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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

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December 1997

East Timor: Troops open fire on students

Many students were seriously wounded when troops opened fire on students in Dili, renewing world outrage at the continuing army brutality in occupied East Timor. Indonesia continues to be dogged by pressures at home and abroad over its refusal to budge with regard to East Timor. Demonstrations were held in East Timor and Java to mark the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre.

At least eight students sustained serious gunshot wounds on the premises of the University of East Timor, Dili, and many more were arrested when troops opened fired on hundreds of students on 14 November. The incident occurred inside the university campus, two days after a peaceful demonstration on the campus to commemorate 12 November, the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre, when at least 270 people were shot dead as they entered the cemetery to pay homage to a young East Timorese murdered at Motael Church two weeks earlier.

On 12 November, some four hundred students and school-pupils had gathered on the campus to hold a three-hour candlelight vigil for the dead. Dozens more congregated outside the Cathedral and in Becora district, also holding candles. While this was in progress, others blocked the roads and urged passing motorists not play music, out of respect for the dead. A student told AP: 'This is the only way we can commemorate that brutal incident.' The agency also reported that two people were arrested. Army and police forces tried to block access to the university. The situation on campus was tense on the following day with troops out in force.

Belo: 'Incalculable brutality'

On Friday, 14 November, students on campus challenged the presence of two men they suspected of being plainclothes, undercover agents of the armed forces. After angry words were exchanged the men left, only to return some minutes later, accompanied by troops who opened fired on the students without warning. Later a truckload of troops from Battalion 744 arrived, as well as agents of the intelligence unit, the SGI, members of the para-military *Garda Paksi*, and crack police forces.

According to Manuel Abrantes of the Commission for Peace and Justice in Dili, the security forces prevented the

Red Cross and humanitarian organisations from entering the campus to assist the wounded. 'Inside the university there was panic,' he said, 'and we could only contact them by phone.' [Reuters, 14 November]

Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Nobel Laureate, told Portuguese radio that 15 injured people had arrived at the Commission. 'There were acts of incalculable brutality. The military broke into the University abusively, breaking windows and doors,' he said.

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According to a number of sources, one seriously wounded victim was forcibly removed from a vehicle of the International Red Cross and taken to a military hospital. Witnesses say that he was severely beaten by police before being taken away. Those taken to Wira Husada military hospital were held under police guard. The whereabouts of some of the victims are still not known.

A fact-finding report by the Acting Rector, Drs Paulus Kadju, an Indonesian, condemned the way that troops opened fire inside the campus, causing panic among the students who were engaged in academic activity at the time and some of whom were sitting exams. The troops also inflicted damage inside university class-rooms estimated at Rp150 million. Later, after agreement had been reached that students would be allowed to return home without being molested, troops and police nevertheless entered the campus again and arrested sixteen students. They 'forced open office doors, broke windows, ransacked classrooms and offices and damaged two Honda motorbikes'. The report calls for legal action to be taken against the security forces who opened fire in the university.

A statement by the Student Senate of the University of East Timor described the assault as a 'brutal attack', a violation of the autonomy of the campus and a crime against the students of East Timor. It strongly denounced a claim by the military commander, Colonel Slamet Sidabutar, alleging that the troops had entered the campus to rescue two 'hostages'. They called for protection for the victims of the assault, for information of the whereabouts of those still missing and for a thoroughgoing independent investigation by the UN Human Rights Commission and other human rights groups. (*Komnas HAM*, Indonesia's Human Rights Commission was not included in their list although this is the body that was sent from Jakarta to conduct an investigation.)

The 14 November incident will add to the growing number of incidents when East Timorese have been wounded, arrested and tortured, leading to trials of the victims, while the army and police go on to commit yet more violations with impunity.

US activist deported

Lynn Fredriksson, a member of the East Timor Action Network in the US, was arrested by police in Dili on 12 November, held for several hours for questioning, then deported from the country. The security authorities alleged that because she was taking photographs of the student vigil at the University, she was 'engaging in journalistic activities', and therefore abusing the tourist visa with which she entered Indonesia. They even claimed that she had 'incited' the students to behave more vigorously, as she recorded the event on her video camera. [*Jakarta Post*, 14 November]

The independent journalists' association, AJI, protested against her deportation in the strongest terms.

12 November in Yogyakarta

About two hundred East Timorese students from a number of universities in Java took part in an action outside the local legislative assembly, the DPRD-DIY, to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre. The students had come from Solo, Semarang,

Salatiga and Yogyakarta to take part in the event. Besides a huge banner bearing the words, 'Commemorate the Sixth Anniversary of the Santa Cruz Incident', they unfurled banners saying: 'Show Us Justice and Truth', 'We Love Peace', and 'We Are Anti-Violence'. They also held a free-speech forum. Security forces kept a watchful eye on the proceedings during the course of which some of those present handed bunches of flowers to the police.



The event was organised by the students' association, IMPETTU, which has recently taken a courageous stand on the status of their country and on human rights violations. The association was set up in the 1980s to rein in the activities of East Timorese who were coming to Java in growing numbers to study at universities. It was created during the days when General Benny Murdani was in charge of the armed forces but now that it is becoming much more daring, another body, the East Timor Students' Movement, the brain-child of Major-General Prabowo Subianto, has been set up.

Reports are now circulating that the military are considering liquidating the organisation because it has become so openly hostile to the Indonesian occupation of their country.

One year for Mahkota Hotel protest

Three young East Timorese have been sentenced to one year each for taking part in an attempt to meet the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General, Jamsheed Marker, when he was on a visit to Dili. The three men, **Mosito Braga Soares**, 21, **Cancio Antonio Hendriques Guterres**, 26, and **Alberto da Costa**, 22, were arrested with dozens of people who went in March this year to the Mahkota Hotel where the UN envoy was staying, after being frustrated that plans for him to visit the University of East Timor to hear the views of the students was scrapped from his itinerary. Troops chased the students into the hotel and used so much violence that many fled from the building by breaking windows and jumping through the broken glass.

Altogether 33 people were held, many of whom are still due to be charged in connection with the incident.

Five go on trial for police raid

The trial began on Monday, 10 November of five East Timorese who are charged with involvement in a daring raid on a police command post in Dili on 28 May this year, the day before Indonesia held unlawful general elections in occupied East Timor. The five defendants are: **Jermias da Costa**, **Jose Mali Amaral**, **Ernesto Roderiques Martins**, **Akau da Costa** and **Francisco Magno**.

The men are charged with attempting to undermine the Indonesian government and face sentences of up to life imprisonment. Three lawyers were to have represented the accused in court but only one was allowed into the session. Court officials alleged that the others did not have permission to practise in East Timor. *

Timorese charged with explosives offences

A number of East Timorese in Central Java and Dili are to go on trial shortly on charges of possessing and transporting explosives, for which the maximum penalty is death. From his prison in Jakarta, resistance leader Xanana Gusmao has taken full responsibility for their activities.

Altogether six East Timorese are likely to face charges very soon, four in Semarang, Central Java, and two in Dili. Another six have taken refuge in the Austrian embassy in Jakarta and have asked to go to Portugal. [We incorrectly reported on page 16 of *TAPOL Bulletin* No 143, October 1997, that the six had left the embassy for Portugal.] The arrests followed an explosion on 13 September that wrecked a house in Demak where several East Timorese were living. The authorities claim that the inhabitants were making bombs for use in Indonesia and East Timor and that they were members of a unit called *Brigada Negra* or Black Brigade which is alleged to be an offshoot of AST, the Timorese Socialist Association.

during interrogation, while Fernao told friends who visited him in late October that he had been subjected to electric shock and burning with lighted cigarettes. Lawyers from the Semarang Legal Aid Institute have been given power of attorney to act for Dominggus Natalino, but have been refused access, on the grounds that he has been provided with legal representation by the police. The other three have asked another legal aid association, the PBHI, to represent them. There are reports that even the lawyers appointed by the police have not been given access.

The documents regarding their case have been handed over to the public prosecutor's office, which means that their trial may begin soon. They are being charged under Article 1, Paragraph 1 of Emergency Law No 12 of 1951 regarding the possession, storage and transport of explosives, the maximum penalty for which is death.

The two now in custody in Dili are: **Constancio da Costa Santos**, 21, and **Paulo George R. Pereira**, 23. They were arrested on arrival by ship in Dili from Java and are said to have been carrying a large quantity of home-made bombs, ammunition, and bomb-making equipment as well as documents from the resistance. The idea that they could have got through security at any point of departure from Java with such a quantity of weaponry sounds ludicrous. They too are shortly to go on trial on similar charges.

Xanana takes responsibility

Xanana Gusmao, leader of the East Timorese resistance and commander of the armed resistance, FALINTIL, who is now serving a twenty-year sentence in Cipinang Prison, Jakarta, may be called to testify at the trials. On 18 November, he was interrogated at the prison in the presence of his team of lawyers, headed by Luhut Pangaribuan of the PBHI. He was questioned in particular about his relations with Constancio, now in custody in Dili. He told his interrogators that, like many other East Timorese, Constancio, who was a member of the clandestine front, had visited him in prison

Asked about the bomb-making activities, he said he knew about and supported them. 'As FALINTIL commander I know the needs of the guerrillas. These bombs were made to help FALINTIL guerrillas fight the



The Indonesian press joined the chorus branding the East Timorese resistance as a terrorist movement.

The four now in custody in Semarang are: **Ivo Salvador Miranda**, 20, **Dominggus Natalino Coelho da Silva**, 18, **Fernando (Fernao) Pedro M Correia**, 19 and **Joaquim Santana**, 23. All are believed to have been subjected to intimidation and strong psychological pressure

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Indonesian army which has occupied our country for twenty-two years and trampled on the freedom of the Maubere People.' He went on:

'As Commander of FALINTIL and leader of the struggle of the Maubere People, I authorised them to make these bombs and I told Constancio that I would take responsibility for these activities. I wish to state that I totally reject attempts to call us terrorists. We never intended to use these bombs against civilian targets or to use them anywhere in Indonesia. If this had been our intention we could have used them against targets in Indonesia during the period of unrest in Java before the general election. I once again reiterate that these bombs were made to bolster our armed resistance to the Indonesian army. The bombs were made for this purpose and I take full responsibility for their activities.'

Austrian embassy stands firm

On 20 September, six East Timorese, including a married couple and their two children entered the Austrian embassy in Jakarta, seeking asylum and a passage to Portugal. While in the past, such requests at embassies in Jakarta have been dealt with almost as a matter of routine, in this case, the Indonesian authorities allege that two of the asylum-seekers, **Avelino Coelho da Silva** (who is accompanied by his wife and children) and **Nuno Saldanha**, were involved in the bomb-making conspiracy in Central Java and have refused to allow them to leave the country, alleging that they are 'terrorists'.

The Austrian embassy has made it clear that it would be wrong for them to hand over the two Timorese as they have no reason to believe that they are terrorists. The first secretary at the embassy, Eleanor Windis, told the press that they agreed to allow the East Timorese into the embassy because they want to go to Portugal. The army commander in East Timor, Colonel Slamet Sidabutar, has himself publicly admitted on several occasions that it will be difficult for him to provide the evidence required by the embassy.

The army have done their best to drag Nobel Peace Laureate, Jose Ramos-Horta into the affair, alleging that photographs showing him in the company of the two men now in custody in Dili is proof positive that he must have had a hand in their activities.

Terrorism and the armed struggle

This latest incident has been used by the military to pin the 'terrorist' label on everyone involved in the East Timorese armed resistance. The military were clearly dismayed that FALINTIL was not on the list of thirty so-called 'terrorist groups' made public by the US Department of State in October this year, nor, for that matter, were the OPM in West Papua and Aceh-Merdeka in Aceh, North Sumatra. Of course, the US announcement had nothing to say about state terrorism.

Who is it who has the right to deny that the East Timorese are perfectly entitled to arm themselves, while so many western governments, including Britain, continue to supply the terrorist dictatorial Suharto regime with weapons? *

Suharto tells Mandela to mind his own business

President Mandela's East Timor initiative suffered a setback when President Suharto told him in Cape Town that he rejects interference in Indonesia's 'internal affairs'. The Indonesian dictator's brief visit to South Africa sparked demonstrations by the country's largest trade union, COSATU while a conference in Mozambique in October paved the way for greater solidarity throughout the continent of Africa.

Although there were high expectations in some circles that President Suharto's visit to South Africa on 20 - 21 November would take forward President Mandela's initiative on East Timor, this appears not to have happened. Although Nelson Mandela made reference to East Timor in his speech at the state banquet for the Indonesian president, saying that South Africa was 'willing to help Indonesia solve its problems', Suharto made no reference at all to East Timor. He said only that countries 'should respect each other's sovereignty and not interfere in others' internal matters'. Just days after troops fired on and seriously wounded defenceless students in Dili, Suharto said that Indonesia 'adheres to the principle of peaceful co-existence'.

On his third visit to Jakarta, in July this year, Nelson Mandela succeeded in persuading Suharto to allow him to meet imprisoned East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao at the State Guest House. After returning home, Mandela wrote to Suharto asking him to release Xanana as

a crucial step towards resolving the question of East Timor. However, the letter was never answered although Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said in response that Xanana could not be released because he was 'a criminal'.

In advance of Suharto's trip to South Africa, Alatas played down the significance of East Timor as a topic of discussion between the two heads of state. This was just a return visit, he insisted. Be that as it may, East Timor was clearly the main topic when the two presidents met in Cape Town. Although Mandela refused to divulge the contents, he said that the talks had been 'fruitful'. However, since he was 'acting on behalf of the UN' he would first have to report to UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

Speaking to the press after his talks with Suharto, Mandela said that they were 'close friends'. He praised the Indonesian dictator for being among those 'who assisted the ANC financially to win the elections'. [SAPA, 20 November] At the end of the visit, Mandela conferred his country's highest award, the Order of Good Hope, on Suharto.

It is understood that agreements on trade between the two countries were signed during the visit.

Demonstrators arrested

Several dozen people were arrested when members of South Africa's leading trade union, the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) demonstrated in several cities to protest against the Suharto regime, while supporting Mandela's efforts to help resolve the East Timor question. The Pan African Congress and the Democratic Party also protested against the Suharto visit.

Thirty-eight people were arrested when COSATU activists protested outside Parliament in Cape Town on the day of Suharto's arrival. This followed a resolution adopted in September by the 1.7 million-strong union, strongly condemning Suharto's human rights violations in Indonesia and East Timor. They carried banners supporting the struggle of Asian workers, calling for an end to Suharto's genocide and for an end to his union bashing. Because they had failed to get the permission of the City Council for the action, they were rounded out and bundled into waiting police vans, along with their banners. The National Union of Metal Workers also joined the protests.

Union leaders later described the police action as 'barbaric'. Spokeswoman Nowetu Mpati said it was a violation of their constitutional right to demonstrate peacefully. 'At this time of our democracy, it is barbaric for the police to act like this. Our lawyers are looking into the matter.' [SAPA, 20 November]

Demonstrations were also held outside the Indonesian embassy in Pretoria as well as in Klerksdorp, East London and Port Elizabeth. Some placards read: 'Mandela, no deals with murderer Suharto.'

Meanwhile, PAC secretary-general Michael Muendane said the visit was 'undesirable' when the Suharto regime was oppressing people and denying East Timor its self-determination. He said that during apartheid, the world had been asked to sever ties with South Africa and the same should now apply to Indonesia. The Democratic Party's executive director James Selfe recalled that Suharto had come to power on a wave of killings that left a million people dead. He said his party would judge Suharto's visit according to whether the South African government achieved real progress towards establishing democracy in Indonesia and East Timor.

First African solidarity conference

A conference on 'Africa and the East Timor Issue' in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, from 13 - 15 October 1997 marks the beginning of solidarity actions in Africa for East Timor and Indonesia. The conference was convened by the University Eduardo Mondlane and the University of Oporto. Mar'ie Alkatiri, Fretilin representative in Mozambique was the main organiser of the conference.

It was opened by Mozambique's Foreign Minister Leonardo Simao and closed by Graca Machel, widow of the country's first president, who is a long-time supporter of East Timor. It was very well attended by academics and NGOs from the region, especially from South Africa and Angola. It was addressed among others by Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos-Horta, external representative of the East Timorese resistance, Rui Augusto Gomes, a former senior official in the Indonesian administration of East Timor who defected earlier this year, and Liem Soei Liong, represent -

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ing TAPOL. The Mozambican solidarity group, AMOTIL, set up several years ago, has been re-constituted and played an active part in the conference.



Mar'ie Alkatiri, organiser of the Maputo conference

Four resolutions were adopted. The first supported the Mandela initiative on East Timor and called for the release of Xanana Gusmao and other East Timorese political prisoners. The second condemned the lack of access to the territory; demanded freedom of access to the territory, its peoples and institutions and called for freedom of research, study, speech, information and association in East Timor. The third greeted the people of Indonesia and the democratic forces in their fight against the colonialist dictatorship of General Suharto. The fourth was in support of the Saharaoui people and the efforts of the UN in achieving self-determination.

Maputo Declaration

This historic conference will be best remembered for a statement setting out the strategy for the international solidarity movement for East Timor. The Maputo Declaration, as the document is called, first welcomed the role the Lusophone countries of Africa have played in support of East Timor, acknowledged the role of Portugal and stressed the role of dialogue as the only way to a solution. It went on to welcome initiatives taken by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the recent efforts by President Mandela, and paid special tribute to Xanana Gusmao and the two distinguished East Timorese Nobel Laureates, Jose Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo. In conclusion, it said:

'The participants are aware that peace in East Timor can only be achieved when the East Timorese have a clear and active participation throughout the process of dialogue and demand:

'1. The direct participation of the Representatives of the People of East Timor in the process of dialogue under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.

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'2. The total and unconditional release of Xanana Gusmao and of all the East Timorese political prisoners.

'3. A cease fire, to be agreed upon without delay and endorsed by the Leadership of FALINTIL - The National Liberation Armed Forces of East Timor - and the Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Armed Forces, as the tool to end hostility, to dramatically reduced the Indonesian Armed Forces and Security deployment in East Timor and to end the systematic violation of human rights on East Timorese territory.

'4. A global settlement for the full implementation the

UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on East Timor to be undersigned by Portugal, Indonesia, the Representatives of the People of East Timor and the UN Secretary-General.

'The participants are aware of the Resistance's present needs in East Timor and urgently appeal to the International Community, the Civil Society and International Organizations, Governments and Parliaments of all countries to render support to the East Timorese People in their struggle for the re-establishment of the international rule of law in East Timor and for self-determination and independence.'

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Spreading the word in Indonesia

A recent tour of Central Java by an Indonesian activist to spread the word about East Timor has revealed that more and more people are aware of the tragedy of the East Timorese people, with Indonesian intellectuals beginning to speak out. Meanwhile, an Indonesian combat journalist has published a graphic account of the Indonesian army's invasion of the country on 7 December 1975.

The tour of Central Java was undertaken by Tri Agus Susanto of the reform and pro-democracy organisation, PIJAR, to mark 12 November, the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre. Tri Agus was recently released from prison after being convicted in 1994 for contempt of the head of state. He spent most of his time in Cipinang Prison where he got to know East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao, familiarising himself with what has happened in East Timor since 1975.

The speaking tour was arranged by PIJAR, in collaboration with the East Timorese students' organisation, IMPETTU. IMPETTU was created more than a decade ago as a pro-integration organisation for East Timorese studying in Indonesia but has become increasingly involved in actions to oppose Indonesia's occupation of their country.

At a well-attended meeting at the Atmajaya Catholic University, Yogyakarta, Hortencio Pedro Vieira of IMPETTU said that people should study the history of both Indonesia and East Timor. Following East Timor's unilateral declaration of independence on 28 November 1975, foreign forces contrived to issue a counter proclamation known as the Balibo Declaration on 30 November. Neither of these was recognised by the UN which to this day regards East Timor as a 'non-self-governing territory'. It was quite remarkable that, under President Sukarno, Indonesia was strongly anti-colonialist but President Suharto is doing everything possible to halt the decolonisation process in East Timor.

Another East Timorese, Joao Maco from the pro-Indonesian East Timorese Student Movement which was set up by Major-General Prabowo Subianto, welcomed East Timor's integration with Indonesia, describing it as the least bad option available to the people of East Timor. He did however admit that there were many shortcomings which the younger generation should try to improve.

Drs Suryo Leksono, a lecturer at the political science faculty, spoke out in favour of a referendum in East Timor.

He said that global circumstances at the time of the Indonesian invasion were dominated by the Cold War but conditions have now changed and a referendum is long overdue.

Tri Agus stressed the need for the pro-democracy movement to embrace the issue. He quoted the East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao as saying that the Indonesian pro-democracy movement and East Timor's struggle for liberation have different objectives but face a common enemy, meaning that the two need to work closely together.



Speaking at the Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang, Horacio de Almeida, chairperson of the Semarang branch of IMPETTU, said that East Timor is a political problem which can only be resolved by listening to the aspirations of East Timorese. It is a matter for the international community, not just Indonesia and Portugal, to solve.

Benny Danang Setyanto, a lecturer in law who graduated from Diponegoro University and Monash in Melbourne, said that it was clear beyond doubt that the Indonesian government and ABRI, the armed forces, had violated international law. In the wake of the Balibo Declaration, a document concocted by Indonesia, the armed forces repeatedly ignored UN resolutions calling for their with-

drawal from the territory. He said Indonesia's international standing is constantly being plagued by the issue.

Tri Agus focused on the attitude of Indonesian intellectuals and journalists who base their analysis on information produced by the armed forces. He said they were just as much to blame as the generals who participated in the war against East Timor. ABRI's involvement in East Timor was in a violation of the Constitution, an act of foreign aggression against a territory that had never been part of the Dutch East Indies.

Most comments from the floor condemned ABRI for failing to withdraw from East Timor and condemned the government for refusing to allow a referendum to take place.

The 7 December invasion

Indonesia mounted one of the biggest parachute operations since World War II when it seized the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1975, the memoirs of an Indonesian combat photographer reveal.

Under the invasion plan, which showed Jakarta's concern that its troops would meet fierce resistance from the lightly armed East Timorese, more than 2,100 crack airborne troops were to parachute into Dili in conjunction with an amphibious landing by 400 Marines backed by tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Hundreds more troops were to be brought in once Dili had been secured.

The blow-by-blow account of Indonesia's conquest of East Timor is contained in the book *Saksi Mata Perjuangan Integrasi Timor Timur* (Eyewitness to the Integration of East Timor) by Hendro Subroto, a television cameraman attached to the Indonesian invasion force. Subroto, an experienced war correspondent with enviable military contacts, especially in the Indonesian Air Force, writes from the perspective of someone who does not question the desirability of Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor. His account skims over the fact that as many as 100,000 - and possibly 200,000 - of East Timor's 700,000 people died as a result of the Indonesian invasion, mostly of starvation and disease during a series of relentless army operations against guerrilla units in the mountains.

The airborne operation had to be scaled back after four of the nine Indonesian Air Force C-130 Hercules transport planes were hit by Fretilin ground-fire as they made their parachute run over the capital at dawn on December 7, 1975.

As a result, the book reveals, the Indonesians had only five C-130s for a planned second sortie two hours later. A third sortie had to be cancelled. Each of the nine aircraft in the first group, which roared over Dili in tight formation after flying from an air base in East Java, carried 80 paratroopers.

However, 79 of the 720 men failed to jump, apparently because the drop run over Dili was too short. Another 35 troopers drowned when an air force pilot, banking sharply after a Fretilin bullet killed his jump-master, neglected to turn off the green "jump" light.

During the second sortie, descending Indonesian green beret troops from Battalion 502 fired on Indonesian Marines making their way inland from the beaches, mistaking them for Fretilin troops.

Battalion 502, which was withdrawn from East Timor in disgrace in February 1976 after soldiers went on a ram

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page of killing and looting, was chosen as the first Indonesian Army unit to take part in joint exercises in Australia.

Subroto provides an illuminating account of Indonesia's clandestine border war in the months before the invasion, describes how Indonesian warships lobbed shells into the hills around Dili, and reveals that several Indonesian frogmen were lost as they swam back to their ship after making a pre-dawn reconnaissance of the landing beaches.

In the lead-up to the airborne operation, Subroto reveals, Garuda Indonesian Airways put 21 aircraft at the disposal of the armed forces to create an air bridge between Jakarta and East Java, ferrying combat forces to the jump-off point. [Extracts from an article by David Jenkins in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 1997]. *

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When we left, we were taken to the south Jakarta police headquarters and interrogated for 24 hours, then released. Although we had been given guarantees, we were watched all the time, followed in the streets. Seven of the demonstrators were arrested when they returned to Malang. Four of them had been in the Russian embassy.

Later I was arrested again but managed to get out. I had had a lot of experience with the police in Jakarta in the old days. Most officers were from outside Jakarta and they didn't know me. When BAIS asked me to work for them, I said yes but I never intended to do anything for them. I never gave any information to BAIS. This is why they don't like me. In the end, they let me go.

I went to live at the home of the former Fretilin President, Xavier do Amaral.

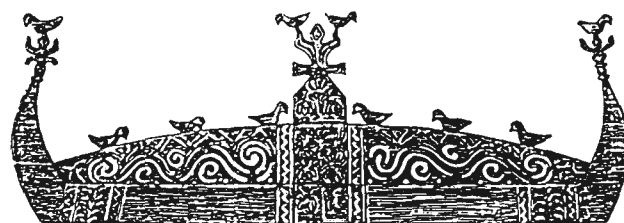
What position does he take? Is he pro-Indonesian?

He's an independent man. He has never supported Indonesia and will never do so but in order to survive he always says yes to whatever they want. He once told me that he loves Fretilin and in fact, some of the major Indonesian newspapers have reported him as saying this. His objective is to prepare for the day when the question of East Timor is resolved. He wants to set up an organisation called Moris Damai (Tetum for 'live in peace') to help people get special skills in order to build our country, whether it is integrated with Indonesia or independent. I didn't agree with what he is trying to do.

I decided to jump over the fence into the Dutch embassy. This happened on 19 February 1995, together with three others. In less than a day we were on our way to Portugal. In Amsterdam, we were taken to Schiphol Hotel where we were interviewed by journalists.

What about your sister?

She is studying at the University of East Timor. We manage to keep in contact and our letters get through safely as long as we don't discuss anything political. *



Abducted East Timorese speaks (II)

This is the concluding part of an interview of Tomas Afonso who spent many years living in Indonesia, thinking that he was an Indonesian. The first part was published in TAPOL Bulletin No 143.

What were your impressions when you arrived back home?

We were welcomed at the airport by our relatives. I could see immediately that they were living in a state of fear. The next day, I noticed that there were a huge number of soldiers in East Timor, far more than I had seen anywhere in Indonesia.

The journey from Dili to Los Palos took three and a half hours. Between the districts, there were army posts. We saw many soldiers and spies, armed with M-16s. We saw army convoys everywhere.

When my sister and I arrived in Los Palos, we were taken into custody and interrogated. They wanted to see our identity cards (KTP), to check whether we were members of the clandestine. They were very surprised to see on my KTP that I was born in Jakarta.

I was amazed to see so many soldiers in Los Palos - one soldier to three local inhabitants. Everywhere in East Timor there is an army post - in every village, manned by ten soldiers armed with M-16s and other modern weapons. I had never before seen such a huge concentration of soldiers as I saw in East Timor, even when I lived with *Armed-13*. I had been to many places in Indonesia where the army has bases. Back in East Timor, I realised that the troops came from different battalions and divisions. But soldiers I met in Indonesia never said they had been to East Timor.

Three months after my return home, an uncle of mine was summoned by *kodim* (sub-district military command) where he was interrogated on suspicion of being linked to the clandestine front. He was summoned every day for three months and questioned from morning till evening, mostly about me.

Back home, I learned about what was going on and did what I could to support the resistance. I left food for them - coffee, rice, sugar - at the edge of the forest.

Obviously, all your experiences in Indonesia had made you very tough.

It's true that life's experiences are the best teacher. Anyone with a lot of experiences will become very sensitive.

I learnt a lot about the culture and languages of my people. I didn't stay in East Timor all that long, only a year and I only spent three months in Dili. On one occasion, I was arrested and interrogated for three days in Manatuto; this was the time of the racial riots in Dili in October 1995. There were clashes between East Timor and Muslim newcomers from Bugis. I wanted to return to Los Palos but I didn't have an identity card (KTP) so I thought people would think I had been in the bush. I had learned many

languages in Java so spoke to the Javanese officer in Javanese. He thought I had been sent from Java on special duty so he let me go and told me to return to Dili.

I returned to Dili but the situation there was out of control; people were burning shops. So I decided to leave. I had some money so I took a ferry to Surabaya and I went to Malang, East Java.

Shortly before 7 December, the 20th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, there was a meeting between members of the resistance and an organisation called *SPRIM*, set up by the *Partai Rakyat Demokratik*, to express solidarity with East Timor. We decided on an action to get publicity in the Jakarta press, to hold demonstrations inside the Dutch and Russian embassies in Jakarta.

We had further discussions at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta to hold a joint action with the pro-democracy movement, to enter the embassies during the night of 7 December. The action happened and it got into the press.

I was among 55 people who entered the Dutch embassy - 26 East Timorese and 29 Indonesians. We stayed in the Dutch embassy for three days. On the second day, we were attacked by a demonstration outside the embassy, organised by *BAIS* agents (*BAIS*, now called *BIA*, is the armed forces intelligence agency). They wanted to arrest us.

They regarded three of the Timorese who had entered the embassy with our group as traitors because they had been recruited by *BAIS*. But these three had been forced to work for *BAIS*, taken to Pulau Seribu, given Rp. 15,000 each to take part in a demonstration. However, they joined us and their masters were furious.

These intruders couldn't arrest anyone; in fact one of their people outside the embassy was killed. When they entered the embassy compound, fierce fighting took place. Three of us were severely injured, one of whom was a woman. During this attack, the Dutch ambassador was struck on the head and neck; two of his assistants were also injured and taken to hospital.

We left the embassy after the people there didn't want to accept our petition.

Was it your intention to ask for asylum?

Yes, we would have liked to get asylum but the situation inside the embassy was very bad. Just imagine. Each one of us was surrounded by security forces who had spread throughout the building, downstairs and upstairs. So in the end, we decided to ask the embassy to seek guarantees about our safety and leave.

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Protests reverberate round the world

November 1997 has been a remarkable month for protests against the Suharto regime. Many actions were held to mark the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre. In Vancouver, Suharto and Jiang Ze Min were the main targets of nationwide protest at the failure of the APEC Summit to discuss human rights and environmental issues while Suharto was branded a murderer and put on trial.

By the time eighteen heads of state of the Asia-Pacific region gathered in Vancouver on 23 - 24 November for the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit (APEC), the Indonesian regime had been clearly identified as the target for protest and condemnation throughout Canada.

Bar Suharto or put him behind bars

For ten days prior to the Summit in Vancouver, thirteen exiled East Timorese and two exiled Indonesians toured Canada calling on the Canadian authorities 'to bar Suharto or put him behind bars'. They testified to audiences across the country about torture, murder, rape and other atrocities they had experienced in Indonesia and East Timor. A mock trial of Suharto was held, charging him with genocide.

The demand for action from the Canadian Government was based on the country's Immigration Act which denies entry to senior officials of foreign governments who 'in the opinion of the minister engage in gross human rights violations, war crimes or crimes against humanity which, had they been committed in Canada, would have been in violation of the Criminal Code'. These actions alone were enough to give a high profile to the iniquities of the Suharto regime. When Foreign Minister Ali Alatas warned that the government would 'take measures' against Indonesian citizens who joined protest actions in Canada, the protests intensified, reaching senior government circles. A senior US official told the *AFP* [22 November]: 'Our position is clear: we would oppose any threat against Indonesians or others who demonstrate peacefully ... and would urge (Alatas) to reconsider.'

Suharto and Alatas were clearly anxious to protect the Indonesia dictator from the embarrassment he suffered two years ago in Germany. After first saying Suharto would not attend the Summit; he only agreed to go after getting assurances of protection from the Canadian Government.

People's Summit

A People's Summit prior to the APEC meeting was attended by 1,500 people. High on the agenda was the economic crisis in Asia. Speakers compared the astronomical growth in Asia to 'unsustainable strip-mining'. The gathering also lambasted the APEC Summit for not broadening their agenda to include labour and human rights.

At the first demonstration the day before the Summit, 2,500 demonstrators marched to the Summit centre. On the next day, 24 November, seven thousand people demonstrated against the APEC meeting for ignoring human rights, democratic rights and environmental problems. In freezing temperatures, the protesters marched five miles from Plaza of the Nation to the Summit convention hall in

the centre of the city. While several Asian countries were assailed, the main targets were Jiang and Suharto. Some banners carried the words: 'Adolf Suharto, the killer', 'Put Suharto behind bars' and 'Suharto's genocide in Indonesia and East Timor'.

On the second day, as a thousand students tried to tear down the fence keeping crowds from the Summit heads of state, police used pepper spray against everyone in range. Many fell, clutching their burning faces. The students had come to carry out a 'citizens arrest' of Suharto. Forty people were arrested, including two men who turned out to be Indonesian government agents who had infiltrating the crowd. The Civil Liberties Association protested at the unwarranted severity of police action aimed at ensuring a 'protest free' environment for the APEC participants.

Pakpahan in the limelight

Imprisoned labour leader, Mochtar Pakpahan, became the centre of attention in North America during the APEC Summit. Pakpahan who is serving a four-year sentence for 'inciting' workers in Medan in April 1994, is now on trial for subversion in connection with events surrounding the attack on the head office of the PDI on 27 July last year. He has been in hospital in Jakarta since March suffering from a number of ailments and complications.

When Bill Clinton met Suharto for bilateral talks in Vancouver, it must have infuriated the Indonesian dictator to be asked not only about human rights in general but about Pakpahan in particular. The White House national security adviser, Sandy Berger, said of the meeting: 'He (Clinton) was raising the question of East Timor but also I think putting in a broader context for Suharto.' [*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November] The fact that Clinton mentioned the release of Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng on medical grounds in his meeting on the same day with Jiang highlights the stubborn refusal of Suharto even to consider such an action to help the ailing Pakpahan.

Even more galling was the request by the Canadian authorities to send a team of doctors to Jakarta to assess the labour leader's medical condition. For months, the Indonesian attorney-general has refused a request from Pakpahan, supported by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and trade unions in the US to allow Pakpahan to go abroad for treatment unavailable in Indonesia.

Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced that the attorney-general had finally given the go-ahead for Canada to send medical help. At the very same time, however, State Secretary Moerdiono, in Vancouver with Suharto, said that he 'knew nothing' about such a request from the Canadian government. *

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Meanwhile in East Java, the labour leader Dita Indah Sari, now serving a five-year sentence on charges of subversion, was taken to hospital suffering from typhoid. At the time of writing, she was still under intensive care.

Protests in Southeast Asia

Since the creation of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor in 1994, it has become a tradition for solidarity groups in the ASEAN region to protest on the anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre on 12 November 1991.

Protesters outside the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur on 14 November were shoved and punched by embassy staff while Malaysian police stood by. In heavy rain, about fifteen protesters held a candle-light vigil organised by *Solidaritas Timor Timur-Malaysia* but they were set upon by twenty heavies from the embassy. When the protesters called on the police for protection from embassy violence, they said they had not seen anything. Later the news agency *Bernama* reported that 'policemen ordered the embassy staff to get back into the embassy while the group were told to disperse or face action'.

The STTM later called on Malaysians to condemn the violence by the embassy staff and urged the Malaysian government and its agencies to protect its citizens from violence by other governments.

In Bangkok, activists from seven NGOs gathered outside the Indonesian embassy in a busy part of the capital city. Many people saw the dozens of banners unfurled expressing Asian-Pacific solidarity with the people of East Timor, calling for an end to human rights violations and condemning the terror in the occupied territory.

A statement to the press which was also delivered to the embassy called for freedom for East Timor, for implementation of the resolution of the 1997 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, in particular the release of political prisoners and a visit to East Timor by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

The protest in Manila was backed by a number of human rights and students' NGOs, including Phil-Seti, Philippine Solidarity for East Timor and Indonesia. The demonstration went first to the Australian embassy with an appeal to Canberra to allow East Timorese refugees in Australia the right of asylum. They then went to the Indonesian embassy where they succeeded in defacing the embassy wall with the words, 'Free East Timor' despite attempts by embassy staff to stop them. The protesters carried mounted photos showing Indonesian brutality in action in East Timor. In memory of those who died on 12 November 1991, the protesters laid flowers and carried a large 'in memoriam' board with the names of the victims.

Six Timorese held in British prison

On 12 November, six young East Timorese who reside in Britain, along with three Britons, entered the British Aerospace Wharton factory where Hawk aircraft are built. While they were holding a memorial service for the victims of the Santa Cruz Massacre, they were interrupted by security police and arrested. They were later charged with trespassing and obstructing security personnel. The three Britons were released on bail but the East Timorese have been held on remand because they refuse to give their names 'in solidarity with all the nameless dead of East Timor killed by British-supplied weapons'.

All the nine will face charges before a magistrates court on 8 December. *

Violence against women exposed

A set of forty photographs showing the violation of several women by soldiers while in custody in East Timor have been smuggled abroad and reproduced in newspapers in many countries. The photos were launched in Darwin on 20 November and in Vancouver two days later.

The photos show soldiers undressing women, holding them down and holding cigarette butts close to their naked bodies. Several of the women have slogans smeared on them. One reads: 'This is a Timorese champion, this is what becomes of anti-RI (people)'. A banner held above one woman reads: 'Here's the Nobel Prize'.

Speaking on behalf of the East Timor International Solidarity Centre in Darwin, Maria Soares called the photos a 'black reminder' of what she had seen herself before fleeing her homeland to Australia in 1985. She called on the Australian government to press Jakarta to allow a 'credible, independent human rights organisation into East Timor to investigate torture and human rights claims'.

Soldiers are in the habit of taking photos of their victims, possibly for purposes of intimidation. An army manual on interrogation procedures smuggled abroad in 1983 instructs soldiers on how to handle photos they take. They are warned not have photos developed outside, for fear of them falling into 'irresponsible hands'. *



IMF tries to rescue Indonesia

After two weeks of uncertainty, it was announced on 30 October that the IMF would step in to rescue the ailing Indonesian economy. A huge package of nearly US\$ 40 billion was promised to the Suharto government to calm the panic-stricken market. The first measure, the closure of sixteen banks, came as a shock to many middle class people.

Although the government officially sought IMF assistance on 8 October, it looked as though President Suharto would never agree to an IMF bailout. He made several public pronouncements insisting that he only wanted IMF technical advice but no financial assistance. He knew very well that an IMF deal would impose stringent conditions that could see the demise of many of his family's business interests. Suharto has always boasted about Indonesia's economic achievements under his leadership. He is, after all, known as *Bapak Pembangunan* (Father of Development). It is difficult for him to admit that in the past two years, the Indonesian economy has begun to falter: Indonesia has been forced to start importing large quantities of rice again, there is a mounting current account deficit and foreign public and private debt has been rising inexorably. Indonesia's external debt now stands at US\$ 117 billion (the official figure), not including the IMF bailout.

However painful it may have been for Suharto himself, Indonesia had to agree to a \$38 billion rescue operation, the second biggest in history after the Mexico *tequila* crisis in 1995.

By mid-October it became clear to financial experts around the world that the Indonesian economy was very sick indeed and a drastic remedy was called for. Its financial system was in much worse shape than first thought and a worsening of the Indonesian crisis would seriously affect the global economy.

The domino theory revised

In the fifties, the domino theory was floated to warn that if one Asian country fell to communism, others would follow, but the prognosis proved false. In fact, the few remaining 'socialist' countries like Vietnam and China have introduced a kind of 19th century capitalism nicknamed 'savage capitalism'. Today, the domino theory has gained currency again and is this time proving devastating valid in the economic domain. After the collapse of the Thai currency, others soon followed.

The Thai bailout announced in September, amounting to US\$17.3 billion, has not yet shown results, despite a change of government after weeks of political turmoil. Apparently unaware of the impact of the Southeast Asian crisis on the global economy, the US government decided not to join the IMF rescue operation with funds of its own. Political and economic conditions in Thailand remain fragile with the threat of a further plunge hovering overhead. The third patient to follow Indonesia into the intensive-care unit was South Korea, the 11th largest economy in the world. The collapse of a number of key conglomerates forced the

government to go to the IMF, cap in hand; some analysts believe that South Korea will need a bailout far in excess of what Mexico received.

One could argue that Indonesia profited from the botched rescue operation of Bangkok. As the crisis in the region worsened, Jakarta was inundated with offers of assistance from many countries, including vast sums from Singapore and Japan. Suharto even alleged that these bilateral handouts would not be subject to IMF conditions but that proved to be a false hope. In the event the IMF has agreed to provide Indonesia with a three-year standby loan of \$10 billion, topped up by the World Bank and the ADB each with \$4.5 and \$3.5 billion. Singapore made a generous offer of \$10 billion while neighbouring countries like Brunei, Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong and Japan have chipped in, bringing the total to just under \$40 billion. The US administration initially refused to participate, fearing a backlash from Congress. However, on 'grey Monday', 27 October, when Wall Street crashed by 557 points, the mood in Washington changed dramatically and a US\$3 billion contribution was announced.

US contribution lambasted

Let the Family pay!

A senior member of the House Banking and Financial Services Committee has described the Clinton decision to contribute \$3 billion to the IMF bailout for Indonesia as illegal and promised to do all he could to stop it. Bernie Sanders, speaking at the Committee on 13 November, said the decision was in violation of a Congressional amendment of which he was co-sponsor stipulating that the US cannot support IMF or World Bank loans to any country unless the loan proposal guarantees internationally recognised workers' rights.

He then said that even if it was legal, which it is not, he would oppose it. 'Not only is it morally wrong for the US to provide political and economic support for an illegitimate, authoritarian government such as the Suharto regime, but it is totally absurd. It is an outrage that the taxpayers of this country are forced to bailout a family which Forbes magazine claims is one of the richest families in the world.'

'They estimate that General Suharto alone - alone - is worth \$16 billion. His family is worth \$30 billion. And you take 50 more of their allies, they're worth £60 billion. If they need the money so much, let them pay for their own bail out and not ask the taxpayers and working people of this country.'

IMF: the good, the bad and the ugly

For all third world countries, an IMF rescue operation is bad news for the common people. In order to cure the patient drastic remedies are required under the terms of the loan. IMF is primarily concerned with improving fiscal and monetary conditions, which almost inevitably results in wage cuts, redundancies, and so on. It also means making deep cuts in state expenditure on social programmes and subsidies for basic commodities. The IMF's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) invariably hits the poor.

Both IMF and the World Bank have always treated Suharto's Indonesia with kid gloves, lauding its impeccable record in repaying its debts. It was Suharto and his economic team, nicknamed the 'Berkeley Mafia', who brought Indonesia back into the fold of the global economy in the late sixties and for many years, Indonesia's financial managers followed the IMF/World Bank directives almost slavishly.

It is now being said that Indonesia's 'economic fundamentals' are still sound. But what are these fundamentals? Indonesia is Asia's largest oil producer, the world's largest natural gas exporter, it has (or had) huge tracts of tropical rainforest as well as some of the most sought-after minerals, not forgetting a huge domestic market and cheap labour with no basic rights. These are the fundamentals that have made Indonesia a most valuable asset in the eyes of the IMF/World Bank and the West. Indonesia became the showcase for multilateral financial institutions; no other country in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America could match the impressive macro-economic growth figures achieved in Indonesia.*

Although World Bank managers have been all too aware of the dark side of the Indonesian economy - Suharto's crony capitalism with its high-cost economy, wasteful monopolies and unbridled lending - this was not allowed to become an issue at the annual conferences of the Bank-led conference of donors, the Consultative Group on Indonesia. The collapse of the so-called tiger economies in

Southeast Asia is the best testimony that even the world's world's leading financial institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, have proven incapable of predicting the crisis that has now hit most of Asia, with possible repercussions all round the globe.

The collapse of the tiger economies

Since the crisis erupted in Bangkok in July, the South-east Asian currencies have fallen in value against the dollar by between 30 and 40 per cent [see also *TAPOL Bulletin* No. 143, October 1997]. Stock markets have also fallen sharply. Almost overnight, the darlings of the global investors with double-digit growth figures in Southeast Asia have become economic pariahs.

The Bangkok disease has now spread all over the world. The Brazil stock market fell by 40 per cent in November and the South Korean and Japanese economies are facing nightmare scenarios which are being compared to the global crisis of the thirties.

The Southeast Asia crisis is the third global crisis since 1980. The Latin American debt crisis in the eighties was followed by the 1995 Mexican crisis. They all have one basic feature: a vast capital inflow, the Achilles heel of present day global capitalism. This build-up of debts, most of them short-term is denominated in dollars. When the currencies fall in value, the cost of repaying these debts rises, aggravating the debt-burden, undermining the banks and driving businesses to the wall. Capital inflows foster booms, consumerism and wealth but sow the seeds of busts and misery. This is what is happening in Southeast Asia now. Much of the portfolio capital invested in Asia has fled, creating a huge outflow of funds and exacerbating the looming recession.

Some analysts fear that the IMF will need up to US\$200 billion to bail out ailing economies in Asia, money which is simply not available. The main features of the present crisis have filled the pages of the business press everywhere. They are: yawning current account deficits, high levels of external debt and huge amounts of useless investments.

On top of this, the prolonged stagnation of the Japanese economy has further fuelled the crisis. Many of the loans and investments supplied to South-east Asian countries in the past two decades have originated from Japan, shaping the main features of the tiger economies: a dazzling array of industries producing and assembling the same commodities, cars, T-shirts, electronic goods, the lot. It is now clear that there is a crisis of over-production, with countries vying with each other for the same markets. Other investments have been squandered on luxury high-rise office buildings, hotels, golf-courses and other unproductive projects. The Japanese banking system is now facing a huge build-up of non-performing loans. Already three major Japanese financial institutions have collapsed and more financial institutions in the region are expected to fall over the next few months.

The Economist, 25 October 1997



Tough negotiations

In the end, Suharto was forced to accept that an IMF rescue operation was unavoidable. The deal has created a huge dilemma for the Suharto economic system where big business is synonymous with the Suharto family and cronies. Allowing an IMF team to oversee developments would affect the interests of the extended Suharto family. The retired 'Berkeley Mafia' guru Widjoyo Nitiasastro was called in by Suharto to preside over the negotiations with the IMF, bypassing the financial trio, Saleh Affif (Coordinating Minister for Economy and Finance), Mar'ie Muhammad (Finance Minister) and Sudradjat Djiwandono (Governor of the Bank Indonesia). Since the crisis erupted in August these three have had to introduce many unpopular measures to protect the rupiah, much to the dislike of big business.

After two weeks of negotiations and confusion about the role of contributions from neighbouring countries, the IMF package was still wrapped in secrecy. But then, it was the turn of Hong Kong stock exchange to take a battering on 23 October, dragging down stocks all over the world and creating the conditions for Suharto's IMF deal.

Unlike countries such as Ghana or Jamaica that have been roughly arm-twisted by the IMF, the terms for Indonesia appear to be more lenient. Soon after the Southeast Asia crisis erupted, a plan was announced by countries in the region to set up an Asian Monetary Fund with a total of US\$100 billion for use in emergencies. From the start, the IMF, that is to say the US, have been dead against the idea because it would undermine IMF hegemony. But globalisation makes strange bedfellows. During the first weeks of the crisis, there was evidence of growing distrust between East Asian countries and the US, but after the Wall Street crash they joined forces, out of a common fear of the spread of the contagion. The APEC Summit in Vancouver will be an occasion for a lot of hot air about saving the global economy from disaster but no one expects the problems to be solved by such a gathering.

Business as usual?

Many financial experts remain sceptical. Despite the huge amounts of money soon to be injected into the Indonesian financial system, the fundamentals of Indonesia's New Order remain unchanged.

The Indonesian government has recently introduced measures in compliance with the IMF rescue plan. The government monopoly on the import of certain food products has been ended. In particular the liberalisation of wheat and soybeans imports is remarkable because it directly affects the interests of the Suharto clan. However, state control over the distribution of wheat has been retained, ensuring the continuance of unbridled profits for the super-mie companies owned by crony, Liem Sioe Liong. Plans to lower tariffs on chemicals and steel have also been announced.

But wasteful, controversial projects like the Timor car of Tommy Suharto and Habibie's aircraft production have been left untouched. Nor is it clear how the problem of 'good governance' - all about a more efficiently-run economy and nothing to do with democratisation - is going to be tackled.

Indonesia's rampant corruption continues to be a fact of life. In recent studies of corruption, Indonesia leads the way among Asian countries. Illegal levies and under-the-

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table payments are structural in Suharto's New Order. It is an accepted part of life for businesses, foreign or domestic, that the only way to get things done is with bribes. On top of this, it is still nigh-on impossible to invest in medium or large projects without involving one of the Suharto sons, daughters or their offspring.

Before the IMF deal was announced but as the rupiah was taking another nose-dive, the government announced the slashing or postponement of 75 mega projects, much to the relief of economic analysts. But after the IMF deal was signed, the government announced that fifteen of these shelved projects would go ahead after all. This includes four toll-road projects in the hands of Tutut Suharto and several energy projects in which members of the Suharto clan are heavily involved. As most economic analysts conclude, while Suharto remains in power, no structural changes can be made.

IMF: solution or problem?

One IMF remedy is the introduction of good governance: an economy run on the basis of credible, transparent and consistent economic policies. At the same time, the IMF wants to get rid of free trade barriers like the state-owned BULOG, the National Logistics Agency.



The IMF was not designed to foster equitable economies, dedicated to redistributing wealth in favour of the poor. The emergence of conglomerates in the mid eighties has not only created a huge gap between the haves and the have-nots but has also stifled the growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

Nor is the IMF designed to focus on sustainable development. The way the Suharto system has squandered Indonesia's wealth and been responsible for mass destruction of the country's natural resources, such as the on-going forest fires, is not a problem for the IMF. The IMF is intent upon retaining Indonesia as an integral part of the global economy, where capital can flow freely and the trade between countries is unrestricted, the very features that have resulted in economic turmoil and misery for the millions. The IMF is not part of the solution; it is part of the problem. *

Social-economic impact of the crisis

Reports that two million workers have been laid off in the construction industry speak volumes. Even before the IMF treatment began, an economic slump gripped the country. The prices of basic needs have risen between 10 and 20 percent. There have been public protests in several cities under the slogan 'bring prices down'.

This is the worst crisis faced by Suharto in his 32-year rule. Some observers predict that it will lead to his downfall. Businessmen and opposition activists agree that social unrest will grow in the coming months.

Some sectors of the economy have already been crippled. The worst hit is the construction industry with 70 per cent of activity at a standstill while the automotive sector has predicted a drop in production of 40 per cent. The service industry has also been hit: restaurants complain of a 20 per cent fall in takings and travel agents have seen business shrink by half. Expensive consumer goods have been hit hard. Elite shopping malls like Plaza Indonesia and Pondok Indah Mall are largely deserted these days. Expensive brands of Italian and French clothing and perfumes are piling up, unsold.

Pawn shops have come back into their own. With high interest rates, people are avoiding the banks. Confidence in the banking system has fallen as people expect more banks to be closed or to amalgamate. People who need cash quickly are turning to the pawnshops whose turnover has risen by 400 per cent; even expensive cars are being pawned these days.

Rumblings at the grass roots level

For many years, criticism and jokes have circulated about the greed of the Suharto family, much of it originating from the affluent middle class, the ones who have benefited directly or indirectly from the unjust system. Things have changed now that the middle class has been hit. Many realise that the end of the Suharto era is nigh. It is impossible to set a new economic direction under the Suharto dynasty which is synonymous with income disparity, lack of transparency in financial matters, nepotism, collusion and corruption.

Strikes have occurred in practically every sector (see separate article) and demonstrations against soaring prices have already occurred. December and January will be crucial months when workers will demand *Ramadhan* and New Year bonuses. The prolonged drought and forest fires are causing a breakdown in food supplies which can only worsen in the coming months. Many crops have failed and tens of thousands of peasants are heading for the cities to find a living. At the same time, many laid-off construction workers have decided to return to their villages.

The IMF agreed to postpone cuts in subsidies for basic goods till after next March when the MPR will appoint Suharto for a seventh term, fearing that earlier cuts could undermine his position. Saving Suharto's skin is part of the unmentionable political agenda of the IMF. But even without the subsidy cuts, prices of essential goods have soared.



Massive lay-offs

The economic slump is expected to continue for months and the prospects for 1998 are bleak. In the most severely hit sector, construction, it is expected that altogether 2.8 million workers will lose their jobs because of the abandonment of projects. Two million casual labourers out of a workforce of 4.3 million are already out of work. As for the textile industry, 39 textile companies in West Java have gone bankrupt with 40,000 textile workers being sacked.

There is no safety net in Indonesia to protect the living standards of sacked workers. Without registration of the unemployed for dole, it is impossible to obtain accurate figures on unemployment. Experts use two criteria: open and disguised unemployment. Open unemployment applies to those who work less than an hour a week while disguised unemployment refers to people who work from 3 to 10 hours a week. The huge informal sector which takes on people for petty, part-time jobs, helps to blur the true level of unemployment.

The official figure for the workforce is around 90 million people; some analysts put open unemployment at around 10 per cent (nine million people) while disguised unemployment is estimated at 70 per cent by some, though others put it lower, at 45 per cent, a whopping 40.5 million.

Forced repatriation

Migration was not an Indonesian tradition but economic hardship has forced many to find work abroad. The Minis-

try of Manpower recently published figures of legal workers abroad. Up to 18 September this year, 924,168 workers had gone abroad, 64 per cent of them women. 408,211 workers went to Malaysia, 319,444 to Saudi Arabia, 86,209 to Singapore, 26,278 to South Korea, 19,630 to the United Arab Emirates and 225,567 to Taiwan.

Indonesians from critically poor regions like Lombok, Flores, Bawean, Madura and East Java have poured into Malaysia. No official figures exist but analysts believe that there are 1.5 million Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, the majority illegal. They have been attracted by much higher wage rates across the Malacca Strait. The economic slump in Malaysia will force many of them to return home.

Some 6,000 illegal Indonesian workers are at present being held in eight immigration lock-ups in Malaysia, waiting to be sent home. The Malaysian authorities insist that the number of illegal Indonesian migrants is huge.

Saudi Arabia has also decided to get tough with foreign workers. Thousands of illegal Indonesian workers have been rounded up and detained. The Indonesian government had to dispatch a fleet of Hercules planes to fly 17,000 illegal workers home. All these people will swell the reserve industrial army. Yet economic hardship and the lack of employment opportunities could force others to go abroad.

White collar demos at the banks

The decision to close sixteen banks threw 9,000 white collar workers out of work. The sudden closure was a shock for workers and depositors alike. Sacked workers demonstrated outside several of the banks, having been told that they would receive only three months salary in compensation. These are people who saw themselves as more privileged, enjoying relatively good salaries and job security.

The Indonesian banking system is relatively new. In 1988, regulations were introduced allowing new banks to be established with an initial capital of only 500 million rupiah. The number of banks quickly grew to 250. Every business established its own house bank but only a dozen or so function as proper banks; the majority were used mainly used to accumulate funds for the mother companies. At least fifty banks are known to be virtually bankrupt because of insufficient assets and because they flout the legal lending limit.

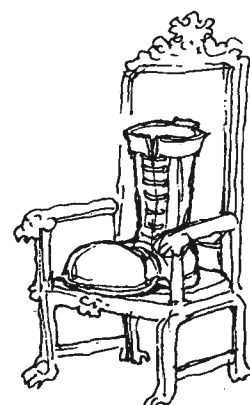
The Suharto Family banking interests

The liquidation of sixteen banks was arguably one of the most bitter experiences in Indonesia's short banking history. Although rumours were circulating that up to fifty banks would be closed, the announcement came as a shock for thousands of small depositors.

Three of the banks whose licences were withdrawn are part-owned by members of the Suharto family. The majority of *Bank Jakarta* shares are owned by Probosutedjo, Suharto's flamboyant half-brother. Another, *Bank Andromeda*, is 25 per cent owned by Bambang Tri, Suharto's second son, with another fifty percent owned by Prayogo Pangestu, a key crony of the First Family. The majority of shares of *Bank Industri* belong to Hashim Djojohadikusumo (brother of Major General Prabowo, a son-in-law of Suharto) while eight percent is owned by Siti Hediati (Titiek Prabowo), Prabowo's wife. Titiek Prabowo also has shares in *Bank Industri*, the house bank of the Ibnu Sutowo family, one of the richest families in Indonesia.

Other banks, *Bank Yama* part owned by Tutut Suharto and *Bank Utama* part owned by Tommy and Sigit Suharto, were saved from the chop at the last moment by other crony-owned banks.

For the first time in the history of the New Order, the government took measures negatively affecting the First Family. Although it was obvious that President Suharto had agreed to the decision announced by Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad, Probosutedjo and Bambang Tri threatened legal action. In an emotional outburst, Bambang Tri accused certain political groups of being behind the decision to sully the family's name and overthrow his father. After returning from a state visit to Kuala Lumpur, Suharto had a private meeting with his son who thereupon withdrew his case. Licking his wounds, the repentant son announced that he would buy up shares in another bank, *Bank Alfa*, continuing his banking affairs under a different name.



The closure of some of their banks has not affected the Family all that much. Their key banking interests are held by Suharto's cousin Sudwikatmono in *Bank Central Asia*, Indonesia's biggest private bank. Sudwikatmono also has a major holding in *Bank Subentra* and *Bank Surya Nusantara*.

Another important house bank of the Suharto dynasty is *Bank Duta*, the shares of which are owned by three foundations run by President Suharto himself, while his oldest daughter, Tutut owns 70 per cent of *Bank Yama*. *Bank Utama* is entirely in the hands of the First Family; 60 per cent is owned by Tommy Suharto with the rest in the hands of the eldest son Sigit Suharto.

Bank reform

The closure of the 16 banks was the first step in the overhaul of the banking system. The central bank, Bank Indonesia, had failed to monitor and supervise the banking system. It even lacks reliable data on the amount of private debts; figures appearing in the business press are far higher than the Bank's figures, at between US\$ 60 and 70 billion.

The next step will be the merging or fusion of banks. Some smaller banks have already announced that they will merge. The two biggest private banks have also reached a deal. The biggest, Bank Central Asia owned by crony Liem Sioe Liong, has bought a substantial block of shares in Bank Danamon, the second biggest.

If the government goes ahead with the categorisation of banks according to size and assets, depositors may abandon the smaller ones in droves, forcing them out of business. *

An eruption of strikes

Much to everyone's surprise, strikes recently occurred in two 'vital' enterprises, IPTN and PT PAL, the aerospace and ship-building companies. A three-day strike at Gudang Garam, Indonesia's biggest cigarette factory, which brought 40,000 workers onto the streets, was also front page news. Labour analysts expect labour unrest to intensify in the coming months.

Even before the recent economic collapse, labour disputes were on the increase. In 1995, 365 strikes were registered; in 1996 the number rose to 901 strikes, nearly three strikes a day. The FSPSI, the government-sponsored trade union federation, predicts that there will be even more strikes in 1997.

Strikes at IPTN and PT PAL

The strikes at the two most prestigious companies *IPTN* and *PT PAL* are probably the best proof of just how bad working conditions are. For years people were led to believe that the workers at these companies were the *creme de la creme* of the Indonesian working class. But it is now clear that working conditions are woeful and salaries have failed to keep up with inflation since the early nineties.

The huge work force, 16,000 at *IPTN* and 4,500 at *PT PAL* decided take action in October after rumours of mass lay-offs had circulated for months. For years, the companies were regarded as sacrosanct. They were Suharto's pet projects, run by his golden boy Rudy Habibie who has been seen by many as Indonesia's Number Two, according to some analysts, the natural successor to Suharto.

The strike at *IPTN* started on 8 October and continued until agreement was reached on 16 October. The climax came on 10 October when more than 12,000 workers assembled in the auditorium for discussions with the boss, Habibie. The atmosphere was tense, with posters and banners hanging on the walls. They read: "High-tech industry with wages of a taufu factory", "Sack the corrupters and increase wages by 200%", "Pay us more or sack us", "Bosses enjoy a good life, workers live in misery". Some called Habibie "A man full of promises".

With heavy protection from the security forces, Habibie confronted the workforce, after ordering the press, including a CNN crew, to leave. Dozens of loyal *IPTN* workers and security guards, several dozen anti-riot police, Brimob (special Police unit), a number of troops from *Paskhasau* (Air Force commando) and the PPRC Rapid Deployment Forces stood between him and the workers, and he was surrounded by Major-General Djamari Chaniago (military commander of the West Java military command), the Police Chief of West Java and retired Major General Sintong Panjaitan, whose military career came to an abrupt end after the Santa Cruz blood bath, now a senior adviser to Habibie's group of companies.

Habibie was jeered at and almost attacked by workers who fought their way through the cordon. The lack of a union was part of the problem but the workers appointed a delegation named *Forum Komunikasi Karyawan*

(Communication Forum for Functionaries.), a name suggested by Habibie himself.

Five days later, Habibie met the workers' delegation. Most of the fourteen demands were met and it was agreed that the lowest paid would get a rise of Rp.150,000 (US\$ 43.00). The rise will be back-dated to October, a major victory for the workers. As things stand at present, conditions at *IPTN* are back to normal.

The PT PAL strike

Two weeks later, workers at the *PT PAL* shipyard in Surabaya went on strike for three days. Like their colleagues in Bandung, the *PT PAL* workers were only prepared to do a deal with the boss himself. While some local journalists managed to sneak in during the strike at *IPTN*, the authorities in Surabaya closed off the entire plant. Dozens of tough marines secured the shipyard from the outside.

The grievances of the workers are the same as at *IPTN*. Wages have not gone up since 1990 although inflation has been around nine per cent a year. Moreover, the workers are deeply distrustful of the management who are paid in dollars and spend most of their time in Jakarta. Habibie said that the directors are appointed by the government, and is nothing to do with the workers. He managed to contain the conflict, using similar methods as at *IPTN*.



'It's time to raise our wages.'

The Gudang Garam dispute

The *Gudang Garam* (GG) clove cigarette is arguably Indonesia's most important and best-known product. Even in remote areas, *Gudang Garam* is a household name. In cities like Amsterdam, London, Sydney or New York, *Gudang Garam* cigarettes are also on sale. For many years GG has been one of the biggest taxpayers in the country, exuding the image of a highly successful business. Owned by the Halim family, it started to grow in size in the sixties and has now become one of the country's largest employers. It is situated in Kediri, a small town in East Java where most citizens earn their livelihood directly or indirectly from the company.

While modern units have been installed for cigarette paper and cigarette filter plants, the clove cigarettes are still manually hand rolled and packed by women. GG also produces other traditional cigarettes made from corn leaves, also manufactured manually. It employs 40,000 workers, making it by far the biggest employer in the region. The company has a reputation of treating the workers benevolently, with good medical provisions and secondary work conditions so the strike came as a big surprise.

Major victory

The strike started on 11 November and continued for three days. The entire workforce halted production and held demonstrations in the town, the biggest in the history of Kediri, clogging the streets. The main demand was for a wage increase of 50 per cent.

The work force refused to talk with the management and insisted on negotiating with Rachman Halim, the eldest of the Halims. The GG management said salaries were already above the regional minimum wage set by the government but the workers argued that wages had not kept up with soaring prices. At first, Rachman Halim refused to raise wages and was only willing to give in to demands relating to secondary working conditions but the workers

pressed ahead with their demands. On the fourth day, Rachman Halim gave in to almost all the demands. Wages will go up, overtime, transport money, food for meals will all be raised. To improve the health and safety conditions, special shoes and helmets will be provided.

GG could become the test case for many companies at a time of soaring prices. It is questionable whether other companies will give in so easily as they are less likely to have the financial resources of this giant enterprise. [See separate article on the social-economic impact of Indonesia's financial crisis.]

Workers fury at Semen Cibinong

The cement factory *Semen Cibinong* (SC) owned by Hashim Djojohadikusumo, in-law of the Suharto Family, is the second biggest cement plant in Indonesia with a capacity of 7.1 million tonnes a year. On 9 November a thousand workers from Unit IV in Narogong, West Java exploded in anger and torched the office of the company security guards and a sentry post. This was in response to an action earlier that day when four workers were accused of theft and handed over to the police.

Elsewhere workers went on the rampage. On 17 November five hundred workers from *PT Daesun Engineering* (DE) destroyed the DE office, a car and four motorbikes parked in front of the office. At the time, the workers were carrying out a project for *Semen Cibinong* but were suddenly told that their contracts had been terminated. Construction workers know that they are in grave danger of losing their jobs and the threat of lay-offs acted like a tinder keg.

Bad working conditions, low wages and the lack of the right to organise is a source of huge frustration for workers. The economic crisis is already creating tensions, a predictable response from people who lack all the basic rights. *

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haustible needs of the two new industries. Indonesia made no secret of the fact that it was determined to become number one in the world in both fields.

Four of the biggest forest conglomerates possess one third of all the existing plantations with a total of 2.2 million hectares. The four are also holders of the largest forest concessions. Bob Hasan owns 2 million ha, Prayogo Pangestu is holder of 5.5 million ha while the other two, the Salim Group and Sinar Mas, hold millions of hectares of concessionary forest land. They are all part of the Suharto gang of cronies in Jakarta.

By the year 2000, plantation land will expand to 5.5 million hectares, largely to satiate the appetites of these forest hooligans. With such a policy, there is every reason to predict that aggressive land clearing will mean that forests fires become an annual ecological event. *

John Vidal: *When the earth caught fire*, The Guardian Weekend, 8 November 1997

Ben Abel: *Interview with Siswo Suntoro Rasandi*, 23 October 1997, kdpnet@igc.org

Down to Earth Special Supplement No. 35: *The 1997 fires: responsibility rests with Suharto*, November 1997

continued from page 24

'Irian Jaya has got about ten times the population of this area has but they're not getting anywhere near as much as they're getting here.' The West Papuan refugee camp at Iowarra in PNG is rated high in the level of food shortage.' [The Australian, 14 November]

Solidarity actions

The *Forum Komunikasi Generasi Muda Irian Jaya*, an organisation of West Papuan youth, asked members of Parliament on 23 October to urge the government to declare the famine in West Papua a natural disaster. The fifty protesters said the government had been tardy in its response. The authorities only seemed willing to handle humanitarian matters if they served the interests of profit.

Students at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) also took up the issue, reminding the authorities that they were obliged under law to guarantee the welfare of all citizens including those in Irian Jaya. The ITB Student Community (*Keluarga Mahasiswa ITB*) started fund-raising to help the victims of the drought in West Papua. In the first action, they raised nearly one million rupiahs. West Papuan students in Yogyakarta have also raised money for relief in West Papua by conducting street theatre. In their first few days of activity, along the city's Malioboro Road, they succeeded in raising more than Rp 12 million. *

Suharto to blame for forest fires

Since June this year vast tracts of tropical forests, peat swamp and farmland have gone up in flames. Seventy million people across six countries have suffered from a thick smoke, creating serious health hazards over the entire Southeast Asian region. More than 100,000 people have sought medical help for respiratory problems.

For President Suharto, what has been described as the world's most serious environmental catastrophe was not a problem. After apologising in September to his neighbours in Singapore and Malaysia whose populations had not seen the sun for months and who were coughing and wheezing from the filthy air, the Indonesian government did nothing to punish those responsible or ameliorate conditions for people in the most severely affected parts of the country. [See also *TAPOL Bulletin* No. 143, October 1997]. Many offers of assistance came from all parts of the world but co-ordination by the Indonesian government was woeful. Being caught up in another disaster, the economic crisis, perhaps the powers that be felt that focusing on the forest fires would only further undermine confidence. Sticking to orders from the top, Indonesian bureaucrats mostly blamed El Nino, insisting that nothing could be done till the rains came.

For several months, large swathes of Kalimantan and Sumatra were blanketed by smog. The tardy response from the government can partly be explained by the fact that Java was little affected. The winds took the filth northwards inflicting the pollution on Sumatra and Kalimantan where the fires were concentrated, Eastern Malaysia, Peninsula Malaysia, Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia.

The international press paid far more attention to the fires than did the Indonesian press. This is easy to explain as the editors were warned at an early stage by the Information Ministry to 'tone down' their reporting. But it was clear to the general public that the forest fires were man-made, the result of unbridled greed by people in power.

Estimate of the damage

Headings in the international media like: "When the earth caught fire" (*The Guardian Weekend*, 8 November 1997), "Southeast Asian smog is tied to politics" (*Wall Street Journal*, 30 September 1997) and "Ecological hooliganism in Central Kalimantan" (*Down to Earth*, No 35, November 1997) tell the whole story.

Environmentalist Chip Barber from the World Resources Institute in Washington summed it up: 'The fires are the underbelly of the free-for-all economy that the World Bank, the IMF and the bankers have underwritten and held up as an example to other developing countries.'

By mid November official figures from the Forestry Department claimed that 165,000 hectares of forest land had been destroyed by fire, including pristine and protected forests. This bears no comparison with figures from other sources. As early as September the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) estimated that at least half a million hec-

tares had been destroyed. The Jakarta daily, *Jakarta Post* used the figure of 800,000 hectares at the time, while WALHI, the Indonesian Environmental Forum came up with the figure of 1.7 million ha.



Suharto and his private wheeler-dealer Bob Hasan. They are both to blame for the ecological catastrophe.

It is too early to assess the medical consequences of the 6-month calamity. In a few years time, it will be possible to know the long-term affects on the elderly, children and babies from prolonged exposure to the thick smog that filled people's lungs and irritated their eyes. During the worst periods, airports were closed, schools and factories were closed, people were advised to stay at home and to limit the use of cars. It was left to the NGO, WALHI, to send out teams of volunteers to distribute masks to people in the worst-affected areas.

The impact on air traffic was severe in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Jambi in South Sumatra was one of the worst hit areas of all. The airport was closed for 75 days from 31 August and prayers were said when it was able to reopen in mid-November. Altogether 3,372 flights were cancelled in Sumatra and Kalimantan. [*Jakarta Post*, 18 November]

The economic costs are more difficult to assess but can only be described as disastrous for people's livelihoods. Many food and commercial crops in areas covered by smog were badly affected, including small vegetable plots and fish ponds. Analysts predict that a food crisis will occur in parts of Sumatra and Kalimantan before the end of

the year. At the height of the disaster, economic activities in eight provinces came to a standstill. Javanese transmigrants began drifting back to Java because of the economic malaise. Industries were unable to function because of the pollution and the tourist sector was hit hard.

Several hundred deaths were caused by the fires, including casualties of three collisions on the high seas and a plane crash in North Sumatra in which 234 died, because of poor visibility. Others died in car accidents while several people died from respiration problems.

Who is to blame?

The international community has correctly pointed the finger at the Indonesian government and more specifically at President Suharto. The genesis of the problem lies in Indonesia's economic priorities as part of the global economy leading to a 'global catastrophe', as WWF described the Indonesian forest fires.

In March this year, the Meteorological Agency warned of the imminent danger of forest fires and famine and in June, the army's intelligence agency, BIA, detected fires but the signs were ignored by the government.

At a time when the fires were having devastating effects on the population (also in neighbouring countries), the Suharto government failed to react. From Malaysia, Australia, the US and Finland and other countries, equipment, aircraft, firemen and experts were flown in. But the Indonesian government showed little enthusiasm in stopping the fires apart from setting up a Disaster Department. There is a Department for the Environment whose minister, Emil Salim, was obviously very upset but it has no resources to take effective action.

There were daily satellite photos identifying the hot spots from which it was easy to pinpoint the culprits. The environmental and forestry ministers were the only ones to draw the correct conclusion, laying the blame at the door of the plantation and logging companies and transmigration contractors who burn forests and scrub as a cheap way to clear land for their projects.

The real decision makers

In a presidential cabinet, the one who decides is the president. Sometimes, in a generous mood, Suharto allows ministers to take minor decisions. In an unprecedented move, at the height of the disaster, Djameludin, the Forestry Minister, published a list of 176 forestry concession companies (plantations, timber estate and transmigration land-clearance companies) who were ordered to tidy up their act. They were given fifteen days to prove that they were not involved in causing the forest fires. In October, 66 licenses issued to some of the companies were revoked, including companies owned by Suharto cronies, but there was no follow-up. No further inquiries were conducted about the companies and there was a black-out on further reporting. Minister Djameludin went abroad for medical treatment and in his absence, everything was 'back to normal'. It is no secret in Indonesia that there are people outside the cabinet like Bob Hasan who virtually control the forestry sector, who are closer to the real power than ministers like Djameludin. It was Hasan who contradicted ministerial assessments, blaming shifting cultivators for starting the fires and 'communists' in the West for stirring up trouble.

ENVIRONMENT



Structural problems

The fires are directly linked to the relentless exploitation of the forests in the last three decades. Forestry products have become the second biggest foreign exchange earner after oil and gas. Suharto is closely linked to the forestry tycoons Hasan and Prayogo Pangestu and others.

Forest exploitation took off at the beginning of Suharto's rule. During the early years of the *Orde Baru*, the country was ruled by a military junta with Suharto at the helm. Dozens of army generals wanted a share in the economic bonanza so vast tracts of forests were divided up between generals, admirals and air marshals. Sixty-four million hectares were shared out in 560 forest concessions. Very soon however, many officers sold their concessions to the budding tycoons. By the early nineties, 30 million hectares was in the hands of twenty or so concession holders.

Forestry exploitation in Indonesia developed in several stages. In the seventies, Indonesia swiftly shot to the top of the league as an exporter of raw logs. During this period, many small companies were able to join the rat race for a quick buck from slashing forests and exporting logs.

In 1980 a new policy was introduced. The exporting of logs was prohibited; now logs had to be processed into plywood for the world market. A number of smaller companies went bankrupt with only a few dozen surviving to set up plywood factories. Very soon Indonesia had a virtual monopoly, with 75 per cent of the global market.

Already, vast swathes of forest land had been destroyed as the quest for more profits from the global market continued. In the meantime, Indonesia's forest conglomerates grew to gigantic proportions, all closely tied to Suharto or his sons and daughters. The group of senior officers had been replaced by the Suharto clique.

Industry and plantations

Then came diversification with the development of new forestry industries. The paper-and-pulp industry was the new target, along with palm oil plantations. Former forest lands were transformed into acacia and eucalyptus plantations grown as raw material for paper-and-pulp factories. Similarly, plantations were set up for palm oil. The development seemed unstoppable and the growth of monopolies was relentless. Forest land was being used to feed the inex-

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Indonesia's best sons on trial

Political trials in Suharto's New Order usually involve the country's best sons and daughters. Currently on trial are the popular Catholic priest Sandyawan S.J., a well-known activist in Tasikmalaya three student activists in Jombang, East Java and the assistant of senior politician Soebadio Sastro-satomo, Buyung Rachmad. The trial of labour leader Muchtar Pakpahan is still underway.

The trial against Father Sandyawan relates to the aftermath of the 27 July riots and is attracting a lot of media attention. Romo Sandy, as he is popularly known, runs the *Institut Sosial Jakarta (ISJ)* which deals with social problems at the grass roots. Romo Sandy has actively supported workers during industrial disputes and local people threatened with land eviction.

The 27 July 1996 event is now recognised as one of the most tragic events of the decade. The head office of the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) in downtown Jakarta was attacked by hired thugs and security officers. Many PDI activists staying in the building were killed and others were arrested and later tried. Mass actions followed in response to the brutal actions of the security forces. A small opposition party, the PRD was accused of instigating the riots and was forced underground.

Three PRD activists on the run and seeking refuge went to Romo Sandy who took them to his elder brother, Benny Sumardi's home. A few days later the military intelligence discovered their hide-out and the house was raided. The three PRD activists have since been tried and given heavy sentences.

The authorities have not explained why the trial of Sandyawan and Sumardi was postponed until after the general elections; it was not until October 1997 that the two brothers were dragged before the court.

Sandyawan, a target

Romo Sandy was bound to clash with the authorities who see him more as a social activist than a clergyman. After the tragic events of 27 July 1996, Romo Sandy formed a team of volunteers to monitor the many disappearances. Members of the team were sent to hospitals and morgues, arousing the ire of the authorities. The situation in Jakarta for many people became particularly tense when Major General Sutiyo, the military commander of Greater Jakarta, issued an order to 'shoot on sight' people regarded as disrupters.

The fact that Romo Sandy gave sanctuary to top suspects was a blessing in disguise for the military and was widely reported in the national press which spiced up the story to incriminate the two brothers. A Catholic priest hiding alleged communist suspects was grist for the mill as stories circulated about the alleged role of the PRD leaders.

The three PRD activists along with their colleagues, the so-called masterminds of the riots, faced a typical *Orde Baru* political trial. Yet after all the hype, masterminding the riots did not appear in the charge-sheet. Even so, two of the men, Budiman Sudjatmiko and Petrus were given long prison sentences.



Romo Sandy with his foster children, former street kids.

Defence on the Internet

Before presenting his defence in court, Romo Sandy issued a four-page statement. This moving document, which was circulated on the Internet, demolishes the political, moral and legal arguments of the authorities, they initially wanted to charge him with 'insulting the President', 'spreading hatred' and 'insulting the authorities' but these charges were dropped. He now faces the charge of 'giving refuge to people guilty of a criminal offence'.

He called his trial a test case for the State of Indonesia. He asked: 'Does the Government and the Law adhere to the universal principle of clergy giving sanctuary to people whose lives are in jeopardy because of a political act?' A priest is merely fulfilling his humanitarian and canonic duty by giving shelter to those whose lives are in danger.

The sessions at the Bekasi court have been attended by many supporters, including a number of nuns.

The Buyung Rachmad trial

Buyung Rachmad is the private secretary of one of Indonesia's foremost senior politicians, Soebadio Sastro-satomo, who published a book, *New Era, New Leadership* earlier this year. Although the author has taken full responsibility for the book, the authorities have chosen not to put him on trial for insulting the President but to try his secretary instead. Buyung has described this as an act of gross political manipulation.

The trial has been stalled for weeks because the court has failed to bring the injured party, President Suharto, to court to testify. Some weeks ago, the presiding judge

agreed to a request from the defendant that the injured party should be summoned to testify. He later announced that he had ordered the prosecutor to write to the State Secretary for a statement clarifying whether the President felt insulted by publication of the book. After it became apparent that testimony from the injured party would not be forthcoming, the defendant announced that he would not attend further sessions until his request had been met. After failing to turn up for two sessions, the prosecutor's office was instructed to use force.

Forced to attend a court hearing at the end of October, he took a vow of silence, refusing to speak until his request had been met. It is not clear how the dispute will be resolved. Clearly, the court is under pressure not to embarrass Suharto who may feel 'insulted' but regards himself as above the law, refusing to comply with the court's wishes.

The Jombang trial

Another travesty of justice is the trial of three student activists in Jombang, East Java who were involved in a solidarity campaign for sacked workers against the management of the *CV Masa Perkasa* shoe company.

On 18 October 1995 **Syamsunar, Romli and Misbachul** organised a march of hundreds of people to the local parliament and the district chief's office. The authorities refused to meet the demonstrators and the march turned into a day of protest. The three were picked on as the ring-leaders and charged under article 154 of the Criminal Code which is known by its Dutch name, the *haatzaai artikelen* (inciting hatred).

The trial has been dragging on for two years because the court has not been able to produce three key witnesses the district chief, the head of the local assembly and the local military commander. The interrogation report identified these three officials as the main targets of the October 1995 protest.

The trial has been repeatedly postponed. Following a postponement because of the elections, it now appears that the three witnesses are unwilling to testify. At a session on 7 October, the prosecution claimed that the three men had important duties to fulfil and were unable to attend in court, much to the annoyance of the defence team. Defence lawyer Buyung Nasution insisted that the three witnesses should respect the court by attending the trial. Judge Bambang Chaniarso shrugged off the complaint, saying that the witnesses were not vital to the case.

Since the trial started, the defendant Syamsunar has got married and become a proud father. The two other defendants are finalising their studies.

The Tasikmalaya trials

Towards the end of 1996, there was much social unrest in various parts of the country. The unrest in Tasikmalaya (West Java) caused extensive damage in the town centre, with shops and departmental stores gutted and looted. [See *TAPOL Bulletin* No. 139, February 1997]. The police force failed to restore order and the military were called in. Altogether 173 people were arrested and now four alleged ring-leaders are on trial.

Abdul Muis, 23, and **Asep Ilyas**, 23, are facing lighter charges, for which the prosecution has demanded four years. The third defendant, **Mimih Haeruman**, at that time chair of the local chapter of *PMII*, a Muslim students' or-

POLITICAL TRIALS



Buyung Rachmad

ganisation, has gone into hiding. He was tried in absentia; the prosecution has demanded twelve years.

The fourth defendant, **Agus Setyana** (also known as Agustiana) is a well-known social activist in the region who has often encountered problems with the authorities. In 1993 he spent eight months in jail for defending evicted peasants. As with most defendants in political trials, Agustiana is an obvious target for the authorities. After the Tasikmalaya riots, he was kidnapped by the army and underwent severe interrogation. He has been in police custody since February 1997. His health has deteriorated since his arrests and at the trial on 4 October he almost fainted and had to be rushed to hospital.

Agustiana is being treated as the heaviest of the Tasikmalaya cases and he stands charged under the anti-subversion law which carries the death sentence. His political activities were closely scrutinised at the trial which is expected to conclude before the end of the year.

Insulting the President

Two people from Tangerang, West Java, are on trial for insulting and discrediting the good name of the President. **Syarifuddin** (23) and **Abdullah** (22) are accused of distributing political pamphlets to a crowd when they were arrested. The pamphlets, according to the prosecution, are full of incitements and insults of the government. The offending document calls for an investigation into the personal wealth of senior officials and the revocation of the five 1985 laws that gag political freedoms.

The trial of Pakpahan

Despite his weak medical condition, the judges decided to go ahead with the trial of labour leader, Muchtar Pakpahan. He has a tumour on his right-lung and has been hospitalised for many months. Pleas from the ICFTU for him to be treated abroad have been refused by the Indonesian authorities.

At a court session on 9 October, Pakpahan collapsed. He collapsed again in court a week later. In the meantime Pakpahan has become Indonesia's most celebrated political prisoner. Both the Canadian and US governments raised their concerns about Muchtar Pakpahan directly with Suharto. [See also box on page 9].

★

US Congress bars use of US weapons in East Timor

The US Congress has voted to block the use of US-supplied weapons in occupied East Timor, placing an unprecedented restriction on US arms sales to Indonesia. Meanwhile, in the UK, the Labour Government refuses to divulge the nature of the many arms contracts licenced since it came to power in May this year.

The Congressional vote came on 12 November, a fitting way to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre. The new legislation, included in the foreign operations section of the 1998 appropriations bill, requires that any contract to sell lethal equipment to Indonesia 'state that the United States expects that the items will not be used in East Timor'. The legislation is expected to deal a heavy blow to the Indonesian regime which has repeatedly stated that it will not accept conditions on weapons sales, particularly conditions tied to its human rights record. Earlier this year, Suharto cancelled a pending F-16 fighter-plane deal because members of Congress were talking about attaching human rights conditions.

Unprecedented

Charles Scheiner of the East Timor Action Network/US described the bill as 'unprecedented' as each time Indonesia signs a deal for US weapons, it will have to agree not to use the arms in East Timor. Moreover, he said, it was a political milestone as it constitutes implicit recognition by Congress that East Timor is distinct from Indonesia.

The provision is contained in Section 571 of the appropriations bill which reads: 'In any agreement for the sale, transfer, or licencing of any lethal equipment or helicopters

for Indonesia entered into by the United States pursuant to the authority of this act or any other Act, the agreement shall state that the United States expects that the items will not be used in East Timor.'

According to the world's leading legal expert on East Timor, Professor Roger Clark, Professor of International Law at Rutgers Law School, 'The key phrase "the US expects that the items will not be used in East Timor" means that the US regards Indonesia as obligated to refrain from using the weapons in East Timor.'

At present the Indonesian army of occupation in East Timor relies heavily on US-supplied weapons. Indeed, from the start, the war was waged almost exclusively with US-manufactured hardware which also played a critical role in the encirclement and annihilation campaign of 1977 - 1979 which caused such devastation, leading to the high death toll in East Timor.

The East Timor weapons ban is the latest in a series of expanding restrictions imposed by Congress on arms sales to Indonesia. Congressional pressure halted a transfer of F-5 fighters in 1993 and, under similar pressure, the State Department introduced a ban on the sale of small arms and crowd control equipment to Indonesia in 1994. The ban has since been expanded to include helicopter-mounted weapons and armoured personnel carriers. [ETAN/US Press Release, 13 November]

UK arms policy takes turn for the worse

Meanwhile, the ethical policy so publicly enunciated by Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has done little to reverse the trend of arms sales to Indonesia. His announcement of arms sales criteria on 28 July came as a bitter disappointment [see *TAPOL Bulletin*, No 143, October 1997] for failing to revoke contracts concluded under the previous government and for giving 'full weight' to the UK's national interests while only requiring the government to 'take into account' respect for human rights.

On 26 September, Robin Cook was quoted in *The Guardian* as saying that the government had blocked three licences for the export of armoured vehicles and sniper rifles to Indonesia, altogether worth around £1 million. The statement, coming on the eve of the Labour Party conference, had the effect of undermining moves to adopt a resolution calling for an embargo on arms sales to Indonesia. However, on the last day of the conference, it became clear that while four (not three) applications had been rejected, eleven had been approved. This information was contained in a letter to Ann Clwyd MP from the Depart-



Special anti-riot unit using US-made M-16 rifles

ment of Trade and Industry. Government ministers refused to disclose the nature of the equipment or the value, which could run into millions of pounds. Robin Cook's failure to mention this cast a deep shadow over the true significance of his policy on arms sales.

Moreover, there were another 44 licence applications pending at the time, with the probability of more applications being made all the time.

Ann Clwyd MP, the most outspoken Labour MP on arms to Indonesia, expressed sadness that the orders had gone ahead. 'The ministry's refusal to disclose details shows the need for a freedom of information act so that the public can be properly informed about the government's decisions.' [*The Guardian*, 9 October]

In October, TAPOL wrote to the Foreign Secretary asking for details about the licences granted and the military equipment involved. He replied on 10 November, saying the government was 'naturally constrained by the need for commercial confidentiality'. He argued that it is 'simply not practicable to publish separately details of each and every licence application'. (We had in fact asked about the licences granted.)

In response to our call for transparency on arms deals, we were simply told that the government would publish an annual report on UK strategic export controls. 'This will set out the state of export controls and their application in line with our manifesto commitment.' This means that we will have to wait till at least mid-1998 to learn anything, nor is it clear that the annual report will make us any the wiser on the arms deals concluded with Indonesia during the Labour Government's first year in power.

The role of big business and Blair

But decisions about arms sales are not left to the Foreign Office, with its high-profile ethical policy. The Department of Trade and Industry has a crucial say in the granting of licences and it is through this channel that the arms manufacturers exert their influence. Margaret Beckett who heads this Department appointed as one of her top advisers Lord Hollis who until he got this job was a member of the Board of Directors of British Aerospace.

It is also apparent that Prime Minister Tony Blair is the one calling the shots on arms sales. It emerged that Robin Cook was reprimanded by the Prime Minister's office for announcing in September that three contracts worth £1 million had been blocked. The Prime Minister's office wrote to the Foreign Secretary Cook telling him 'to moderate his policy of blocking arms sales to countries accused of serious human rights violations'. [*Financial Times*, 3 October] It seems that what the government fears most is that this could damage its relations with the arms manufacturers.

In contrast with the US where Congress wields such control over arms sales, British Members of Parliament can do nothing more than ask parliamentary questions and table Early Day Motions which have no significance beyond registering concern.

'Stop Arming Indonesia' launched in Jakarta

The sixth anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre, 12 November, was marked in Jakarta this year by the launching of the Indonesian translation of *Stop Arming Indonesia*, a book published in 1995 by the European Network

ARMS SALES

Against Arms Trade. The launch, by the pro-democracy organisation, PIJAR, was attended by more than 150 people including diplomats from the British, Spanish and Dutch embassies.

Three people commented on the book. The first to speak was Hermawan Sulistyono, a researcher at LIPI, the Indonesia Council of Sciences, who said that events like the Santa Cruz Massacre and the Tanjung Priok Massacre in September 1994 should never be allowed to occur again. The procedures used on those occasions were based on the Basic Law on Defence of 1982. Speaking about the arms trade and the situation in East Timor, he said the military occupation of the territory should end immediately; besides being a huge waste of money, the occupation was gravely damaging Indonesia's reputation on the international arena. 'If I were president,' said Hermawan, 'I would free East Timor.'

Ratty Supit, a former editor of the journal, *Teknologi Strategi Militer*, said that there was a profound contradiction between the arms sales policy of western states and their stand on human rights. The very countries whose governments speak so forcefully on issues like human rights and peace are the ones that allow their arms manufacturers to bolster human rights abuses in other countries.



The meeting was also addressed by Mariano Lopes who chairs the Malang branch of the East Timorese students' organisation, IMPETTU. Those who sell arms to Indonesia are just as immoral as the forces that use them to attack the people of East Timor and occupy their country. He also criticised Indonesian intellectuals, journalists and historians who have done nothing to condemn the actions of ABRI, the Indonesian armed forces, and who conceal the reality of what is happening in East Timor.

Following the speeches, the banner reading 'Launching Stop Arming Indonesia' was replaced by a banner reading: 'No Arms, No Massacres!' A cultural programme followed during which songs and poems were performed.

Then the lights in the hall were dimmed and dozens of candles were lit. In the darkened hall, a participant rose to read a short story entitled *Learning from History* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. It tells of a history teacher named Afonso who took his pupils to the Santa Cruz Cemetery to pay tribute to those who died there on 12 November 1991. During the reading, a song recorded by the Irish group, U2, *Love from a Short Distance*, was played. The song is about the resistance of the people of East Timor against the foreign invaders.

The meeting ended with songs and poetry presented by young East Timorese which were greeted enthusiastically by the audience. There was a specially warm welcome when they sang the FALINTIL anthem, followed by shouts of 'Viva Timor Leste' from several PIJAR activists present, to which the East Timorese present responded with shouts of 'Long Live Indonesian Democracy'.

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West Papua stricken by famine

Drought, famine and disease have wrought havoc for West Papuans whose country produces phenomenal profits for the Freeport/Rio Tinto copper and gold mine. Hundreds have died from malnourishment and disease, and tens of thousands of people are at risk.

The number of deaths from lack of food has been rising inexorably since June; by early November more than five hundred are known to have died.

According to a missionary report circulated on the Internet in October, much of the island of New Guinea is stricken by drought and famine but the situation in West Papua is the most critical because of the poor transportation infrastructure and low level of government concern.

It is clear that West Papuans are suffering from years of neglect, leaving them with poor transportation and a total absence of roads. The tragedy is that this territory is earning huge profits for Freeport/RTZ, owner of one of the world's richest copper-and-gold mines, with cash pouring into the state coffers and swelling the wealth of Suharto and his crony, Bob Hasan, boss of Nusamba, the company composed of three Suharto-controlled foundations.

Besides gastro-intestinal diseases caused by poor water supply, the main cause of death is lack of food caused by the dry conditions and hard frosts which have killed off the tops of sweet potatoes, causing tubers to wither. Stricken and weakened villagers are suffering from malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, skin diseases and intestinal worms, especially children and babies. There are even reports of an outbreak of cholera in some regions. Conditions have been aggravated by forest fires; thick haze has made the task of reaching remote villages more difficult.

Over 100,000 at risk

Half the population in the region of Puncak Jaya of about 40,000 are at risk, according to district chief, Ruben Ambrauw, while the number at risk in Jayawijaya is 90,000. More than four hundred deaths have occurred in Jayawijaya alone. [*Indonesia Times*, 22 October]

After months of doing nothing to alleviate the consequences of the prolonged drought, the authorities finally started shipping in much needed foodstuffs. However, only one helicopter has been made available by the armed forces, as compared with the six helicopters that were sent to the territory to free the hostages held by the Free Papua Movement, the OPM, in 1996. Links with remote villages are being left to missionary aviation companies, the only ones with the small aircraft to cope.

The district administrator of Jayawijaya, J.B. Wenas has complained of the limited number of aircraft available for relief operations, dwindling aviation fuel and bad visibility caused by the forest fires. Wenas, a retired army officer, has warned that the number of victims could rise unless more intense relief efforts are made soon. He said yam crops, if planted now, would only mature in eight months time. A visiting German environmental expert, Johann Georg Goldammer, warned that the climax of the disaster would come in December or January. [*Kompas*, 19 October]

Famine relief has been hampered by forest fires raging

in Jayawijaya and Puncak Jaya. In October it was reported that 6,217 hectares of forest in the Lorenz National Park, Jayawijaya district, had been destroyed by fires. Forest and ground fires killed one tribesman and severely burned two others when they spread to the village of Lolat and razed scores of houses. [*Indonesia Times*, 22 October]

Villages abandoned

Villagers in three villages in Puncak Jaya district, Tuptut, Jiwot and Agadugume, have abandoned their homes in search of food, following the worst snowfall ever to hit the area, according to Sem Telenggen, village chief of Agadugume. The snow had rotted the crops and livestock had died of hunger. Not all villagers had left however, only those with relatives in nearby villages. Those who remained behind were hunting for wild coconuts in nearby forests. The village chief said that 23 people had died from hunger from August to October.

Aid workers on the PNG side of the border with West Papua say villagers have crossed over to PNG to get a share of the relief supplies. Aid worker Peter Barter said:

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