here. [*Jakarta Post*, 14 November] Nazar is likely to be formally charged shortly by the police who announced in early November that they had summoned him to appear for questioning as a 'suspect'. He failed to respond to the first summons and is likely to be arrested if he ignores the third summons. The charges relate to a campaign conducted by SIRA at the time of Indonesia's national day, 17 August, when they refused to raise the Indonesian flag but raised the UN flag instead. This was tantamount, said the police, to acting as if Aceh was no longer a part of Indonesia.

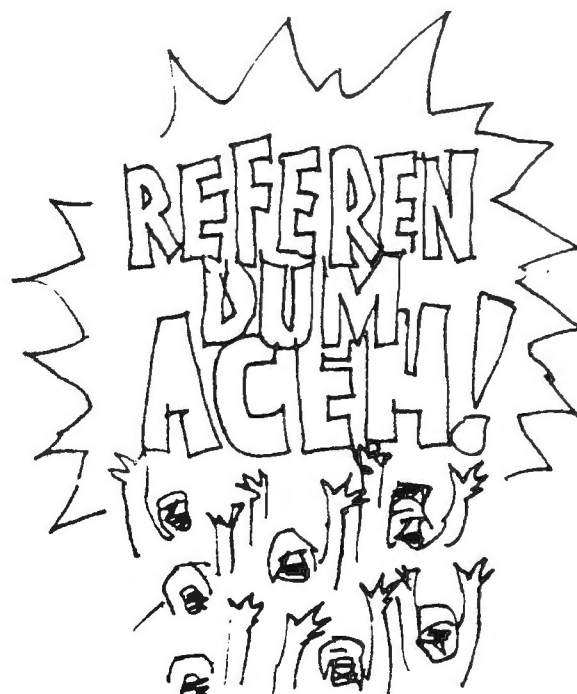
Polling on Aceh's future

For ten days, prior to the Mass Rally, from 3 - 11 November. SIRA activists conducted a poll of the entire population to ask people to choose between remaining with Indonesia or going independent. The poll came as the result of months of preparation and involved a network of activists extending down to every village in Aceh. More than 2,750,000 ballot papers were printed. The results were announced on 14 November. They showed the 92 per cent voted in favour of independence, 0.13 per cent voted to stay with Indonesia, and 7.8 per cent abstained.

In announcing the results, the coordinator of the event, Radhi Darmansyah, said it should be taken as a sign that the Acehnese were ready to take part in a legal and democratic referendum, and appealed to the international community to take heed of the aspirations of the Acehnese.

The Centre's 'war against separatism'

A grave political crisis has engulfed Indonesia during the course of 2000. Moves to remove President Wahid from power have gathered pace and could plunge the Republic into a crisis of implosion and disintegration. While this crisis has been fuelled by the bickering political elite, the Indonesian armed forces, the TNI, confront a myriad of problems, disunity within their own ranks, difficulties in confronting the discredited role they played under Suharto



and pressure for violators of crimes against humanity to be called to account. One of the key elements in the TNI fight-back is to raise the spectre of 'separatism' which can only be crushed, they insist, by military operations in 'troublesome' provinces like Aceh and West Papua. All the emphasis is on keeping Indonesia intact, on stressing that the Republic must retain its unitary structure. Hence the recent practice of calling Indonesia Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, or the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, NKRI.

This paradigm has the advantage of providing the justification for the TNI's continued internal security role to confront the 'separatists', at a time when a key element in the reformasi that inspired the movement to remove Suharto was to establish civilian supremacy over the military and restrict the TNI's role to external defence. 'Waging war against separatism' has now become the army's chief *raison d'être*. This explains why the security forces have resorted to such violent methods to quell the pro-referendum movement, as compared with their handling last year's mass rally.

Humanitarian Pause accord under threat

Talks that were to have been held in mid November between Indonesian government representatives and representatives of GAM to consider political aspects of the Humanitarian Pause accord were unlikely to take place because GAM representatives announced that they would not attend because of the security situation and the killing of so many people who were trying to attend the Mass Rally.

While efforts were being made to keep the talks on the road by the Henry Dunant Centre, it became clear that the security forces on the Indonesian side are also unhappy about continuance of the accord. At a press conference in Jakarta, the official spokesman of the Indonesian police said they were 'fed up', and wanted a 'free hand' to launch a crackdown on the rebels. Accusing GAM of using the accord to consolidate their position, he called on the Indonesian government to review it. [*AFP*, 14 November]*

Victims' Congress wants the world to hear

For three days in early November, 375 victims coming from all parts of Aceh, met in Banda Aceh to share their experiences and discuss ways of drawing international attention to their desperate search for justice. A contact from the UK was in Banda Aceh at the time and collected a number of testimonies which we include below.

One of the decisions of the Congress was to appeal to the United Nations to pay serious attention to the human rights violations in Aceh. Jufri, chairman of the Organising Committee of the Congress., said that although the human rights situation in Aceh had been discussed for two years running at the UN, this had not led to any improvement in the situation on the ground. The Congress felt that the UN should become directly involved in bringing about an improvement and should call on the Indonesian government to withdraw all its troops from Aceh.

The Congress also call for the violators to be called to account. This can only be done before a special human rights court functioning in accordance with international standards. Koneksitas courts in which military investigators and judges are involved are unacceptable.

The Victims Congress set up a Council of Victims Representatives (Dewan Utusan Korban) which is the highest organ alongside the Executive Council.

Victims testimonies

Sept 1999 Alue Nireh, Aceh Timur. I have four children, the youngest (5 years) was murdered by the TNI. The children were running around playing in the village, something blew on a truck and the military were surprised. They opened fire and my son, and another 5-year-old and three adults died. Very many were injured.

Aceh Pidie, October 2000 (This interviewee is 16 years old). A few weeks ago my father was taken by the Brimob and shot dead. They took him to Guha Tujoh, about 16kms from my village. I saw this and I cried. When I cried the Brimob fired shots into the air to frighten me. There were others with me, they also saw it. When his body was found, he had been badly cut. I have six brothers and sisters, I am the eldest.

Alverireh, East Aceh, 12 June 1999. Five trucks of TNI came to my village. They threatened us to make us leave our houses. But some people were too afraid to leave and thought they would be shot. My sister was too afraid to leave so they shot her with two others. She was still alive and I asked the BRIMOB to take her to a hospital, but they refused so she died, and the others also died. She was 15 years old and two children were 4 and 6. This was part of a sweeping operation; in total five died that day in the village

E. Aceh. September. It happened during a sweeping operation. The BRIMOB took my husband and my son. My son was 17 years old. I don't know why they took them, they did not ask if they were members of GAM, but they delivered



them to the hospital dead the next day. I wish they had taken me also, I want to die. What am I to live for without my husband and son? Their faces were all bruised.

Banda Aceh, October 2000. The BRIMOB came to the coffee shop and took me to my house and asked me to show them where my gun was. I told them I don't have a gun. They took me away for almost one week. I thought I would die, my wife did not know where I was. They kicked me and beat me, and burned me with a flame (shows arm and back), then they punctured my skin with a metal rod. No, not a knife, this thing was not sharp and they had to force it through my skin (shows left-hand side).

Matangkuli, N Aceh, 7 March 2000. The military came to my house. They tied my husband then they raped me. The soldier also hit me, took our money and some gold. There were two soldiers. At first they just wanted to take cash and harass me. All eleven houses in the village were visited. I was one of six women who were raped that day. Some of the raped women were newly married. After the rape, I felt physically sick, sick in my stomach. I told my husband what had happened and he was very angry. They untied him when they were finished with me. He didn't see the rape. Later, the commander came to the village and said he didn't believe us. I feel so sad because no one can help with my feelings, no one can make me feel better. Now I am afraid at home, in my house. I'm afraid the military will come to the village again. *

Military operations violate truce

In the midst of a deepening crisis in Aceh where military operations have intensified despite the renewal of the Humanitarian Pause, and the death toll continues to rise, civil society has taken two important initiatives. A three-day Victims' Congress was held in Banda Aceh and a two-day Mass Rally for Peace was convened. [See separate items.]

On 2 September, the Humanitarian Pause was extended by agreement between the two sides, the Indonesian government and GAM, the armed resistance. But far from resulting in a decline in the number of fatalities, no fewer than 166 people were killed in the two months after the extension. The vast majority of those killed were civilians. The security forces lost 28 men while GAM lost 25. Most of the civilian casualties were killed in the wake of operations by the security forces against villages. In many cases, villagers were seized and remained unaccounted for until their bodies were found. These days, hardly a day passes without one or two people being killed or bodies being found down ravines or by the roadside.

GAM HQ attacked

One of the most serious transgressions of the Humanitarian Pause by the Indonesian security forces was the attack on the headquarters of GAM in Teupin Raya, East Aceh on 24 October. Two members of GAM were killed, including a senior adviser, while no fewer than eight civilians, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed during raids in nearby villages. Nineteen civilians disappeared and are still unaccounted for.

Under the terms of the Humanitarian Pause, offensive actions are ruled out, and military operations should be kept to a minimum, so that humanitarian activities to go ahead unimpeded, to assist the tens of thousands who have fled their villages and are now living in squalor in makeshift camps. Such a breach ought to lead to investigations by the Joint Committee on Security Modalities with five members each from GAM and the Indonesian armed forces but there has been no report yet of this happening.

The operation is the clearest sign yet that the Indonesian armed forces are far from happy about the continuance of the Pause. It may reflect their fear that GAM is gaining in popularity and consolidating its military position, as well as frustration with the heavy losses sustained by the security forces, especially Brimob, the special police combat force. According to Cordova, which monitors violations of the Pause, on 23 October, the day before the attack, a large number of troops surrounded two villages, Cot Baroh and Cot Tunong. This may have been a softening up operation to search for people suspected of having GAM sympathies.

At crack of dawn the following day, as local people were completing early morning prayers, dozens of troops arrived in a truck and seven jeeps and surrounded the area in a pincer movement. They opened fired at random, causing people to run in all directions. While the gunfire continued, a number of people were rounded up and forced into a truck. Other troops then appeared from Teupin Raya with a number of people in custody, including two GAM members. Local people saw the two GAM members being roughed up and executed on the spot. Similarly brutal treatment was meted out to the civilians, resulting in eight more deaths.

About one thousand villages fled the area in fear of their lives.

Troops to protect government buildings

In a move which seems designed to strengthen the role of the military over civilian affairs, the Aceh chief of police announced that security personnel will be deployed to protect government buildings. He said the aim was preventing attacks on government installations which is crippling the functioning of local government.

One human rights group in Aceh estimates that at least 14 government buildings to have been attacked since the start of the second phase of the Humanitarian Pause. In early November, GAM forces attacked a warehouse of the oil and gas company, Exxon Mobil, during which 16,000 packages of explosives were seized.

But the decision was strongly condemned by Kontra-Aceh, the Commission for Disappearances and the Victims of Violence, whose coordinator, Aguswandi, said it would only intensify the prevailing sense of fear of security forces throughout Aceh, and further reinforce the role of the military; the end result would be to intensify the armed conflict which the Humanitarian Pause is supposed to curb. He called on President Wahid to cut back the number of troops in the province.

'Love-the-mosque' operation

The operation bear the name, Operasi I Cinta Meunasah, Operation 'Love the Mosque' I. Sr Superintendent Ridwan Karim, the senior ranking Brimob officer on the Joint Committee for Security Modalities, has denied that his side is engaged in military operations. Claiming that Indonesia 'has never conducted any military operations in Aceh,' he said that the aim of the operation was 'to create a conducive atmosphere'. While claiming that the police were in control of operations, he admitted that the army was also involved, saying that 'this is not against the law'. [Jakarta Post, 1 November]

Markets torched

A fairly frequent occurrence in this 'love-the-mosque' operation is the torching of market places, which results in extensive loss of property and curtailment of economic activity.

The most devastating of these totally unprovoked attacks occurred on 12 October when the popular Ulee Gle Market, Bandardua sub-district, district of Pidie, was razed to the ground. The third largest market in Pidie, Ulee Gle Market was grew to its present size over many years, and consisted of scores of well-built shops and residences (rukho) and street stalls. It had become a vibrant and well patronised centre for the sale of locally-produced commodities from a wide area, as well as household goods and clothes..

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the peaceful atmosphere
continued on page 8

Seeking the truth about G30S

In the last few months at least a dozen new books and numerous articles have been published in Indonesia about the G30S tragedy, the most dramatic event in modern Indonesian history, which led to the birth of Suharto's Orde Baru. While for more than three decades the official version blamed the PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party, for killing six generals, the main thrust of the present writings is to seek the truth behind G30S.

Nowadays, the term G30S (Gerakan 30 September), the 30 September Movement, is widely used but while Suharto was in power, people were more or less obliged to call it G30S/PKI, to make it clear that the 30 September Movement was organised by the PKI. This change in name looks insignificant but it signifies a dramatic political shift, a sign that public perception is changing and raising serious doubts about the validity of the official version.

The monopoly of information was virtually absolute during the Orde Baru, particularly regarding G30S. A film called *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (The Betrayal of G30S/PKI). It was screened every year on all TV channels and polls indicate that until recently, 97% of the population believed the official version. Three decades of brainwashing still has a grip on the minds of average Indonesian. A recent poll by the leading political weekly, TEMPO, reveals significant shifts. Asked about what really happened on 30 September, 78 per cent said PKI abducted the generals and 31 per cent said that Suharto attempted to overthrow Sukarno. Asked who masterminded the G30S, 71 per cent said, Aidit, the PKI chairman and 44% said Suharto was the culprit. An overwhelming 95 per cent of respondents thought that school textbooks should be revised on the G30S events thought 50 per cent believe that the textbooks are broadly speaking correct. The polling team was disappointed with the 'conservative' nature of the answers. It concluded that only a minority have taken the trouble to read and analyse new information about G30S in the last two years. They concluded that the impact of Orde Baru indoctrination is still strong.

Soebandrio and Heru Atmodjo versions

The G30S accounts by Soebandrio and Heru Atmodjo are among the latest accounts and shed new light on the dramatic events in 1965. Soebandrio was Foreign Minister in 1965 while Lt-Colonel Heru Atmodjo was a key intelligence officer in the air force. They were both arrested in the early days of the Orde Baru and received heavy sentences by kangaroo courts. Soebandrio was sentenced to death while Heru Atmodjo was sentenced to life. Soebandrio's sentence was commuted to life while Heru Atmodjo served 15 years in jail.

In October 1965 Soebandrio was arguably Indonesia's second most powerful man after President Sukarno, the First Vice-Prime Minister and head of BPI, the state intelligence body. He spoke lengthily with Lt. Colonel Untung,

who led the G30S operation to kidnap the generals, before his execution as they were together on death row. According to Soebandrio, Suharto set up two teams, both consisting of former officers of the Central Java Diponegoro division. In the mid-fifties Suharto was



Terror in 1965, an unprecedented red drive

commander of this division and he enjoyed close, long-standing relations with the men in both teams. The first team was led by Untung and Latief, both key people in the kidnapping of the generals while the second team was led by Ali Murtopo and Yoga Sugama, key intelligence officers. Untung told Soebandrio that Suharto promised to support the G30S movement, if necessary by providing more troops for the operation.

But Suharto used this first team to implement an operation that was designed to fail. The second team was in charge of the real plot. They emerged as victors and the PKI became the scapegoat, responsible for killing the generals. This line of thought is fully backed by Heru Atmodjo who wrote a fifteen-page account about the G30S events. A condensed version is published in a separate article in this issue: G30S an army intelligence operation. Soebandrio's manuscript had difficulty finding a publisher (the first publisher backed out, fearing repercussions from Suharto loyalists) while Heru Atmodjo's account is circulating widely in photocopy form. Soebandrio's book is titled *Kesaksianku tentang G30S* (My Testimony about G30S) and is bound to appear in print soon.

Heru draws the conclusion that the G30S movement was

designed to fail. He fails to understand why Syam, a nobody in Indonesian politics, was in charge of the preparations and Untung, a middle ranking officer with few operational skills, was in charge of the kidnapping. Syam led a shady agency called *Biro Khusus* (Special Bureau) whose main job was to infiltrate the armed forces and report only to PKI chair Aidit. The vast majority of PKI leaders and members knew nothing about this Special Bureau and military prosecutors claim that they created the name for practical reasons.

Latief's Defence Plea

The other officer directly involved in the kidnaps was Colonel Latief, one of the very few plotters who is still alive. Latief's account has been known for some time in political circles but only became available to the general public when his defence plea at the Jakarta military court in 1978 was published earlier this year. Like Untung, Latief

Suharto's Involvement in G30S.). Previously it was available in a mimeograph edition and was regarded as subversive reading.

First Indonesian PhD on 1965 killings

Hermawan Sulisty, an outspoken academic, wrote his PhD in 1993 on the mass killings in Jombang and Kediri, East Java in 1965-66 but only now has his dissertation been published in Indonesian under the title *Palu Arit di Ladang Tebu*, (KP Gramedia, 2000). Sulisty grew up in the area where numerous killings occurred, mostly at the hands of members of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia which is very strong in East Java. He comes from an NU background and remembers vividly how, as a young boy, he pushed corpses into the river with sticks of wood. It is widely understood that the mass killings in Central Java were carried out by the army special forces but in East Java many of the killings of alleged communists or sympathisers were carried out by NU people. Through extensive interviewing, Sulisty concluded that military involvement in the killings was also structural in East Java. NU members were incited by being shown documents of death lists of NU leaders supposedly prepared by the PKI. 'It's them or us' became the general cry for a witch-hunt against innocent members of trade unions, peasant unions and other organisations. He gives a gruesome account of what happened in Kediri on 17 October 1965, when the atmosphere was already very tense and many people had been taken into custody by the military. The military commander told some informal leaders that the military could not cope with the huge number of prisoners and asked them to 'get rid of the problem, giving a graphic description of how to do it. In the night, some 15,000 prisoners were taken to empty schools and killed, with military in plain clothes taking part.

TAPOL, MIK, Solidamor publication

Three NGOs, MIK and Solidamor in Jakarta and TAPOL in London, published a reader: *Plot TNI AD - Barat Di Balik Tragedi 1965* (The Army - West Plot Behind the 1965 Tragedy) with a range of articles by Coen Holtzappel, W.F. Wertheim, David Johnson, Kathy Kadane, Ralph McGehee, Mark Curtis and Mike Head, for the first time available in Indonesian. The articles, written between 1979 and 1999, were selected by an editorial team in Jakarta under Bonar Tigor Naipospos and Rahadi T. Wiratama. While Holtzappel (see his article in this issue) and Wertheim dealt with domestic aspects, the other translated articles deal with the geo-political situation and the pro-active policy by MI6 and CIA to get rid of Sukarno and the PKI. This is the first in a series of books by the same NGOs. It certainly won't be the last word on the role of foreign secret services in the events of 1965.

Other publications

Several other publications should be mentioned in helping solve the riddle about G30S.

Another important book recently published is: *Mendung Diatas Istana Merdeka* (Mist Over Merdeka Palace), Sinar Harapan, 2000. The author is Atmadji Sumarkidjo, a long-time military watcher. He deals with extensive material from Teperpu (Team Pemeriksa Pusat, Central Investigation Team) in particular, two former members of the team, retired Major-General Tahir and retired Colonel Djiwo



Political Prisoners at Buru island in the early seventies
Photo: Peter Schumacher

fully trusted Major-General Suharto and informed him about the G30S operation on two occasions, on 28 September and on the night of 30 September. The operation was a preventive action when rumours of a military coup were widespread. The kidnapped generals were supposed to be presented to President Sukarno and held accountable for their plans. However, six generals were killed while the seventh escaped. Latief insists that that the plan was only to bring the generals to the palace but others involved in the operation received orders to murder the officers. Latief's defence plea of 1978 has finally appeared in paperback, published by ISAI under the title: *Pledoi Kol. A. Latief, Soeharto Terlibat G30S* (Defence Plea Colonel A. Latief,

Soegondo. The book can be described as an unofficial army version of G30S. Here, the blame is no longer placed squarely on the PKI as a whole but rather on the Special Bureau (Biro Khusus) run by the mysterious Syam with the full support of Aidit, the PKI chair. Much of the book is devoted to a history of the PKI since 1948 as seen by the military, which provides useful insights for the public.

Another NGO, the Sumatra Human Rights Watch Network (SHRWN), based in Medan, recently published *Naiknya Para Jenderal* (The Coming to Power of the Generals). This is a edited version of chapter six of: *Tragedi Manusia dan Kemanusiaan* (Human and Humanitarian Tragedy), published by TAPOL in 1996 by M.R.Siregar, an Indonesian political refugee in the Netherlands who wrote his version of G30S based on many articles written inside and outside Indonesia.

Articles in the press

All the main political weeklies, notably Gamma, Tempo and Forum published important articles about G30S in October. Most of the books mentioned above have been reviewed by the weeklies, but new probing and analytical writings have also appeared. Forum made a useful rundown of the different versions of the G30S events, TEMPO conducted an opinion poll on G30S while GAMMA had a scoop with its report of the troubles surrounding the Soebandrio manuscript. In a long analytical article in Gamma, LIPI historian Asvi Warman Adam draws the conclusion that there is ample evidence of Suharto's involvement in the G30S events. He concludes with an appeal: if there is not the political will to charge Suharto on nepotism and corruption, he should be charged in the 'court of history' for his crimes against humanity.

Film about 1965 killings in Aceh

In March this year, the highly-rated film director, Garin Nugroho, appeared with a powerful film, *Puisi Tak Terkuburkan* (Unburied Poetry). The action takes place throughout inside a prison camp in Aceh in October 1965 where scores of men and women were being held. Each day, prisoners are called by name, sacks are placed over their heads and they are taken off to be slaughtered. The camera dwells on the harrowing condition of the prisoners, their attempts to live through the horror of not knowing when they will be called, and light-hearted chatter to relieve the tension. The story is told through the eyes of an Acehnese poet, Ibrahim Kadir, who was arrested but later released because of mistaken identity. Kadir is still alive and plays himself in the film. The film was shown at the London Film Festival in November. *

continued from page 5

was suddenly shattered by the sound of gunfire as military vehicles transporting Brimob troops drove past. Children squatting by the roadside and people in the shops fled in all directions and the shops were hastily shuttered. The troops jumped down from the vehicles, firing into the air, and started kicking down doors and ordering the inhabitants out.

Suddenly, one of the shops was engulfed in flames and within minutes, the entire market was ablaze. In all, 98 shops and 33 market stalls were completely destroyed, as well as a large number of cycles, motorbikes and cars. The traumatised shopkeepers and stall-owners who had stood watching their possessions go up in smoke, were powerless to halt the conflagration. They had lost everything apart from the clothes they were wearing, while the impact on the local economy will be severe and long-lasting.

Brimob officers later claimed they acted in response to a grenade attack by GAM on their vehicles which led to a firefight, but local witnesses strongly denied this. Two people were shot dead during the operation.

Two days later, another market-place in Tiro sub-district, also in Pidie, was torched with the loss of 85 shops and homes. [Kompas, 1 November] *



NEW PUBLICATION

PLOT TNI AD - BARAT

DIBALIK TRAGEDI '65

Published by MIK, Solidamor & TAPOL
A reader with articles by WF Wertheim, C.
Holtzappel, David Johnson, Mark Curtis a.o.

G30S, an army intelligence operation

In October this year, a number of articles were published about the events of 1 October 1965, also called the G30S, which led to Suharto's seizure of power and ushered in his military dictatorship which gripped Indonesia for 33 years. Several articles challenged the view that the PKI was to blame and discussed the role of Suharto himself. The following extracts are from an account recently sent to TAPOL by Heru Atmodjo, an air force officer who was deputy head of AURI's intelligence department in 1965. Heru was sentenced to life and released after serving 15 years.

In 1965, during konfrontasi with Malaysia, a British aircraft carrier with fighter aircraft and escorted by several destroyers and a supply ship entered the Sunda Strait on its way to Christmas Island. They were staging a show of force under our very noses. After intense reconnaissance, Air Force commander, Air Marshal Omar Dani who was concurrently commander of the Komando Mandala Siaga (Kolaga), the theatre of war command for konfrontasi, placed his forces on a state of high alert. Through diplomatic channels, the British embassy in Jakarta was urged to ensure that fighter planes be disarmed. For the first time in our history, a foreign naval convoy was warned not to enter our territorial waters.

CIA's 'first priority target'

In the 1950s and 1960s, US intelligence saw the non-aligned countries as a threat to US interests. The countries that attended the Asian-African conference in Bandung in 1955 succeeded in building a powerful movement which subsequently spread to Latin America. The leaders of this movement, Sukarno, Nehru and Nasser, came to be regarded by the CIA as 'first priority targets'. The CIA supported opposition parties and encouraged them to oppose our government, recruiting agents and setting up communications networks. CIA support for the PRRI/Permesta rebellions in 1958 was evidence of their efforts to overthrow Sukarno and they supported several attempts on the life of the Indonesian president.

Once he had been identified as a 'first priority target', Sukarno was closely watched by the US intelligence community and his name appeared daily in the press.

Arming the people

After Sukarno held discussions with Chou En-lai about arming the people, a delegation headed by Dr Subandrio, Deputy Prime Minister, visited China and was offered 100,000 small arms free of charge. The idea was approved by KOTI, the Supreme Command, at a meeting also attended by General Nasution but the agreement was never put into practice. However, it was widely alleged that AURI had received a shipment of 25,000 small arms from China as a way of discrediting the force.

As konfrontasi reached a climax in late 1965, all the armed forces were conducting training of volunteers. AURI was smaller than the other forces (only 18,000 men as compared to 300,000 men in the army). The AURI commander therefore suggested that people living within a radius of 5 kms of airbases should be given training to help defend the bases. But before any instructions had been issued, Major Suyono who was commander of AURI's airbase defence force, PPP, went ahead and gave training to groups

of people at Kebon Karet, Pondok Gede, located outside the parameters of the Halim Perdanakusumah airbase. Initially, the training was for people from across the political spectrum and was in line with the idea of protecting the airbase. But it subsequently became apparent that only communist-affiliated groups such as Pemuda Rakyat, Gerwani and SOBSI were involved. There was a discussion about this within AURI and a decision was taken that the training should stop.

Kostrad battalions to Jakarta

In preparation for Armed Forces Day on 5 October 1965, two battalions of Kostrad (the army's strategic command, then under the command of Major-General Suharto), Battalion 530 from East Java and Battalion 454 from Central Java, were instructed to come to Jakarta. The order was sent on 15 September and repeated by radiogram No 239/9 on 21 September.

Meanwhile, a meeting of so-called 'progressive officers' was held in August to discuss the Council of Generals and the president's state of health. Present at the meeting were Colonel Latief, commander of the Jakarta Infantry Brigade, Lt.Colonel Untung, of the Cakrabirawa (palace guard) battalion, Major Sigit, commander of 201 Jakarta Infantry Brigade, Major Suyono of AURI, and two civilians, Syam Kamaruzzman and Pono who were later known to be the links to D.N. Aidit, chairman of the PKI (the communist party) and his Biro Khusus or Special Bureau.

As Sudisman, member of the PKI's politbureau told me when I met him in prison before his execution, the other chairmen of the PKI were not authorised to have anything to do with this Special Bureau which had its own lines of communication. It was strictly separate from the legal party and the party's central committee only received reports from Aidit. Syam was the head of the Special Bureau. The officers at that August meeting regarded Syam as the representative of Aidit. Similar meetings were held in Central and East Java which suggests that the Kostrad battalions from those two regions had been summoned to Jakarta on a special mission also related to the Council of Generals and the president's state of health.

As we know, Kostrad was under the command of Major-General Suharto and his First Assistant (Intelligence) was Lt-Colonel Ali Murtopo. This also suggests that Syam had direct links with Kostrad which meant that information about the PKI and the 'progressive officers' as they were known, was being fed to the army, and vice versa, information about the army was being fed to the PKI.

During the latter weeks of September, I was busy with preparations to open an Air Force Officers' Intelligence School on 1 October. Until then, we had only six well-

trained intelligence officers in the force. AURI operations deputy, Commodore Dewanto, as Director of AURI Intelligence, was very enthusiastic about this school and the navy asked to send officers to receive training in air intelligence.

On 30 September, whilst these preparations were under-way, two senior officers came to AURI headquarters to report on political developments. An officer from Madiun, East Java said the PKI masses were holding demonstrations, shouting slogans against the 'bureaucratic capitalists' and 'imperialist compradores', recalling the situation there in 1948 (when the PKI is alleged to have attempted to set up local soviets), while the other officer reported a demonstration in Jakarta with the slogan 'what are we waiting for?'.



Retired Colonel Latief just published his book accusing General Suharto of direct involvement in the G30S kidnapping.

I wanted to check this information, but failing to find the Deputy for Operations at his office, I sought information from AURI officers working with other forces but they knew nothing and suggested that I consult Major Suyono because he was in contact with people outside the Air Force, so this is what I did. I went to see him at his home and he didn't beat about the bush. He told me that a revolutionary situation was developing and becoming unstoppable. A Council of Generals was planning to seize power on 5 October. Progressive officers in the army would not stand by and allow their superiors to get involved in a counter-revolutionary movement. They believed it was better 'to pre-empt rather than be pre-empted'. The generals were going to be arrested and taken to the president. The progressive officers had two Kostrad battalions at their disposal, he said, plus the presidential guard under Untung and an infantry brigade under Latief. The action would take place that night and Brigadier-General Supardjo, commander of the Second Combat Force in West Kalimantan, had also arrived in Jakarta.

Suyono told me he had decided to join forces with these officers, along with the people's forces which were undergoing training under his instruction. He said that whether or not the commander of AURI approved, they were planning to use PT Aerial Survey (PENAS) as their Central

Command, located outside Halim airbase and would make use of AURI vehicles and weapons.

I warned him that he was going too far, but he said he was doing everything on his own responsibility and was ready to take the consequences. Even when I told him I would report what he had told me to the commander of AURI, he refused to change his mind. He felt sure the commander would agree with what he was doing. He also gave me the names of the seven generals who would be taken into custody.

I came to the conclusion that the movement was being led by Brig-General Supardjo as the most senior office, a well educated man who had received training in Pakistan. He was, moreover, serving under Kolaga which was commanded by AURI's commander, Omar Dani so I decided to go and report all this to him immediately. I also told Omar Dani that Supardjo (who I had never met) had arrived in Jakarta. He told me to visit him at his residence at 8 pm to report this to the AURI deputy chiefs. I was also instructed to find Supardjo and ask how this might impact on the president's security which was what we were concerned about.

I visited Suyono again at his home and was told that Supardjo would be at PENAS at 5 am the following morning. When I returned to headquarters to meet the deputies, I reminded them that I was due to go to Bogor the following day to open the intelligence school but I was ordered to remain in Jakarta.

To the Palace with Supardjo

I went to PENAS as arranged and was introduced to Supardjo and also to Untung and Latief and to two civilians whose names were not mentioned at the time. I later realised they were Syam and Pono. I told Supardjo the AURI commander wanted to know what was going on and he said I should go with him to the palace to meet the president and from there we would go to the AURI commander. Just before I left PENAS, I heard two civilians say: 'Nas (Nasution) got away, all the others were caught.'

We drove by jeep to the palace and Supardjo went inside while I waited at a guard post outside. After a while, he came out to tell me that the president wasn't there so I decided to return to AURI headquarters. When I arrived, Commodore Dewanto was there. He turned the radio on at 7 am and we heard that the progressive officers had taken the Council of Generals into custody. He ordered me to go to Halim Airbase to tell Omar Dani that Supardjo was still at the palace. He told me that the president would be coming to Halim (a normal procedure during times of crisis) and that I should take a helicopter to the palace to fetch Supardjo. I did so and took him to Halim. That was as far as my duties went and I had no idea at the time whether the president arrived in Halim.

Revolutionary Council announced

Later that morning, it was announced that a Revolutionary Council would be set up, and I was named as a deputy chairman along with other officers, under Untung as chairman. No one had ever spoken to me about this council. While I was with those officers, I heard Untung or Latief say anything. The ones who did all the talking were the two civilians, Syam and Pono. They were the ones receiving and sending letters but I didn't know what it was all about. I am quite certain that none of the people named

as members of the Revolutionary Council knew that their names would be included.

On the way to the palace, I had seen the two battalions, 454 and 530 on the streets. They didn't halt Supardjo's vehicle. I couldn't work out who they were there to confront.

Later I came to know that the 30 September Movement consisted of: Pasukan Pasopati, a unit of troops under the command of first lieutenant Dul Arip, Pasukan Bimasakti under Captain Suradi and Pasukan Cadangan Pringgondani under Suyono and Sukrisno. My assumption that Supardjo was the leader of the movement turned out to be wrong because all the announcements were made in the name of Untung though I hadn't seen Untung lead anything.

I knew that training being given by Major Suyono had



Two young officers, Lt.Colonel Yoga Sugama (left) and Major Ali Murtopo, portrayed together in 1959. Their cooperation with Suharto blossomed and in the sixties they will emerge as the intelligence-supremos of the New Order.

taken place in Pondok Gede, along the Jakarta-Bogor road (where there was also a well called Lubang Suaya). When we in the air force spoke about 'Lubang Buaya', we were referring to an airstrip used by our fighter planes and for paratroop training. Many officers such as Benny Murdani and Sarwo Edhie were well acquainted with the location of our Lubang Buaya airstrip because they had done training there and also knew that PENAS was situated outside Halim airbase.

I never saw either the president or Aidit at Halim. I heard that Aidit asked for a plane to take him to Yogyakarta but I am pretty sure that Aidit and the president did not meet each other at Halim. Later that day, we heard that Suharto had refused to allow Major-General Pranoto to comply with an order to go to meet the president at Halim (Sukarno was intending to ask Pranoto to take over command of the armed forces in place of General Yani, one of the kidnapped generals) and that by late afternoon, Suharto had taken control of the radio transmission building, the Telkom building, had closed off the capital city and declared a curfew.

A movement designed to fail

I was tried before an Extraordinary Military Tribunal and accused of rebellion against the lawful government. I was given a life sentence and spent time in many prisons. I was

finally released from Cipinang Prison on 31 August 1980 after serving 15 years.

When I met Untung in prison, I remarked that we had been acquainted in those days and no one had consulted me about anything. He told me he had met Aidit on 26 September who asked him: 'Are you ready?' to which he replied, 'I'm a military man and when I receive orders, I always carry them out.'

Untung told me that he wasn't the leader of the movement but had only signed the things he was asked to sign. The person who was really in charge was Syam, not Supardjo or Latief. As far as I could see, Untung didn't have the education or capacity to lead such a movement. But I find it difficult to believe that Syam was in charge of a military movement. I am convinced that the movement was designed to fail. The facts show that the whole thing was guided by a mysterious person, that it was a 'covert operation'. But who was behind it? There are two possibilities:

The first is that supporters of Sukarno were behind it. They could be described as misguided, foolhardy, rash adventurers and there were many such people within the ranks of Sukarno's supporters.

The other possibility is the CIA or MI-6 from Britain was behind it, helped by people who had been planning things for a long time. The planning was very complex. The aim was to overthrow Sukarno but to do it in stages. There were several intermediary targets as well as the ultimate target. One of the targets was the air force, a strong supporter of Sukarno and also equipped with very modern weaponry. The plot was to allege that Halim airbase was the base of the G30S. Sukarno would be there, Omar Dani would be there, the leadership of the movement would be there, and therefore Halim would have to be destroyed.

Others who supported Sukarno were the PKI and left-nationalist masses which would have to be eliminated politically and ideologically. This was done by means of psywar and propaganda and at the core of this propaganda was Lubang Buaya which became a very well-known name.

The generals had been taken as planned to Lubang Buaya and were handed over to the man in charge, Dul Arif. He was the man who ordered their execution. Stories about eyes being gouged out, sex organs being slashed and licentious dances taking place was part of the plot to destroy the revolutionary forces which supported Sukarno. Suharto knew this, Ali Murtopo knew this. But when a forensic team which examined the bodies of the generals failed to confirm the reports of mutilation, they ignored it. According to this plot, the masses of people would be incited to murder PKI people, members of Gerwani, Pemuda Rakyat, SOBSI, etc. The army and Sarwo Edhie were the ones who helped this to happen.

Sudisman told me that the existence of the Special Bureau was a fatal weakness of the party. He also said that there was rivalry between Aidit and Nyoto, with the latter being very close to Sukarno. There were even indications that Nyoto was planning to set up another party. Although there were serious splits in the party, the 30 September movement was clearly an adventurist-military action, unrelated to the party's Marxist-Leninist ideology, according to Sudisman.

G30S, an army intelligence operation

Sukarno had long been a 'first priority target' but the CIA knew they couldn't overthrow him directly or assassinate him. They had many agents including people who didn't even know they were being used.

If we look again at the meeting held in August between progressive officers and Syam and Pono and the link with Kostrad's instruction for two battalions to come to Jakarta, there were Special Bureau people in Kostrad and vice versa. Each side had information about the other.

On 1 October, the fully armed Kostrad battalions were stationed in Monas Square. Lt-Colonel Ali Murtopo, Kostrad's intelligence chief, went there to speak to the battalion commanders and 'win them over', after which the commanders accompanied him to Kostrad HQ. Soon after,



the radio building was seized without a shot being fired. Suharto then went on to the offensive without firing a shot. Suharto sent an ultimatum to Sukarno saying that the

Suharto in 1965, the beginning of a 32-year iron-fist rule

Halim, the 'headquarters of the G30S' would be cleaned out. The city was closed off and a curfew imposed. Just compare this to what happened before the action when a suggestion made by Major Suradi for the city to be closed off, was strongly rejected as being 'adventurist'.

The G30S was part of a comprehensive strategy to take control the state. The generals were kidnapped to implant a feeling of revenge within the armed forces. Such a thing had never happened before, kidnapping six generals. It provoked widespread condemnation and calls for the physical annihilation of these traitors to the nation. But at this point, Suharto did nothing to Sukarno. His intelligence officer was Ali Murtopo who later became the key intelligence officer during the first decades of the New Order, in charge of intelligence, security, political engineering, the government system and the composition of parliament. They created the impression that Halim was the headquarters of the G30S. No one knew that the Lubang Buaya inside Halim was different from the Lubang Buaya in Pondok Gede which became known far and wide. Fabricated stories about eyes being gouged and penises being slashed was used in a psywar to incite feelings of revenge. Sukarno was branded as the G30S superman. Gerwani was smashed and its reputation was utterly

destroyed. AURI, whose role had been vital in ousting the Dutch from West Irian became the target of false propaganda. After all this had been achieved, their attention turned to Sukarno. But they needed a formal basis, acceptable to legal experts and the international community. This was the 11 March 1966 letter which became known as supersemar which Sukarno signed, giving authority to Suharto to preserve order.

Ali Murtopo

Ali Murtopo had served under General Yani (one of the murdered generals) but was punished for a number of misdeeds and removed to the unit which later became Kostrad. He recruited Benny Murdani who became one of his protégés, a leading intelligence officer since the days of konfrontasi.

Ali Murtopo was very close to Dul Arip, who commanded the Pasopati troops of G30S and also to Jahurup who led the kidnap gang which failed to capture Nasution. On their way back east, Jahurup abandoned his troops near Tambun, east of Bekasi. When Dul Arip arrived in Brebes, he handed his troops over to another officer, and there are witnesses who can testify that he was taken away by Ali Murtopo. What happened to these two men is shrouded in mystery. They never appeared in court. Their disappearance cut off a critical line of intelligence, a classical CIA method.

The first PKI leader to be murdered was Nyoto, after attending a cabinet meeting. He had been in North Sumatra at the time of the G30S and knew nothing about it. After being arrested, he was taken from the military prison and killed without any process. His elimination removed a key source of information about the party's contacts with Sukarno. Murtopo and many other senior officers had been sworn in by Syam as part of the Special Bureau, they are inseparable from Syam. Suharto came to power with the help of the Special Bureau/PKI.

The G30S was not a military movement to seize power. It was Suharto who carried out the military movement, closing off the city and seizing power. Although Untung was the one who announced the 30 September movement and removed the cabinet from office by setting up a revolutionary council, it was Suharto and his military movement who systematically seized power by military means. Although Untung appeared to be the leader, it was Syam who controlled everything. Although Untung later took responsibility for everything and agreed to take the consequences, all he did was to sign things. The whole action was engineered by one person and that one person was Syam. The link between Syam and Suharto is the thing that needs to be probed.

The entire intelligence operation was run by Murtopo: destroying the evidence, killing Nyoto, destroying links with other regional PKI leaders who could have revealed many things, and murdering Aidit.

Suharto's operation made deliberate use of psywar to destroy the PKI by means of inciting mass sentiment. People today, including members of parliament, say that the PKI murdered millions of people but the fact is that the G30S killed six generals and a junior officer, as well as Nasution's daughter and an officer in Central Java. But hundreds of thousands of people were murdered by Suharto. Statistics will one day provide the true figure. It is estimated that between one and two million innocent people fell victim to this slaughter. *

Coen Holtzappel's contribution

In TAPOL Buletin No. 159, August/September 2000, we made some critical remarks on an article written by Coen Holtzappel in 1979. It is more than just and along the tradition of proper journalistic standards the editors have created space for him to react on this matter. We thank Coen Holtzappel for his contribution.

Somewhat surprised, I took cognizance of a column in the November issue of TAPOL Bulletin, containing a poor review of a 1979 article of mine concerning the so-called 1965 coup. The reason was that a surviving and recently-released participant in the Untung action read a recent Indonesian translation of the article which is included in a book entitled *Plot TNI-Barat Dibalik Tragedi 1965* recently published in Indonesian by three NGOs, including TAPOL. This is a curious case of TAPOL openly disavowing a contribution to a book which they themselves published, hardly an advertisement for the book or the publisher. I have not seen book and my permission was not sought for the inclusion of my article, which is itself grounds for objection. To put it mildly, I find this procedure rather unusual and stress that I do not take responsible for the Indonesian version.

I can only react on the column on the basis of my article published in 1979 in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* edited by the late professor Wim Wertheim. The purpose of that thematic issue was to bring together articles of academic quality condemning the brutal force by which Soeharto had come to power and maintained his grip on power. My own article was intended - on the basis of official documents of the first trials of leaders of the G30S - to examine whether the official Indonesian version of the G30S was correct. This held that the G30S was a coup d'etat against Soekarno, led by the Indonesian communist party, executed by communist officers and intended as a stepping stone to a communist takeover. An important part of this representation was the horror story of the generals having been bestially murdered by members of the communist youth movement Pemuda Rakjat and the communist women's movement Gerwani. This was used to legitimise Soeharto's takeover after the Untung action.

My 1979 article established that the action of former Lt-Colonel Untung was a patriotic deed by units and officers of the Indonesian army and air force to protect President Soekarno against the evil plans of a number of generals who had formed a council of generals, intending to take power on 5 October, Armed Forces Day. After kidnapping the generals, the leaders reported their action to Soekarno and sought his blessing (restu). They obeyed his order to stop the bloodshed and prevent further troop movements. The conclusion was that Untung and his companions were loyal to Soekarno and did not stage a coup d'etat.

The Untung action received support from so-called sukarelawans (volunteers). In the official version, they were members of communist undercover organizations. But from the trial proceedings, it became clear that the volunteers had been trained under military supervision to support confrontation with Malaysia, guarding military installations against western attack in an invasion or western-inspired covert actions against military installations. This training was entirely legal and was endorsed by Soekarno himself. Their deployment as part of Untung's action was, according

to the proceedings of the Untung and Njono trials, limited to guarding PKI buildings near Halim Perdanakusuma airbase against actions of Council of Generals. They did not partake in killing the generals and were not even at Lubang Buaya, because they were guarding PKI buildings. In actual fact, the ones who killed the generals were from the troops participating in Untung's action, as the perpetrators and those who had ordered them to do this themselves admitted during Untung's trial.

Concerning the involvement of the central leadership of the PKI, all that could be ascertained, based on the documents of the trial of Njono, the leader of the PKI South Jakarta Committee, was that the PKI leadership knew about the Untung-led action and reported this to the president. The PKI decided to let these officers have their way while not getting involved. Although PKI chairman Aidit was in the vicinity while Soekarno was at the Halim airbase on the day of the Untung action, there was no evidence that he was in contact with either the president or Untung and his companions. The claim that Aidit's emissaries Aidit, Messrs Syam and Pono, took part in the Untung movement and that they were members of Aidit's special bureau for covert actions, could not be established from the proceedings. Actually, it was the intention of the leading officers in Untung's action not to have civilians, let alone politicians, involved in their planning and action. After initially being forced to admit that they were communists, Untung and his witnesses later withdrew these confessions during the latter's trial.

Thus, nothing credible was left from the official version of Soeharto and the armed forces. The action was not a coup d'etat and the PKI neither inspired it nor had any intention of staging a coup. Nor were the generals murdered by the communists. Untung and his companions were not communists. The Untung action was an internal military affair. My 1979 article was not 'inaccurate and outdated' as alleged in your column. Its conclusions are still valid and dispute the official version. Last but not least, they could be established from court proceedings which, according to public opinion, had been 'manipulated by the Soeharto regime' to support the official version, as stated in your column.

I made some remarks in my article about the role of the Indonesian Air Force and some of its officers in the Untung action, including Mr Heru Atmodjo. According to your column he objects to my views on their role. I look forward to reading what he will reveal in your journal. In due course I will return to the subject and update my 1979 article with material that was not then available. *



Kontras founder gets major rights award

One of Indonesia's foremost human rights activist, Munir, has been selected as a recipient of this year's Right Livelihood Award, an award that is widely acknowledged as 'the alternative Nobel prize.'

The citation states that he is being honoured 'for his courage and dedication in fighting for human rights and the civilian control of the military in the world's fifth most populous country'. The award ceremony will take place in the Swedish Parliament on 8 December.

Even while still a law student in East Java, Munir who is now 35 years old, became involved in cases to support farmers confronted by military violence. When he joined the staff of the East Java Legal Aid Institute, he focused primarily on labour issues. After moving to Jakarta, he came to public prominence shortly before the downfall of Suharto when two dozen pro-democracy activists were abducted. The campaign which he spearheaded resulted in the release of eleven of the men being released (13 are still missing) and a group of junior military officers being brought to trial.

At the height of this campaign, he founded Kontras, the Commission for Disappearances and the Victims of Violence. Kontras has gained an enviable reputation for opposing political violence, encouraging respect for due process, ensuring victims' physical and psychological recovery and promoting reconciliation and peace. The Commission has a regular publication which reports on acts of violence and has project offices in Aceh, Jayapura,

Lampung, Medan, Surabaya and Ambon, and some netting committees in West Kalimantan.

In 1999 Munir was appointed a member of the Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations in East Timor which produced a wealth of evidence of the Indonesian army's involvement in recruiting, financing, training and using the militia which caused such havoc at the time of the UN referendum in East Timor.

He also teaches human rights in army and police courses and was a member of the drafting committee for a law on human rights court which is still awaiting enactment by Parliament.

In 1998, he received the prestigious Yap Thiam Hien human rights award and in 1999, he was named Man of the Year by a leading Muslim periodical, UMMAT, and as 'young leader for the Millennium in Asia' by Asiaweek in 2000.

While still chairing the Management Committee of Kontras, Munir also heads the operational division of YLBHI, the Indonesian Human Rights Foundation.

This is the second time an RLA award has gone to Indonesia. In 1995, the Indonesian human rights activist Carmel Budiardjo was a recipient of the Right Livelihood Award. *

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THE EAST TIMOR QUESTION

The Struggle for Independence from Indonesia

Edited by Paul Hainsworth and Stephen McCloskey

Foreword by John Pilger

East Timor has long been one of the world's most infamous 'trouble spots'. Originally colonized by the Portuguese, it was brutally invaded and occupied by the Indonesian military forces in 1975. According to the UN, this resulted in the death of about one third of the population through massacres, starvation and disease. But more recent years have seen the worst chaos, with an escalation of widespread violence contained only through the deployment of multinational forces. This book considers the potential for change against a backdrop of strong popular and political support for the Timorese cause.

Addressing East Timor's recent emergence as an issue of global importance, *The East Timor Question* illustrates how local, grassroots, individual, organizational and campaign initiatives have contributed to this state of affairs, in the context of the increased emphasis which is being placed on ethics, international morality and human rights in contemporary international relations. Drawing on the personal experience of individuals, this work provides up-to-date analysis both of the situation in East Timor and of recent political changes in Indonesia.

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La'o Hamutuk: Monitoring the Transition

'La'o Hamutuk' (Tetum for Walking Together) is a joint East Timorese-international organisation that has come together to monitor and report on the activities of the principal international institutions currently participating in the evolving development and reconstruction in Timor Lorosa'e. This short article will look at La'o Hamutuk's work to date and some of the major concerns currently being raised by Timorese civil society, as they move closer towards full independence.

Since June this year, in the quiet Dili suburb of Becusi Bawah, Timorese NGO workers have regularly gathered with La'o Hamutuk's staffers to voice their concerns about the central role they want to play in the transitional process. The Saturday morning meetings give the chance for groups like FOKUPERS, CDEP, HABURAS and CDHTL to have open discussions with representatives from the World Bank, UNTAET, USAid and other institutions that are playing a major role in the physical and social reconstruction of the country. The organisation believes that the people of Timor Lorosa'e must be the ultimate arbiters of the reconstruction process and that the process should be as democratic and transparent as possible.

Getting Started

Although it did not get off the ground in Dili until May this year and is operating with a minimal budget, the La'o Hamutuk staff has established itself well within the 'development industry' whose practitioners now swarm the place. It was one of the first groups to criticise the international community for marginalising FALINTIL, the East Timorese resistance army, an issue that has since been partially addressed by UNTAET. It produced a well-received review of the humanitarian situation. By providing non-partisan analyses of, and information about, international activities in a regular bulletin and workshops, La'o Hamutuk aims to facilitate greater levels of effective Timorese participation in the reconstruction and development of the country. For Timorese or solidarity groups abroad, La'o Hamutuk has a web site and a discussion page.

In the coming months, the staff of two Timorese and two foreigners will focus largely on the large health and agricultural rehabilitation projects being administered by the World Bank Administered Trust Fund (TFET), whilst supporting a growing number of concerns that are being raised by other Timorese NGOs.

Current Concerns

Whilst some Timorese leaders openly praise UNTAET for having established an all-Timorese National Council and despite Kofi Annan's claim that East Timor has recovered from last September's destruction, there are many Timorese who still wonder when they will start to see some real changes.

In light of the recent UN Security Council visit to East and West Timor and the third donors' meeting for East Timor in Brussels in December, the National NGO Forum has voiced major concerns about the development process. The Forum, which represents over 100 NGOs, has called for greater transparency and participation, the immediate creation of a mechanism that would give NGOs more access to funding for human resource development, gender education, agriculture, health, environment and human rights and reconciliation.

Major setbacks recently became apparent in judicial affairs, after East Timor Transitional Administration's (ETTA - the embryonic government of East Timor) budget revealed that investigations into serious crimes will be restricted to only four cases. The others, including the horrendous Suai Church massacre will be put on hold. UNTAET's inability to deal with these serious crimes raises major questions about the UN's commitment to human rights and justice.

Many Timorese NGOs, under the banner of the Forum, have also called for the suspension of UNTAET's civic education programme, criticising for being non-transparent, non-democratic and failing to address the desires of the people. The failure to provide communication and transport to the isolated people of Oe-cusse has long been an issue for the Forum and La'o Hamutuk. UNTAET has yet to respond to either of these issues.

Other major concerns raised by Timorese are tertiary education and housing. The University of Timor Lorosa'e (UNTIL) was due to open in early October but a lack of funds has limited the number of students and teaching resources will be minimal. Joao Carrascalao, the cabinet member for infrastructure, claims that his budget for rebuilding homes and providing power is far too low. In Dili only those with business contacts or employment have so far been able rebuild their homes.

Creating Space

The international community's inability to create space in the system for local participation is undoubtedly the result of by the lack of information available to local people in Tetum, Bahasa Indonesia or Portuguese. The UN's universal policy of using English as its official language greatly benefits the hundreds of local UN and international agency staff but isolates most Timorese.

The enormity of the damage inflicted by the TNI on the physical and social fabric of the country in 1999, and the twenty-three year occupation is unmeasurable. Despite the millions of dollars donated to building the new nation, those responsible for transitional decisions are aware that there is a very thin margin of error. As UNTAET edges closer to handing full sovereignty over to the Timorese, this margin of error will undoubtedly narrow and the expectations of the nation and especially civil society will rise. La'o Hamutuk's continuing role will be to work with the Timorese to create more space for them in both central and peripheral issues leading to independence and beyond.

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Justice on trial in Indonesia and East Timor

The Indonesian justice system is in crisis as former President Suharto's son, Tommy, is on the run from an 18-month jail term for corruption and notorious militia leader, Eurico Guterres, implicated in crimes against humanity in East Timor, is feted as a national hero. A new law on human rights courts has been passed, but may not be effective in dealing with past crimes. Meanwhile, there is growing concern about the UN's lack of commitment to criminal prosecutions in East Timor.

The new law on human rights courts was passed by the House of Representatives (DPR) on 6 November, just a few days ahead of a UN Security Council mission to Indonesia and East Timor. It was evidently pushed through in an attempt to persuade the international community that Indonesia is capable of handling human rights cases and to undermine demands for an international tribunal on East Timor.

Prosecuting past crimes

Much attention was focused on whether the new law would allow for the trial of those implicated in past rights abuses, particularly those associated with last year's violence in East Timor. A recent constitutional amendment - Article 28(I) - granted an amnesty to past abusers by introducing the principle of 'non-retroactivity' into Indonesian law without exception [see *TAPOL Bulletin*, No 159, Aug/Sept 2000, p. 18].

Nevertheless, Article 43 of the new law gives the President the power, on the recommendation of the DPR, to set up ad hoc courts to try cases involving past crimes, in apparent contravention of the amendment. Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, insisted that Article 43 would be effective despite the amendment though the reason for his confidence is not immediately clear from the legislation.

An explanatory note appended to the new law argues that because ad hoc courts are for the protection of human rights, the restrictions imposed by the 'non-retroactivity' principle must be waived. In support of this argument, it cites another constitutional amendment - Article 28(J)(2) - which reads: 'In executing the rights and freedoms of every person it is necessary to waive any restrictions set forth in law for the sole purpose of guaranteeing the recognition and upholding the rights and freedoms of another person, in the interests of justice and in consideration of moral and religious values, security and public order in a democratic society.'

However, this amendment appears to be capable of waiving restrictions only in ordinary laws, which are subordinate to the Constitution. It is difficult to see how it can restrict another constitutional provision which is absolute in its terms. Article 28(I) reads: 'The right not to be charged on the basis of retroactivity is a basic human right that may not be breached under any circumstances.'

Lawyers acting for military officers accused of crimes in East Timor have already said they will use the non-retroactivity principle to save their clients from prosecution. A further amendment to the Constitution is likely to be needed if past cases are to be successfully prosecuted.

In any event, the highly politicised nature of the process

is likely to protect senior officers from prosecution. The Attorney General, Marzuki Darusman, has announced that 22 military and police officers, government officials and militia members accused of human rights violations in East Timor will go on trial in January, but that remains unlikely so long as the military faction and its political allies in Parliament are involved in the decision to set up ad hoc courts, as provided for under the new law. TAPOL has already argued that this should be a judicial process and that decisions on whether to pursue past abusers should not be taken by politicians. The same applies to the appointment of personnel involved in the inquiry, investigation and prosecutions phases, which is also open to political interference under the new law.

It has been suggested by Asmara Nababan, the Secretary-General of the National Commission on Human Rights



East Timorese refugees in West Timor looking at Indonesian soldier

(*Komnas HAM*), in response to a request for an inquiry into the 1965/66 killings, that *Komnas HAM* will not in future be able to set up inquiry teams to investigate past atrocities without a request by the DPR to the Government (*Kompas*, 21 November 2000).

TAPOL would question whether the new law goes this far. There appears to be nothing in the new law which requires the DPR to request an inquiry. The DPR has to recommend the setting up of an *ad hoc* court to hear a case of gross violations, but *Komnas HAM* is responsible for carrying out the initial inquiry. The law specifically states that the purpose of an inquiry is 'to identify the existence or otherwise of an incident suspected to constitute a gross violation of human rights...' (Article 1(5)). Unless an incident has been identified as a gross violation by a *Komnas HAM* inquiry, the DPR has no apparent authority to intervene.

In any event, it is difficult to see how the DPR could make an objective and properly-informed decision on whether to

set up an *ad hoc* court without the findings of prior inquiry by *Komnas HAM* (and a subsequent investigation by the Attorney General as required by the law). It would be extremely regrettable if the DPR were to assume an effective veto over any inquiry into past violations.

Improvements don't go far enough

Otherwise, the DPR appears to have taken account of comments on the draft law made by TAPOL and other NGOs. Some welcome improvements have been made, but the law retains several defects. In particular, the DPR has taken the extremely regressive step of adding the death penalty as a possible sentence for certain crimes. It goes without saying that the death penalty must have no place in human rights legislation.

The new law includes an improved definition of 'gross violations of human rights'. There is now a requirement that crimes against humanity must be committed as part of a 'broad or systematic, direct attack on civilians'. In the explanatory notes to the law, a 'direct attack on civilians' is defined as 'an action taken against civilians in follow up of a policy of an authority or policy related to an organisation'. In theory, this should lessen the danger of crimes being passed off as ordinary crimes committed by soldiers and junior officers and increase the likelihood of investigations exposing the responsibility of senior officers and officials for rights violations. The definition of crimes against humanity now broadly follows that in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court ('the Rome Statute'), as does the definition of command responsibility. The fact that the DPR has followed international standards set out in the Rome Statute is encouraging.

The law includes new provisions on arrest and detention. These would appear to allow for a maximum period of 120 days (90 days for the investigation phase and 30 days for the prosecution phase) before a detainee is brought before a judge. In its 1999 report on Indonesia, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions noted that such delays were inconsistent with the right to a fair trial. However, another impediment to a fair trial, which would have allowed courts to conduct a trial in the absence of the accused, has been removed.

Despite these technical changes to the law, the process of bringing perpetrators of past human rights violations to justice is still dependent on a deeply flawed judicial system.

A complete overhaul will be required to ensure that professional, independent and impartial legal personnel are available to carry investigations, prosecutions and trials.

An example of the problems inherent in the current system is revealed in a report presented to the UN Security Council mission by a group of NGOs in West Timor. They allege that those arrested by the Indonesian police for the murder of three UNHCR workers in Atambua [see TAPOL Bulletin, No. 159, Aug/Sept 2000, p. 16] are 'stand-ins' and that the police have failed to interview a key witness who could provide evidence as to the identity of the real perpetrators.

The necessary changes to the justice system will take many years to complete. In the meantime, the arguments in favour of an international tribunal for East Timor remain irrefutable notwithstanding the passing of the new law.

UNTAET fails to fulfil its justice mandate

The demand for an international tribunal was repeated by

the East Timor NGO Forum during its meeting in Dili with the Security Council mission on 13 November. The NGO Forum is alarmed that the prosecutor for serious crimes recently announced he has had to abandon plans to investigate the ten most serious crimes last year and confine his attention to just four cases due to a lack of resources. Without an international tribunal, there is little prospect that the chief perpetrators will face trial, the Forum says.

It cites the April 2000 memorandum of understanding between UNTAET and Indonesia regarding co-operation in legal, judicial and human rights-related matters, and points out that no transfer of suspects between jurisdictions have taken place as allowed for under the memorandum and none is expected.

The continuing delays in conducting exhumations and investigations are likely to result in evidence being lost, destroyed, damaged or becoming unreliable with the result that successful prosecutions will be impossible. Already UNTAET has been forced to release suspects who have confessed to murder and rape because of a lack of resources to pursue investigations.

The NGO Forum concludes that UNTAET, by not providing sufficient resources for investigations, is failing to carry out its mandate to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The problem appears to be not a lack of money, but the way in which UN money is allocated. The special crimes unit is run by the shadow East Timor government known as the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA) which is under-funded and under-staffed, lacking basic necessities, such as interpreters, transport and computers. Meanwhile the resources available for reconciliation and a possible truth and reconciliation commission, which come under the general UNTAET budget, are much greater.

A British police officer said: 'The majority of staff came here on the understanding that they would be investigating serious crimes to prosecute those responsible for attacks last year. While we accept that there is always going to be competing interests for resources, we are surprised that we have been here for six months and still, on a daily basis, we are fighting for basic equipment in order to function...we've had to beg steal and borrow anything we can do to ensure we finish the work.' [South China Morning Post, 14 November 2000]

While the NGO Forum also seeks reconciliation, it argues that bringing the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice is an essential element of reconciliation. It calls on the Security Council to instruct UNTAET to reallocate substantial resources to criminal investigations. TAPOL fully supports the NGO Forum in this demand. *



Hawk aircraft terrorise West Papua

In late September and early October, British-made Hawk 100 and 200 series ground-attack aircraft conducted a series of operations over towns in West Papua in a show of strength designed to strike fear into supporters of independence. A clear pattern is now emerging of Hawks being used to intimidate local people in areas of conflict. Meanwhile, Britain continues to export spare parts for the Hawks and other lethal equipment such as armoured vehicles

Three Hawks were sent to West Papua's main Air Force base at Biak at the end of September as part of a special military operation aimed at cracking down on the independence movement. Air Force Marshall Ali Musiri Rape ominously described the purpose of the Hawk deployment as: 'Tactical operations by means of a show of force if requested by any party to safeguard situations.' [Pikiran Merdeka, No. 14, September 2000]

The aircraft were initially used in a series of low-flying manoeuvres over the town of Wamena in the Baliem Valley on 26 and 27 September, apparently as back up to a police operation to remove the West Papuan 'Morning Star' flag. Tensions were already high in the town following an incident in which police beat five Papuan men the previous day.

A witness explained why - bearing in mind the history of aerial bombings and human rights violations in the Baliem Valley - the very appearance of the Hawks was particularly terrifying for those on the ground:

'Three Hawks, sold by the United Kingdom to Indonesia are now demonstrating their power over West Papua in Wamena at the time I am typing this e-mail... When I was a child in 1976-77, they did the same with Bronco fighters. The Bronco fighters were flying over my village and then some months later they did both bomb my villages and they killed hundreds of us. I have lost my relatives, members of my family and my villagers. I do not want this to be repeated in this civilised and transparent world.'

The operation was a disturbing echo of events in East Timor last year when a Hawk aircraft flew low over Dili terrifying East Timorese who had also suffered appallingly from Bronco bombing raids in the past [see *TAPOL Bulletin*, No. 154/155, p. 34].

The Hawks were involved in further manoeuvres over Wamena when the aircraft made their presence felt over the capital, Jayapura, on 29 September during an official ceremony to welcome 650 more troops to the province. By the time of the tragic events of 6 October (see separate item), the Hawks had been replaced by US-made Skyhawks.

British Government's response

After last year's incident in Dili, the Indonesians claimed that the Hawk was being used in a 'routine training exercise connected with national reconnaissance'. Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, initially appeared to defend Indonesia by saying that the aircraft did not engage itself in combat. Eventually he obtained an assurance that British equipment would not be used again in East Timor.

On this occasion, Indonesia claimed that the Hawks were being used for training exercises to ensure the armed forces could protect Indonesia's borders. The Foreign Office did

not challenge this line initially, but thanks in part to pressure from NGOs such as ELS-HAM (the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy) in West Papua and TAPOL and Campaign Against Arms Trade in the UK, the British embassy in Jakarta made representations to the Indonesian Government, which led to the aircraft being withdrawn from West Papua on 5 October.

Despite this, the situation for the people on the ground has not improved. The Hawks have been replaced by US-supplied Skyhawk A-4s which will almost certainly carry out similar intimidatory operations.

Arms sales continue

Britain and the EU have refused to countenance a renewed arms embargo on Indonesia. This means that the armed forces continues to receive spare parts for lethal equipment from British suppliers. The Foreign Office has acknowledged that the Government has licensed the export of spare



parts for Saladin armoured vehicles of the type involved in the Maluku conflict (see below). This year's annual report on UK arms exports indicates that the Government has also licensed spare parts for Hawk aircraft. TAPOL believes it is

hypocritical of the Government to claim credit for not licensing the export of armoured vehicles and Hawks while it is licensing spares parts. The export of parts which render lethal equipment operational is equally unacceptable.

A report in the Independent revealed how an Associated Press cameraman witnessed a Saladin being used as cover by troops taking sides in fighting in Ambon:

"The military were definitely helping the Muslim side attack the Christians and the Saladin was part of that." The attackers came under fire from Christians snipers in the city of Ambon on 15 July, despite the presence of Indonesian soldiers providing them with covering fire. The Saladin was positioned between the soldiers and the snipers, rotating its cannon in their direction.'

"It wasn't firing," said Mr Jatmiko [the cameraman]. "But because the Saladin was there, that made the Christian snipers scared so they didn't shoot again. It was helping [the Muslims]. If they'd been trying to break up the clash, the Saladin would have stayed. But they came for just five minutes to protect the soldiers and then left." [Independent, 10 October 2000]"

In resisting renewed demands for an arms embargo, the Foreign Office has drawn a distinction between East Timor and other situations. They have suggested, incorrectly, that the European Union arms embargo, imposed in September 1999 and lifted in January 2000, related specifically to the illegal occupation of East Timor. This implies that the armed forces have greater licence to do what they want with British equipment in other areas, such as West Papua, Aceh or Maluku, because they are regarded as part of Indonesia. Notwithstanding this attitude, TAPOL will continue to press the British Government to respond quickly wherever British equipment is used for repressive purposes. *

continued from page 21

now in West Papua is around ten thousand, including 650 Brimob troops guarding the Freeport copper-and-gold mine in Timika.

According to unconfirmed reports Jakarta has also sent elite troops from Kopassus, the unit blamed for orchestrating much of the violence in East Timor last year, while the security forces are encouraging the formation of East Timor-style militia to provide an excuse for a brutal military crackdown. [Sydney Morning Herald, 17 November]

Army chief of staff General Endriartono Sutarto said: 'Now we are witnessing many regions demanding to secede from the state ... I call on the people to share a united vision on national integrity and to eliminate their vested interests.' Major Putranto, one of the commanders of the fresh troops, said before leaving the city of Makassar: 'We are prepared to defend national sovereignty, because that's our main duty.' [Sydney Morning Herald, 17 November]

Seven die in Merauke

On 4 November, Brimob troops opened fire on Papuans who were defending a flag at one of the many local posts of the Satgas Papua in the city of Merauke. The attack followed a quite unrelated argument between two Papuan families in another part of the city which led to an agreement for representatives of the two families to meet and patch up their quarrel at one of the Satgas Papua posts.



The historic West Papuan People's Congress in May 2000

Meanwhile, a Brimob member attacked two men in the street, apparently from one of the feuding families, and lost his balance and fell, which drew the attention of a hostile crowd of people. This incident led Brimob troops to take vengeance on flag-raisers, with tragic consequences. They turned up at several Satgas Papua posts and started tearing down the flags, while shooting indiscriminately. At one post, three people were shot dead and 15 were wounded although they had offered no resistance when the Brimob troops arrived.

Nine days after issuing a statement and report about the above, Jayapura-based ELS-HAM, the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, issued an update saying that the death toll had risen to seven. One person who had been arrested was severely beaten and was dead on arrival in hospital and one of the men wounded on 4 November had since died. A sixth man died when troops driving past a Satgas Papua post opened fire. The next day, troops made menacing gestures towards crowds attending the funeral of the latest victim.

The seventh victim was a non-Papuan settler who died when the vehicle he was riding in was burnt by Papuans, frustrated and traumatised by the attacks made over the previous week by the security forces. ELS-HAM also reported that one school-pupil who was wounded had a leg amputated while several others were still on the critical list.

These incidents point to an extremely volatile situation, with trigger-happy troops and Papuans venting their anger because of the many casualties, while settlers are now becoming targets.

Presidium leaders to face charges

Theys Hiyo Eluay and other Papua Presidium Council leaders will soon face charges in court under Article 106 of the Criminal Code for actions hostile to the state which carries a maximum sentence of life. Chief of police for Irian Jaya said the other Presidium leaders who would be tried were Thaha Al Hamid, Agus Alua, Herman Awom, Don A.L. Flassy, John Mambor and Mrs. Beatriks Koibur. The trials would probably be held in December or early January.

Theys will also be charged under other articles related to 'separatist' activities for hoisting the Morning Star flag. 'We also have sufficient evidence of his involvement in the second Papuan Congress (from May 29 to June 3), which vowed to declare Irian Jaya's independence on Dec. 1 this year,' Wenas said.

This is not the first time some of those named have been threatened with indictments but earlier threats did not result in anything concrete. *

Police attack on flag-raisers ends in tragedy

Members of the notorious Brimob police force, in a joint operation with troops, gunned down West Papuan flag-raisers in the Central Highland town of Wamena. In the ensuing clash, at least thirty people were killed including settlers from Indonesia who, like the Papuan casualties, became the innocent victims of a provocation to incite ethnic conflict. The Wamena Tragedy was used as the justification for a clampdown on widespread peaceful Papuan opposition to Indonesian rule.

Wamena, the capital of Jayawijaya district, is located in the Baliem Valley, several hundred kilometres south of Jayapura and is accessible only by air. It is the home of the Dani people and was at the centre of a murderous Indonesian campaign in 1977, including an aerial attack that killed hundreds of people.

The police struck their lethal blow on 6 October against a group of Papuans defending one of the many flag-poles in Wamena, atop which the Papuan Kejora (Morning Star) was fluttering. They cut down the pole with a chainsaw and opened fire from close range, killing two of the flag-raisers instantly. Eleven people were also wounded by gunfire. The unprovoked attack enraged scores of Papuans who took to the streets; there were running battles between heavily armed security forces and Papuans, some of whom were using bows and arrows. When some of the police took refuge in areas inhabited by settlers, the settlers were set upon, causing a large number of casualties. Besides the thirty deaths of whom most were settlers, 45 people were wounded, including some police officers.

Low-flying Hawk aircraft used

In the days prior to the operation, local witnesses reported that several super-sonic Hawk fighter aircraft had zoomed in low over Wamena, intimidating the inhabitants. In mid September, it was reported that three British-made Hawks had been stationed in Biak's Manuhua airbase for a three-month period. [Cendrawasih Pos, 14 September] Several sightings of the aircraft were reported to TAPOL. Our protests led to high-level discussions in Jakarta between the British ambassador and the air force chief of staff, following which it was announced that the three Hawks were being withdrawn and replaced by US-made Skyhawk A-4s. [Cendrawasih Pos, 4 October]

Scores arrested and maltreated

Scores of people were rounded up, including 25 children. When the children were released two days later, they described how the detainees were being brutally tortured and beaten, while many wounded people were not being treated for their injuries.

For several weeks following the incident, human rights monitors from ELS-HAM, the Jayapura-based Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, were barred from entering Wamena to check on the number of detainees and the conditions in which they were being held, and to provide legal aid to those being interrogated. The two flag-raisers shot dead were named as Agustinus Murip and Eliezer Alua. Yohanes A third death occurred when Udin sustained severe injuries while in police custody; he was kicked and beaten

and was pronounced dead on arrival in hospital. Udin was arrested because he had been taking photos of the police operation. (A US tourist who happened to be in Wamena and took photos of the operation was later accused of being a 'CIA spy'. He was deported because he had shown his photos to other people.)

ELS-HAM reported that a reign of terror prevailed when dozens of Papuans being held by the police were subjected to inhumane treatment. They were ordered to strip down to their underpants, kicked, beaten with rifle butts and canes, slashed with razors and had pistols thrust into their mouths. The detainees were even ordered to drink the urine of police officers.

On 23 October, ELS-HAM reported that seventeen people were likely to be charged with offences relating to the Wamena Tragedy. The number could rise as the police have been exerting pressure on local leaders of the Papuan Presidium Council to identify others allegedly involved.

Provoking ethnic conflict

One of the most disturbing features of the Wamena Tragedy was that there were many non-Papuan settlers among the casualties. With human rights monitors being excluded from the area, it has not been possible to establish the exact death toll though most of the dead are known to have been non-Papuans. The incident led to thousands of non-Papuan families fleeing their homes and seeking refuge with the local police or army. Most medical personnel also fled, leaving hospitals and clinics seriously under-staffed.

Although Papuans resent the fact that hundreds of thousands of settlers from Indonesia have flooded into West Papua and now control the commercial sector and the civil service, there is no history of ethnic conflict. At least a quarter of the population of West Papua of 2.5 million are settlers from Indonesia, radically altering the demographic character particularly in the urban areas.

At the height of the turmoil on 6 October, the police were urging non-Papuans to 'stick together' and defend themselves. Non-Papuans were later advised by the local police to set up a self-defence (siskamling) system which the police promised to support. [ELS-HAM Report, 17 October] On 23 October, the country's leading newspaper, Kompas, alleged that 65 non-Papuans were being held hostage in Tiom, a town west of Wamena, by 'thousands of armed tribesmen' who were threatening to kill the hostages if anyone tried to pull down the Papuan flag. Human rights monitors who had just visited the town heard nothing about these inflammatory reports and the following day, local police denied the story.

In a statement on 21 October, ELS-HAM warned that the local police were trying to pit non-Papuans against Papuans

by urging the former to 'defend themselves' and making them feel very insecure. This was stirring up mistrust between the communities.

There have been fears for many months of sinister moves to instigate ethnic conflict in West Papua, along the lines of the conflict in Maluku. This may explain why the Wamena Tragedy took such a grim turn. The Rev. Herman Awom, a member of the Papuan Presidium Council, insisted that Papuan people 'don't hate the migrants', adding that emotions were inflamed when the police refused to negotiate about pulling down the flag and then took refuge with the settlers. [Reuters, 8 October]

Agreement violated

The downfall of the dictator Suharto in May 1998 created conditions in West Papua as elsewhere in Indonesia for more open expression of opinion. Flag-raising is a powerful manifestation of Papuan identity, closely associated with a Papuan sense of injustice at their treatment since Indonesia took over control in 1963. During the Suharto era, occasional flag-raising incidents were treated harshly and many people served long prison terms for such peaceful actions.

After his election in October 1999, President Abdurrahman Wahid adopted a more tolerant attitude, giving the go-ahead for the practice as a legitimate expression of opinion. Throughout 2000 and particularly since the Second Papuan People's Congress in June, the Kejora has been a common sight in towns and villages. Conditions were set according to which the Papuan flag should fly side by side with and slightly lower than the Indonesian red-and-white.

This more relaxed atmosphere began to change after thousands of extra troops arrived in West Papua at the end of August. This did not deter the flag-raisers however and anxiety grew that a policy shift in Jakarta might soon end in tears. On 3 October, leaders of the Papuan Presidium Council held talks with top-level civilian, police and military authorities in Jayapura at which an accord was reached: flags could be flown unmolested until 19 October and in the meanwhile, the PPC would hold talks with President Wahid on how to proceed regarding this and other matters.

The clampdown in Wamena three days later was in clear violation of this accord. Sources in Jayapura say that while it was the chief of police of Irian Jaya who ordered the strike, he was acting on orders from the national police chief in Jakarta. Higher up the line of command was Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri who is known to be strongly opposed to Wahid's policy of tolerance. She was instrumental in persuading him to withdraw his decision to address the Second Papua Congress earlier this year.

Five days after the Wamena Tragedy, a special cabinet meeting was convened in Jakarta for the express purpose of ending what was described as the 'dualism' in policy in Irian Jaya, as Papua is still officially known. The cabinet meeting on 12 October which was chaired by Megawati decided that unfurling the Papuan flag had been 'distorted' into become a manifestation of 'separatist sentiments' and would be prohibited forthwith. The meeting also ordered the immediate dissolution of Satgas Papua. This defence force came into prominence during the Second Papuan Congress when it provided security for the meeting and has attracted tens of thousands of members in all parts of West Papua. Few members are armed and then only with traditional weapons.

The Presidium Council was condemned for claiming to represent the Papuan people and would only be recognised as a group with whom to engage in efforts for reconciliation.

Crisis atmosphere persists

As the deadline of 19 October approached, there were fears that more bloody incidents could occur. In Merauke and Yapen Waropen, Papuan flag-raisers were defying instructions from the local police to pull down their flags.

In Jayapura, thousands of people were reported to be converging on the provincial capital to give support to flag-raisers. Theys Uluay, chair of the Papuan Presidium Council, was unable to persuade several hundred Papuans not to persist in order to avert yet more bloodshed.

Faced with the looming crisis, the provincial chief of police announced a last-minute extension of the 19 October deadline without setting a new one. When PPC leaders met President Wahid in Jakarta on 23 October, they came out admitting that the two sides' positions were far apart. Embroiled in a power struggle that threatens the survival of his presidency, Wahid clearly had nothing to offer. On the same day, the coordinating minister for security affairs, retired lieutenant-general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono insisted that the police response in Wamena had been 'proportionate', and attacked the Papuan Presidium Council for seeking support from Pacific nations in their quest for a re-run of the so-called 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969 which resulted in West Papua's absorption into Indonesia.

With unprecedented attention being devoted by members of the government to the situation in West Papua, this would not be the only place in Indonesia where lives have been sacrificed on the altar of political conflict within the country's political elite in Jakarta. Meanwhile, many Papuans are planning to celebrate 1 December to mark the day in 1961 when an elected Papuan Council adopted the Kejora flag as their national emblem amid promises from the Dutch colonial administration of a process leading to the territory's eventual independence.

On 9 November, it was announced that agreement was reached between the provincial authorities in Jayapura including the police and the military on the one hand, and the Presidium leadership on the other, for Papuan flags to be removed from all government buildings after 1 December. The agreement appears to involve a ceremonial hoisting of the Indonesian and Papuan flags on an equal footing on 1 December, and thereafter, the Papuan flag will only be hoisted over at the Presidium leader's home and other Papuan locations.

Presidium chairman Theys acknowledged that he could not guarantee that all Papuans would comply with this agreement.

More troops sent to West Papua

Two more Kostrad battalions were sent to West Papua in mid November in anticipation of actions in favour of independence there on 1 December. These battalions, amounting to nearly two thousand men, will bring the number of reinforcements sent to West Papua since August this year to around five thousand. The total number of troops and police

continued on page 19

Self-determination for Papua raised at UN

For the first time since 1969 when the UN General Assembly shamefully struck West Papua off its agenda after a fraudulent Act of 'Free' Choice, the issue of West Papua's right to self-determination was raised at the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly held in September.

Two South Pacific countries, Vanuatu and Nauru, gave their full support to the need for an act of self-determination.

Vanuatu

Prime Minister Maautamate B Sope of Vanuatu made a strong plea to world leaders to right the many wrongs of the UN 'so that we can embark on the new millennium with a clear conscience'. He went on to say:

'As the chairman and an active member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group which is committed to promoting and safeguarding the Melanesian identity, values, traditions and rights, the Republic of Vanuatu calls on the United Nations to review the political and legal basis of its own undertakings in the 50s and 60s in relation to the fundamental rights and the fate of our Melanesian brothers and sisters in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular in West Papua.'

He condemned the so-called Act of Free Choice in West Papua as 'a mockery to the fundamental principles on human rights and self-determination clearly enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (which) cannot continue to turn a blind eye on its own past failures which has led to three long, agonising decades of injustice, tragedy and guerrilla warfare in West Papua. It is both morally and legally wrong to do so. The United Nations has competent agencies and institutions, such as the Committee of 24 or the International Court of Justice, which should be tasked to look into this or give an advisory opinion. The Netherlands which was the former colonial authority, in particular, should recognise that they have some responsibility in helping to resolve the unfortunate situation of West Papua in a peaceful and transparent manner.'

Nauru

The President of Nauru, Bernard Dowiyogo MP, speaking on 7 September, for the first time at the General Assembly following his country's entry into the UN in 1999, referred to three UNHCR personnel killed in Atambua, West Timor, on the previous day and expressed support for the people of East Timor through their final step to nationhood.

'On the other hand, our Melanesian brothers and sisters in West Papua are still striving to break the imposition of colonial domination and foreign control, following the so-called act of free choice in 1969. It is imperative that West Papua be given the rightful opportunity of a democratic referendum of its indigenous people, to exercise at last their right to self-determination. The United Nations cannot stand by and witness the destruction of the people of West Papua. ... Nauru would therefore support a UN resolution that permits the people of West Papua the choice of self-determination.'

Papuan leaders attend S Pacific forum

Inching forward in getting their case recognised at an international level, eight West Papuan activists from the Papuan Presidium Council were given seats at the annual South Pacific Regional Council held this year in Kiribati. The West Papuans were included in the official delegations from Nauru and Vanuatu, making it possible for them to rub shoulders with the heads of governments in the Pacific which include Australia and Aoteroa (New Zealand).

Their presence at the meeting resulted in the question of West Papua being discussed for the first time in this important international forum. While it was obvious from the start that any attempt to have the summit take a position on the question of West Papua's right to self-determination would not be acceptable to the Australian and New Zealand prime ministers, John Howard and Helen Clarke, they were unable to prevent the meeting from discussing the human rights situation and the recent acts of violence.

The final communiqué expressed 'deep concern about the recent violence and loss of life in West Papua' and called on both sides 'to resolve their differences peacefully through dialogue and consultation' and to uphold the human rights of the residents of the province.

It was at the insistence of John Howard that the communiqué underlined Indonesia's position as 'the sovereign authority' in West Papua. The result was welcomed by Franzalbert Joku, international affairs moderator of the Papuan Presidium Council, as being a better outcome than they had expected. 'I was concerned,' he said, 'that West Papua was going to be kept off the agenda.' As one Australian newspaper commented, 'The Australian Government is accepting the inevitability of a heightened focus on West Papua while standing by Indonesia's sovereignty.' [*Australian Financial Review*, 30 October]

Signs of that heightened focus has come in several forms. One was a memorandum of understanding signed between Jacob Rumbiak, a West Papuan independence leader, and Greg Sword, vice-president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, which calls for a UN referendum on the future of West Papua. Greg Sword, who is also president of the Australian Labour Party, said the Australian trade union movement wants the UN General Assembly to examine Indonesia's claim over the independent territory of West Papua, which is so close to our northern shores. ACTU spokesman Alan Matheson said that the handover of West Papua to Indonesia 'has led to the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians and spiralling human rights abuses.' [*The Australian*, 25 October]

A week earlier, church leaders from Australia and West Papua issued a joint statement calling for an 'East Timor-style independence ballot to stop the violence in West

Papua'. The Australian churchman endorsing this statement was Anglican Bishop Hilton Deakin, known for many years as an outspoken supporter of East Timor's right to self-determination. The West Papuan churchman was Pastor Martin Luther Wanma who was attending an Asia Pacific regional conference of religious leaders in Melbourne. [AFP, 19 October]

At the same time, Australia's Greens Party attempted to

table a motion in the Senate saying: 'The Senate supports the right of the West Papuan people to raise the Morning Star flag', but the move was blocked by other parties in the Senate. Senator Bob Brown of Tasmania who had tried to table the motion later announced that he had set up a new organisation, Parliamentarians for West Papua. *

International West Papua Solidarity Meeting

Early 2000, an initiative was started to organise a world-wide solidarity meeting on West Papua. Three organisations: West Papua Action (WPA) in Dublin, TAPOL in London and the Foundation Study & Information Papua Peoples (PAVO) in Utrecht became the Organising Committee of the conference. The lively conference was held in Denekamp, the Netherlands on 10-12 October 2000 and it was decided that similar conferences would be held in the future. Next year the conference will take place in Germany.

Participants for the conference came from many countries, including the US, Canada and Australia. European participation came from Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands and the UK. A long way from the Pacific came a representative from PCRC in Fiji. West Papua was represented by three people: Tom Beanal, vice-chair of the Papua Presidium, Willy Mandowen who represented FORERI and Sisilia Sokoy, a staff member of FORERI.

This conference is an expression of the growing solidarity world-wide among NGOs and individuals about the plight of the West Papuans. The fall of the Suharto dictatorship and the growing movement in West Papua itself to determine their own political future was the bottom-line of the Denekamp conference. A special session was held on the last day of the Denekamp conference how to increase and improve lobby work in order to internationalise the issue of West Papua even more. In the last few years newsletters, e-mail groups, press releases and petitions on West Papua has brought the issue much more in the international press.

The conference aimed to work towards a more co-ordinated and better organised solidarity network to support the process of reconciliation and dialogue in West Papua. Another aim is to alert the international community in general and the UN in particular of the need for the injustice suffered by the West Papuan people to be rectified.

The conference was a bit overshadowed by the developments in West Papua (bloody clashes in Wamena and the Indonesian decision to ban the Morning Star Flag). A continuous flow of information went from Port Numbai, Jakarta, London to the Denekamp conference, creating a lively discussion in the conference.

Program of the conference

The conference started with four keynote speeches, Carmel Budiardjo from TAPOL spoke about the situation in Indonesia and Willy Mandowen from FORERI raised the important topic of dialogue between the government in Jakarta and the Papuan leaders. In the afternoon session the conference continued with an explanation about the

structure of the Papua Presidium by Viktor Kaisiepo and Tom Beanal and the last speaker(s) were Chris Ballard and Octovianus Mote on the human rights situation in West Papua and strategies to improve the situation. A plenary discussion followed the speeches.

In the evening two recent video programmes were shown: 'The Act of No Choice' from the BBC and 'The Papuan People's Congress', a report by AVRO, a Dutch broadcasting program.

The next day a wide range of topics were discussed, making the nature of the conference a proper working conference. Topics were discussed such as: self-determination, human rights, natural resources, military and arms sales. Practical matters like how to expand the network and how to internationalise further the actions for West Papua became obvious topics of discussion.

Public meeting and other activities

A public meeting was organised in Utrecht with the three people in the West Papua delegation. Fifteen people from the International Solidarity Meeting also participated in this public rally. Some 200 people attended the meeting, including many West papuans living in the Netherlands.

A Papuan delegation also met officials from the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry and they also met some Dutch Members of Parliament from the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Commission. Visits were also made to Dutch NGOs and funding agencies to discuss the possibilities of future support in the reconciliation and process of dialogue.

The conference was lucky to have two important spokespersons of the West Papuan people to explain about the situation and strategies of the struggle. Their profound knowledge about the political situation in Indonesia also helped to deepen the understanding of the strategy of dialogue with Jakarta. They spoke with convincing determination and credibility. *

Police interfering in labour disputes

In the days of Suharto, military intervention was a regular feature when workers were in dispute with their employers. Local army officers used their muscle to force workers and their leaders to accept onerous terms from their bosses and frequently faced dismissal after disputes had been resolved. More recently, the military took a back seat, leaving such interference to local thugs. But now the police have taken on the mantle of bearing down on workers.

In a press release issued on 15 November, the SBSI, the Indonesian Workers Prosperity Union, strongly condemned the police for intervening in labour disputes. This has a intimidatory impact on workers involved in strike actions or other forms of struggle for their rights. A recent example was the dispute with PT Maspion in East Java where the management called in the police. Workers were dragged away to the East Java police command and held for a week then transferred to another police command in Sidoarjo. On 13 November, the head of the SBSI unit at PT Maspion was again taken in by the police for no apparent reason.

Such intervention is in contravention of Article 28 of the Indonesian Constitution as well as ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining both of which have been ratified by Indonesia. It also contravenes the law on trade union rights adopted by the Indonesian parliament earlier this year.

The SBSI also complained about police intervention in on-going disputes in East Kalimantan with PT Kaltim Prima Coal and PT Vico Indonesia. If this becomes a regular feature of labour disputes, said the SBSI, it will mean that nothing has changed since the days of Suharto's New Order.

A new wave of strikes

In September the government quietly put the oil prices up 12%, which immediately created a dramatic upsurge of prices of the other basic necessities. Six months earlier, in April, the government was forced to suspend the oil price rise because of the many protests in society. This time the trade unions were taken by surprise. Only on 10 October the different unions in different cities managed to organise a day of action against the increasing cost of living.

In Jakarta a few thousand workers marched from the Independence Monument to the Merdeka Palace. The march created traffic jams in the inner city but the organisers expected more people to participate. In Surabaya, the second biggest city, around 12,000 workers marched to the City Hall. The Mayor of Surabaya, addressed the demonstrated and gave his support to the demands of the workers for a hefty wage increase. In other cities similar demonstrations were held.

The economic meltdown since 1997 hasn't been favourable for the growth of an organised labour movement in Indonesia. The explosion of the unemployment figure was the main reason that workers hesitated to put strong demands to their bosses. But the double digit inflation and the price increases give the workers no other option but to protest. The downfall of Suharto meant the end of one corporatist union and in fact trade unions, both on national,

regional or factory level have indeed mushroomed.

A whole range of trade unions

On national level a record of 23 unions have been established in the last two years. On factory level some 9,000 unions have been registered while 44 unions have emerged in the state sector. During the mass actions it became more evident that the unions also represent a wide spectrum from radical to 'boss-friendly' workers unions. This 'hundred flowers bloom' period is understandable after a three decade of muzzling workers rights by the Suharto regime, but it also creates difficulties in finding a common platform for mutual demands. In Central Java the different unions have managed to create a common platform but in Jakarta the demands of the different unions could not find any compromise. Future workers actions will sift the good from the bad unions. *

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