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OPM wins world recognition

For the first time in thirty years, the Free Papua Movement (OPM) has succeeded in drawing world-wide attention to the struggle of the West Papuan people. Unfortunately it took an act of hostage-taking involving Europeans to achieve this. As we go to press, there are signs that the incident will end peacefully, without any loss of life. The aftermath however could be very bloody.

The kidnapping occurred in the village of Mapunduma in Tiom district, about 125 kms east of Tembagapura, the centre of the Freeport/RTZ copper-and-gold mine which has for years been the major source of friction in the region.

The *Nemang Kawi* unit responsible for the kidnapping is under the command of Kelly Kwalik. For the past twenty years, it has conducted many peaceful operations and acts of sabotage against the mining company's pipelines. Flag-raising is a traditional activity. The flag-raising in Tembagapura on 25 December 1994 prompted a harsh response by the army, leading to many human rights violations. Another flag-raising was planned for 25 December 1995; foreign agencies were invited but the message was ignored.

The 24 hostages (with a six-month old baby) were involved in a research project of the Jakarta Biological Science Club and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to examine local plant life and its uses by the indigenous population. The four British hostages, Bill Oates, Daniel Start, Anna McIvor and Annette van der Kolk, all recently graduated from Cambridge, raised £20,000 to pay for the expedition and won a £3,000 conservation award. The German, Frank Momberg, works for the WWF. The two Dutch are Mark van der Wal, of the WWF, and Martha Klein, who works for UNESCO. Also among the hostages were eight Indonesians and nine West Papuans, including several academics and a local churchman.

The Papuans were soon released. A couple of days later, the Indonesian woman with the baby was also released.

The kidnap group also succeeded in carrying off an SSB radio belonging to a missionary station which was then used to establish contact with church circles in Wamena, to the north. In response to a request from the OPM for Christian missionaries to act as intermediaries, four missionaries, led by Bishop Munninghoff, the Bishop of Jayapura, flew to Mapunduma. After four hours of negotiations with OPM leader, Daniel Kagoya, the intermediaries returned to Wamena with the German hostage, Frank Momberg who had been asked by the OPM to present their demands to the Indonesian authorities.

Military build-up

With negotiations under way, the army deployed three hundred *Kopassus* special commandos and which set up a military base in Wamena. *Kopassus* commander, Brig.General Prabowo Subianto, son-in-law of President Suharto, took command of the operation. Throughout the crisis, the army declared that there would be 'no negotiation with criminals'. The three foreign governments stressed throughout that armed clashes between the troops and the OPM would jeopardise the lives of the hostages.

After several days during which the army continued to

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Upsurge in OPM operations

Since October last year, there has been an upsurge in the level of OPM operations in several regions of West Papua (Irian Jaya). Along with events in the vicinity of the Freeport/RTZ copper-and-gold mine in Tembagapura and Timika and the kidnapping in Mapunduma, the Indonesian armed forces are being stretched to their limit in Indonesia's '26th province'.

If ABRI (the Indonesian armed forces) propaganda is to be believed, the OPM which they persist in calling the 'GPK' or 'security disturbance gangs', is virtually a spent force of no more than two hundred men, few of whom carry firearms. Recent OPM operations give the lie to such claims. An Australian journalist, Ben Bohane, who spent several weeks with the OPM last November and December, has shots of dozens of guerrillas in a single photo. [*The Stone-Age War on Our Doorstep* in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December] True, the vast majority are armed with

The unit operating under Kelly Kwalik, which has captured the headlines recently, has concentrated since the 1970s on attacking the Freeport mine. In an interview with Ben Bohane, Kwalik spoke of their numerous grievances against the company, the forcible removal of mountain people, the pollution, and the failure of the company to employ more than a minimum number of local people. The mountain people would fight to remain in the mountains, he said, and threatened to kill any surveyors who entered their lands. He showed Bohane documents listing, district by district,

43,000 people who had been killed by the military since 1977, and claimed that as many as 2,800 Indonesian soldiers had been killed as a result of OPM actions. [*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December].

Indonesian consulate attacked

In a daring operation by the north-east unit on 27 October, a group of about forty guerrillas attacked the Indonesian Consulate in Vanimo, PNG, about twenty miles from the border with West Papua. Armed with automatic weapons, shotguns, knives and axes, the attackers sprayed the compound with gunfire and raised



The bow and arrow army

nothing more than bows and arrows or spears. Yet they have clearly got the better of Indonesia's well-trained troops, equipped with highly sophisticated weapons. During the hostage crisis, several high-ranking army officers frankly admitted that operating in the jungles of West Papua is beset with difficulties for Indonesian troops.

The OPM consists of perhaps as many as seven units in different parts of the country. Apart from Kelly Kwalik's unit in the south-central region - which carried out the kidnapping of 24 scientific workers - covering the Freeport/RTZ concession area, the two most active units at present are in the north-east region along the border with Papua New Guinea, which is led by Mathius Wenda, and in the south-east region, also bordering on PNG, which is led by Bernard Mawen. Each of these regions cover vast areas of thick, impenetrable jungle. Each unit appears to operate more or less autonomously and, as far as we know, there is no overall OPM command structure.

photo: Ben Bohane

the OPM flag. The Consul-General and other staff were away at the time but those in the building took refuge in the bathroom while the attackers ransacked the building, seized cash and equipment before leaving. After half an hour, the group left Vanimo by road. PNG police who arrived on the scene while the attack was in progress were unable to make any arrests. [*Weekend Australian*, 28-29 October]. Later, two West Papuans from Wamena were arrested in PNG and were due to go on trial for damaging Indonesian property during the raid. [*Post Courier*, 19 December]

The Indonesian Consulate in Vanimo was set up several years ago to establish an Indonesian presence in an area that was inundated with West Papuan refugees during the 1980s. The refugee camps there were the scene of several anti-Indonesian demonstrations after an aborted flag-raising incident in nearby Jayapura (capital of Irian Jaya) and the murder near Jayapura of West Papuan artist, Arnold Ap, in February 1984.

The daring attack took both Indonesian and PNG security forces by surprise and led to renewed efforts by both governments to improve military collaboration to prevent OPM cross-border activities. It is well known that OPM units, both north and south move freely across the Indonesian-PNG border.

In another incident, OPM guerrillas surrounded a group of Indonesian transmigrants from Arso, and captured two teenagers on 22 November. The youngsters were carried off to PNG and have since been held by their kidnappers who are demanding a ransom for their release. The youngsters have written letters to the Indonesian authorities pleading for action to secure their release. Hopefully, their ordeal is soon to end, following mediation by an NGO in Port Moresby.

Military activities in the south

Less than a month later, attention switched to the south, to Waropka, which lies between Kiunga and Tanah Merah. Although ABRI normally imposes a total news blackout on military operations in West Papua, events in the area were such as to force it to produce its own version of what had happened. A clash with the OPM had occurred in November, the army reported, during which an Indonesian soldier was killed and some Indonesian civilians were unaccounted for. ABRI claimed that the OPM had taken thirty people hostage in the village of Ikcan Baru, mostly villagers but also including a couple of Indonesian engineers. According to Indonesian press reports, the OPM attacked the village on 12 November. Later the number of 'hostages' rose to two hundred. In fact, no one had been taken hostage; although several hundred villagers had 'disappeared'. The body of an Indonesian civilian, an engineer doing survey work for the trans-Irian highway, according to the army, was discovered.

The following month, seven hundred villagers, men, women and children were reported to have fled across the border to PNG, north-west of Kiunga, on 9 December, amid reports of heavy fighting between the OPM and the army. [Sydney Morning Herald, 22 December]

According to the OPM, in a message to the Australia-West Papua Association, the clashes were sparked by the presence of survey teams prospecting for oil in the region, for CONOCO, a US-based oil company which holds an exploration concession. An ABRI platoon was reported to be based in Hupkim village, about ten miles from Waropka, to guard the survey team. Unhappy about the presence of the survey team and the troops, local inhabitants asked the OPM to take action. Although it is still difficult to piece together what has been happening, reports of further OPM operations in January of this year suggest that the clashes may have lasted on and off for several months and may be still going on.

The OPM's demands

During the hostage crisis, the OPM called for international attention and support for a series of reasonable demands: they included an appeal to the US government, which facilitated the 1962 New York Agreement, to reconsider the 'plebiscite' of 1969; a call for the Indonesian military presence in West Papua to end; for an end to the transmigration programme and for Freeport McMoRan to stop its socially and environmentally destructive mining exploitation in Tembagapura and Timika. *

Freeport/RTZ 'fights back'

Freeport/RTZ, the mammoth copper-and-gold mine that is devouring the heart of the West Papuan homeland, has been forced to defend itself against a volley of criticisms in West Papua, Indonesia, in the USA and around the world. The hostage crisis in West Papua, so near to the mine's centre in Tembagapura, drew further attention to the company's damaging operations which lie at the core of the dissatisfaction felt by the Amungme and Komoro people.

In November, the company placed three one-page advertisements in the *New York Times* to answer what it called 'outrageously phoney charges' against it. Much of the advertisement was taken up by a statement by Bishop Munninghoff, author of the report on human rights atrocities, that: 'My report is not a report about Freeport and does not contain accusations regarding Freeport.' In a clear reference to the Indonesian environment NGO, WALHI, the company complained that US taxpayer dollars have been used to fund foreign groups which have lobbied the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to end its 25 years of insurance of the mine. Clearly Freeport is still smarting over the failure of its efforts to lobby for WALHI's USAID funding to be stopped.

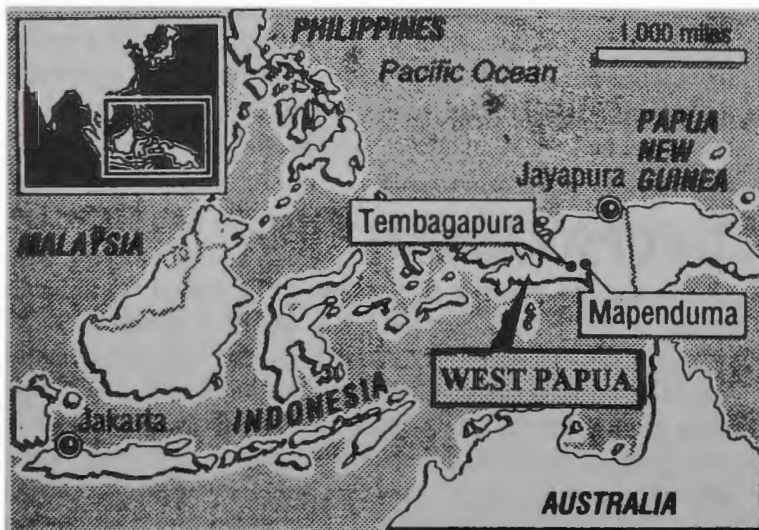
Bishop Munninghoff was later taken to the company's headquarters in Tembagapura to be videoed signing a simi-

lar statement, which was subsequently shown at a press conference in Jakarta.

It is difficult to see what the company has achieved by such heated denials. No one reading the Bishop's report would for a moment conclude that it was a report about Freeport. It was not. But nor did the Bishop, whether speaking voluntarily or at the behest of the company, retract a single word contained in his report which very clearly implicates the company in many of the atrocities documented by him. By mounting such a campaign, the company has only shown how gravely its image has been damaged by all the attention that has been drawn to the atrocities perpetrated in the vicinity of its mine and even on its premises by the Indonesian army whose presence in the region is dedicated to securing the mine against opposition from people whose lands it has occupied and despoiled.

WEST PAPUA

Freeport/RTZ has also sought to prove that the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) exonerated it in its report on the atrocities in Timika. Wrong again! The trouble with the Commission's report was that it did not draw any conclusions about the role of the mining company. The five Indonesian NGOs which were instrumental in making Bishop Munninghoff's report public and submitting it to the Komnas Ham have been highly critical of the Commission for failing to tackle this crucial issue. It was also criticised for precisely this reason by the Amungme Tribal Council [see *TAPOL Bulletin*, No 132] which said: 'For us, the Amungme people, the root cause of the human rights violations is Freeport.'



The Commission seems to be very coy about any suggestion that it should investigate Freeport's role. Following all the kerfuffle about the Bishop's 'denial', the five NGOs renewed their efforts to have Freeport's role investigated. The Komnas HAM response was simply to say that this was not a matter for them; it was for the police to investigate charges of such a nature. The company, by far Indonesia's largest tax-payer, is above reproach, it seems. Let the army take the rap, as they have been doing for years in East Timor, as long as Indonesia's largest and most profitable foreign investor is protected from scrutiny.

Cold War against the NGOs

Jim-Bob Moffett, chairman of the parent company, Freeport McMoRan based in New Orleans is now 'fighting back' in what he describes as a 'new Cold War'. The vice-president of Freeport-Indonesia has said: 'We've put almost all our chips on Irian.' [NRC-Handelsblad, 5 December 1995]

On a visit to the Freeport/RTZ headquarters, Moffett enthused about 'the world's greatest mine': 'This is not a job for us. It's a religion. The NGO situation is something we're going to have to deal with.' Not only is he intent upon 'dealing with' Indonesian NGOs. Moffett lambasted a representative of the World Wide Fund for Nature for what she thought was a confidential briefing in Washington about the company to the US ambassador-designate to Jakarta, Stapleton Roy. [Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 January]

Moffett has been throwing his weight about back home in Texas as well. Under attack from academics and students at the University of Texas in Austin and the Catholic Loyola University in New Orleans, a senior company executive

threatened seven outspoken critics in the US, including professors and journalists, with legal action if they persist in criticising the company. This crude act of intimidation backfired by forcing the hand of UT Chancellor, William Cunningham who had been under pressure for months for pandering to Freeport requests. He decided to resign as director of Freeport-McMoRan because of conflict of interest, after two members of his staff had been threatened by the company.

Ruling the roost in Timika

Freeport/RTZ's role in Timika is indeed all powerful. It is, as the *FEER's* Jakarta correspondent, John McBeth, puts it, 'effectively the administrator of the region', as well as being by far the largest employer. By all accounts, there is virtually no civil administration in Timika. 'All you have is Freeport and the army,' said company executive, Paul Murphy. Its aircraft, operated by a company called *Airfast*, seems now to have taken over the dominant position in transportation throughout Irian Jaya from MAF, the Catholic mission aviation company. It is under contract to the government to drop supplies to the military, although it claims that it 'draws the line' at carrying armed troops. But the *FEER* correspondent 'watched recently as a group of officers climbed into one of the firm's chartered helicopters.' A Freeport executive who also saw the event later said it was difficult to turn down the army's requests.' [FEER, 25 January] Under the terms of the contract, the company provides barracks for the poorly-housed troops, and supplies them with food and transportation. Embarrassed by recent exposures about the army using company vehicles, Freeport recently decided to hive off half its pool of vehicles and 'donate' it to the army. [NRC-Handelsblad, 20 December 1995]

Freeport/RTZ has its own security force which, according to Indonesian regulations, falls under the responsibility of Indonesian police force. Company security officers in blue uniforms have the words *Polda* (*polisi daerah* or district police) on their epaulets and wear caps bearing the words *PT Freeport Indonesia*. [NRC, 20 December]

The Amungme Council aptly summed up the situation by saying that 'local government and the army are wrapped up in the company'. This being the case, it is futile for Freeport and its giant associate, RTZ, to disclaim responsibility for what happens in Timika.

RTZ takes on Survival International

In the UK, it is the world's leading mining corporation, RTZ which is having to 'deal with' the NGOs. The company which bought nearly twelve per cent of Freeport-Indonesia shares in 1995 and is set to buy another huge stake in the company, was infuriated by an Urgent Action issued by the London-based Survival International last November and issued a point-by-point refutation. At one point it states: 'the population within (Freeport's) Project Area has grown from 400 to 50,000. Timika's thriving business sector has made it the fastest growing population centre in Irian Jaya.' Strange that the company finds this something to be proud of. Timika has been swamped by 20,000 transmigrants from Java and other islands, plus 20,000 from Sulawesi who arrived under their own steam. [FEER, 25 January] This has further exacerbated the dissatisfaction of the local tribal people. *

Embassy occupations continue

In January there were yet more embassy occupations by East Timorese, into the Australian and New Zealand embassies. The two who entered the Australian embassy were both women, the first time women have been involved in these actions. They and the five men who went into the New Zealand embassy left for Portugal after a few days.

High drama at the Dutch embassy

As reported in *TAPOL Bulletin* No 132 [December 1995], several dozen East Timorese and Indonesian activists gained entry into the Dutch and Russian embassies on 7 December, the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. The Dutch authorities were later severely criticised by Portugal for the way they collaborated with the security forces to force all the activists to leave the embassy.

An East Timorese named Puto and an Indonesian named Bebek who entered the Dutch embassy have since described at length, in an interview published by *AKSI News Service*, what happened. Here is a summary of what they said:

* * *

We planned long in advance to conduct a major action on 7 December; we wanted to show that there are Indonesians who support the East Timorese. We split up into groups and entered the embassy from several directions.

Bebek was injured in the stomach when he scaled the fence and his foot got caught between the bars. Several others were also wounded. 'We told the embassy staff we had three demands: the withdrawal of all Indonesian troops from East Timor, the release of all East Timorese political prisoners and self-determination via a referendum.'

Security forces outside prevented journalists from getting near, seizing their cameras.. The two said how wonderful it felt to be able to demonstrate freely within sight of soldiers and the police.

In response to their demand for negotiations, human rights activist, Poncke Princen, and a UN representative came to the embassy. Early on, people carrying pro-integration slogans began to demonstrate outside the embassy and as things turned nasty, the ambassador advised those inside to go to the back of the compound. This was when the mob outside forced their way in, shouted abuse and threw stones at the people inside. The security forces outside did nothing to stop them; indeed they encouraged them.

While negotiations were going on inside, a physical attack began, wit-

nessed by a UN representative. The ambassador had a severe gash in the head and three other embassy staff were injured. The two were convinced that the pro-integration group was organised by the military. 'We saw some stepping up on the shoulders of troops to get over the fence.'

[These gangs are from a well-known organisation of thugs called *Pemuda Pancasila* or Pancasila Youth, known for conducting protection rackets. In the past few months, the organisation has been used by the military to stage counter-demonstrations, not only against the East Timorese but also against workers demonstrating, against the Sri-Bintang Pamungkas trial and other pro-democracy events. This is proving to be a convenient way for the regime to intimidate activists without having to call out the troops.]

Embassy staff response

At first embassy personnel said they supported the struggle of the East Timorese people and opposed integration but later gave in to pressure from the regime. On the third day of the occupation, while negotiations were going on inside, security personnel suddenly entered the embassy. It was then, said Puto, that we requested political asylum. Princen, who was there at the time, agreed. But as soon as he left, the security forces began to force us out; they actually came into the room where the talks were underway. Altogether there were about two hundred inside the building with the police inside the building and the soldiers in the yard.



Indonesians and East Timorese inside the Russian Embassy

They were not dragged out, the two men said, but forced out, pushed from behind, at the very moment we were requesting asylum. The ambassador said that this was not the time to seek asylum and they had to get out. All 26 of the Timorese wanted asylum as well as asking that the security of their Indonesian comrades be safeguarded. The ambassador insisted that they would have to leave, either in a good way or with physical force. Princen, who was there at the time, told them that the ambassador had the right to have them forcibly removed, and promised that he would transmit their asylum request to the International Red Cross.

As the security forces entered the room accompanied by the ambassador, Princen left. The ambassador said we had to go 'so we had to leave', said Puto. No one seemed to care that some of the activists were ill and some had been injured during the pro-integration attack.

In the hands of the police

When they left the embassy buses were waiting outside to take them to the South Jakarta police command. They were finger-printed, photographed and interrogated separately by large groups of men. One was kicked by a policeman wearing heavy boots, another had to take off his trousers after which his genitals were burned with a cigarette lighter.

The interrogators asked the East Timorese who had brought them to Jakarta, who had given them money, who co-ordinated the action and so on. The Indonesians were asked about the organisations they belonged to. Puto said he was interrogated non-stop for 24 hours, without food or drink, by a large number of people, from the police, from the army and from the military intelligence, BIA.

They were at the police command on 10 December, Human Rights Day, and held a demonstration to mark the occasion by singing songs of struggle, reciting poetry and giving speeches. When they left the police station they were told buses would take them home but when they saw a military truck waiting for them, they fled, some of them pursued by intelligence agents on motorbikes. Puto jumped into a river to escape.

Asked how they evaluated their action, Puto said:

It was very important in terms of our campaign and in terms of its international impact. This is the first time we held an action with Indonesian activists who love democracy. We are proud to have had such a successful action on the twentieth anniversary of the invasion... and are happy about the international attention, especially because people overseas now know that there are Indonesians who realise how rotten the regime is.

Bebek added: *We also judge it a success because we have heard that our action prompted solidarity actions in a number of countries.*

Embassy alert

In advance of the UN-sponsored talks in London, foreign embassies in Jakarta went on alert for more incursions. Police told them that up to a hundred Timorese might try to invade embassy premises to coincide with the talks.

We are battenning down the hatches,' one Western diplomat said. Most embassies have tightened security by erecting barbed wire on fences, while Indonesian security forces increased their presence outside the embassies.

Since September last year, altogether fifty East Timorese have been granted refuge in Portugal after embassy invasions into the Dutch (twice), British, Japanese, French (twice), Australian and New Zealand embassies. [Reuter, 16 January]

Seven arrested outside Japanese embassy

Seven East Timorese men were arrested by police on 12 January outside the Japanese embassy in Jakarta. An Amnesty International Urgent Action of 18 January states that they were probably suspected of wanting to take refuge in the embassy. Six days later, their whereabouts were not known. According to Amnesty, another eight Timorese were arrested on the same day in another district of Jakarta. Five of the group are thought to have made an attempt on 6 January to enter the Bulgarian embassy.

These arrests again confirm the duplicity of Foreign Minister Ali Alatas who has repeatedly stated that the Indonesian authorities will do nothing to prevent East Timorese from leaving the country.

Protest from New Zealand

The New Zealand Government has made an official complaint to the Indonesian Government about the intrusion into its Jakarta embassy by a man, thought to be an Indonesian soldier, when five East Timorese were in the embassy seeking asylum. One of the asylum-seekers sustained a broken arm which may have been happened during the physical attack against them by this intruder. A head injury requiring a stitch was certainly inflicted by this man.

The intruder, dressed in plain clothes, rushed into the embassy compound and was ordered off the premises; however before he left, a violent attack occurred. Foreign Minister, Mr McKinnon, told the Indonesians that the entry was 'quite unacceptable'. [New Zealand Herald, 19 January]



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PET/BCET group meets Gama

The day before the talks, a joint delegation of Parliamentarians for East Timor and the British Coalition for East Timor met Foreign Minister Gama to present a Memorandum on the talks. Participating from PET were Lord Avebury (Liberal-Democrat), Viscount Brentford (Conservative) and Ann Clwyd MP (Labour). Participating from BCET were Catherine Scott, editor of the CIIR publication, *Timor Link*, and Carmel Budiardjo of TAPOL.

A request to meet Foreign Minister Alatas was turned down. *

Talks make little headway

The seventh round of UN-sponsored talks between the Portuguese and Indonesian foreign ministers on the question of East Timor on 16 January produced a Communiqué that is almost word for word the same as the one published after the talks in July 1995.

For the first time the talks were held in London. The present round commenced in late 1992, after a breakdown in the wake of the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991. Prior to that, UN-sponsored talks had been under way for years, on the basis of UN General Assembly resolution 37/30 of 1982 giving the Secretary-General a mandate to consult 'with all parties directly concerned'.

The London talks Communiqué 'welcomed the visit of UN High Commissioner, Jose Ayala-Lasso to Indonesia and East Timor' [see below], said that the Ministers had continued their discussions on substantive issues 'without prejudice to their respective positions of principle regarding the status of East Timor', endorsed the UN Secretary-General's intentions to facilitate another meeting of the All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue which will take place in Austria in March, and agreed to meet again on 29 June this year in Geneva.

The stumbling-block to any further progress is clearly Indonesia's refusal to countenance any move to consult the people of East Timor on the status of the territory, claiming that their wishes were ascertained in 1976. This position is unacceptable both to Portugal and the UN. At a press conference after the talks, journalists from the UK, Portugal and other countries, gave Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas a rough ride. It happened to be the fifth anniversary of the war against Iraq to liberate Kuwait so they asked why the UN failed to act on the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in the way it responded to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The recently-appointed Assistant Secretary-General, Yasushi Akashi, was not prepared to answer.

Jaime Gama wants to visit Xanana

On the eve of the London talks, Foreign Minister Jaime Gama announced that he would like to go to Indonesia in order to visit the jailed resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao. He made a formal request to his counterpart during the talks but Alatas blocked this by arguing that a ministerial visit to Jakarta would have to be part of the normalisation of relations between the two countries. Clearly that is not on the cards until progress has been made on the substantive issue.

In an interview with *Jakarta Post* [12 January], Jaime Gama said his Government would like to see the trilateral talks expanded to include East Timorese representatives.

'We cannot only conduct a dialogue through the mediation of the UN. We also have to listen to the people there. The people exist, they have their own opinions and choices. Why not have them as participants?'

He went on to say that these talks should include some people in Indonesian jails, including the resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao.

Intra-Timorese talks, a brighter hope?

Certainly the most important breakthrough in the talks was achieved in 1995, when it was decided that the UN would facilitate 'dialogue' between East Timorese from inside and outside, including pro- and anti-integration representatives. At the first round last June, there were rumblings of discontent among the East Timorese from inside about the situation in East Timor. Much to the annoyance of Jakarta, the final Communiqué made reference to the 1982 UN resolution.

The ministerial decision in January 1995 said that these talks would not 'address the political status of East Timor' and in London, Alatas insisted that this must be strictly adhered to, but Portuguese Foreign Minister, Jaime Gama told the press conference that this does not exclude discussing political issues; even cultural issues have a political dimension, he said. The March meeting may well produce decisions that could begin to break the deadlock between the ministers, so undermining Jakarta's insistence that the East Timorese talks should in no way constitute a parallel negotiating track.

Given the diplomatic impasse and the deteriorating human rights situation in East Timor, attention is turning to the possibility of raising the issue again at the UN General Assembly. But even if the Assembly were to give the Secretary-General a new mandate, there is no guarantee that implementation will be any better than now.

It seems to suit Indonesia's purposes to let the diplomatic tango continue *ad infinitum*. For Portugal, the crucial question is to win support from major western powers which enjoy close ties with the Suharto regime. Some progress was made in this direction at the Madrid Summit of the European Union in December 1995. For the first time, East Timor was mentioned in the Final Communiqué. The Summit took place at a time of tension because of the Dutch embassy occupation earlier that month [see separate time].

The paragraph in the Communiqué reads:

The European Council, having particularly in mind the latest events in Jakarta related to the growing tension in East Timor, expresses its support for all actions that might lead to a just, global and internationally acceptable solution to this question, and for the ongoing mediation efforts by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The next step for the EU will be to adopt a 'common position' on East Timor which is expected to happen in the next month or two. The EU position on East Timor could be further enhanced when Ireland takes over the presidency in July.

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Gripping radio documentary on East Timor

The twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion in East Timor has been commemorated in many ways. To mark the occasion, the Indonesian section of Radio Nederland produced an excellent four-part programme on the history of East Timor since 1974. It will help Indonesian-language listeners to fill huge gaps in their knowledge about the war in East Timor.

The Indonesian Section of Radio Nederland (ISRN) was threatened with closure two years ago but a stream of protests from Indonesia and the Netherlands secured its continuation. ISRN has a loyal audience. The political community in Indonesia rely on it, especially on politically sensitive issues which get no airing in the muzzled Indonesian press.

East Timor has been covered consistently for many years. ISRN reporter A. Santoso is one of the few Indonesians who has developed a clear understanding of the contemporary history of East Timor. His radio documentary made together with colleague Yanti Mualim covers 4 topics: the invasion, the tragedy which deals with several mass killings, ABRI (the Indonesian armed forces) and an analysis of the resistance.

All four sections dig deep into the tragedy of the last twenty years. This documentary takes on particular significance because the Timor war has been a closely guarded secret as far as the Indonesian public is concerned. Through interviews with a wide variety of people, living witnesses or academics, ISRN has made an invaluable contribution to improving the knowledge and understanding of its listeners.

In the section on the invasion, there are interviews with retired Lt. General Dading Kalbuadi, a colonel at the time, who was in command of the Indonesian troops invading from across the border in West Timor; Guilherme Goncalves who was appointed governor of East Timor by the Indonesians in 1976; Xavier do Amaral, first president of Fretilin, Lemos Pires, the last Portuguese governor of East Timor and many others. Several myths are shattered: the Balibo declaration and the so-called Indonesian volunteers who launched the invasion.

At least as useful is the second part that analyses several of the better known bloodbaths perpetrated by Indonesian soldiers. This commences with interviews of some Timorese who survived the worst period of killings between 1977 and 1979. Domingos Seixas, long-time Timorese political prisoner in Jakarta, Luis Maria Lopes and Antonio Ramos, both survivors of that period often nicknamed 'the Matebian generation', give their own accounts of the period. Governor Guilherme Goncalves also explains how he pleaded in vain with Dili military commander Colonel Sahala Rajugukguk not to kill innocent people who had come down from the mountains.

Three massacres are vividly documented, Kraras in August '83, the Tacitolu killing fields and the Santa Cruz massacre of November 1991. Eye witnesses speak about their terrible experiences. The killing of the five Australian journalists is also documented, told through the recollections of Guilherme Goncalves, Xavier do Amaral and Dad-

ing Kalbuadi. The conclusion is clear: they were captured and murdered by the Indonesian army.

Indonesian war resister speaks

The third section is very revealing indeed and well worth translating into other languages. Two Indonesian lieutenant-colonels tell their stories. Lt. Colonel Abdul Muis strongly believed in what he was doing in East Timor while Lt Colonel Subianto refused his assignment. Speaking quite candidly, war resister Subianto describes how ABRI was sent to East Timor to 'grab power' after East Timor had already been liberated. He also explains how during Portuguese colonialism people were left alone while ABRI is continuously having clashes with the population.

The story of Sergeant Eddy, who joined Falintil ranks from 1979 to 1982 is also very interesting. He was first wounded in battle and treated. After recovering, he joined the Falintil company under Xanana Gusmao. After his arrest by the Indonesian army, he was tried by a military court, sentenced to four years and discharged from the army.

New brochure

Peacemaking Initiatives for East Timor



Report on a Conference on East Timor held at the
Australian National University,
10-12 July 1995

Order from: East Timor talks Campaign
124 Napier St., Fitzroy Vic 3065, Australia

The eighties are described as a lost opportunity. The brief cease fire period after negotiations between Xanana Gusmão and Colonel Purwanto was deliberately disrupted by General Benny Murdani, the newly appointed ABRI chief in Jakarta.

Lt.Colonel Subianto says that he believes that tens of thousands have lost their lives as victims of ABRI while a woman, Mrs Sudarmi, complains bitterly that ABRI never gave a proper account of what happened to her young brother, an Indonesian soldier, who never returned from the battle field. The war in East Timor was indeed kept secret from the Indonesian public.

Professor Ben Anderson, Indonesia and East Timor specialist at Cornell University, describes ABRI brutalities as a continuum, starting in 1965 and through to the mass killings in Aceh and Lampung. He also shows how, in recent times, military regimes have stumbled or fallen because of military adventures. East Timor has become a growing source of conflict between Suharto and the generals.

The section on the resistance shows how Indonesia has in fact lost the war by losing the hearts and minds of the

Timorese. The same Lt. Colonel Subianto explains how ABRI sees all East Timorese as communists. ABRI's policy, the so-called security approach, has backfired completely. Efforts to Indonesianise the Timorese has been counter-productive. The documentary ends with a positive interview with Wilson, an Indonesian activist. Together with Timorese students, Indonesian activists including Wilson took part in the occupation of the Russian and Dutch embassy in Jakarta on 7 December. He speaks about the close links between the struggle of the Indonesian pro-democracy movement and East Timorese independence fighters.

Hopefully, this important documentary will soon appear in the form of a pamphlet which should circulate widely in Indonesia. English and Portuguese translations would also be very useful. *

The economy: the widening gap and rice shortages

January is a time for assessments about the economy. The outcome is predictable: free market champions depict the Indonesian economy as being healthy and robust but more serious economists disagree. But one thing is certain: enthusiasm about the Indonesian economy is rare, even the staunchest defenders of Suharto's economy acknowledge the existence of serious weaknesses.

The basic problem of the economy can be described as prosperity for the few and exclusion for the many, as stated by Jeffrey Winters, a US political economist. Thirty years of Orde Baru has created fabulous wealth for some and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. For many years the Indonesian economy was described by most analysts as a success story, not least the World Bank who used Indonesia as the example of how the 'poor rose out of poverty'. The Bretton Woods multilateral organisations, the IMF and the World Bank have caused so many disasters in the last fifty years that Indonesia has become the yardstick against which the performance of other countries should be judged. But in Indonesia, economic analysts and even cabinet ministers are more cautious.

Planning Minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita, for example, acknowledges the growing gap between the conglomerates and the people. PDBI, an economic think-tank in Jakarta, has calculated that the top ten Indonesian conglomerates (controlling 300 companies between them) account for almost 50 per cent of the gross national product.

Macro-economic worries

Suharto's annual budget speech expressed concern about an overheated economy, high inflation and a burgeoning current account deficit. For several years inflation has been between 9 and 10 per cent while the current account deficit rose from US\$3.1 billion (1.9 per cent of GDP) in 1994 to some US\$8.8 billion in 1995. The primary reasons for the growing deficit is the uncontrolled growth of credit and de

teriorating external imbalances. It means that a policy of tighter credit will be a major objective.

This is also valid in neighbouring countries like Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines but in an economy with a population of 200 million the social consequences are far greater. Neighbouring countries have lower inflation and a tighter fiscal policy. Indonesia's per capita income is the lowest in the region. In the second half of 1995, there were major social outbursts in different cities. Suharto's New Year speech expressed concern about this.

The 1996 budget is certainly ambitious, aiming for high growth targeted at 16.1 per cent, while curbing the huge rise in imports. The government hopes to increase revenue by 24 per cent by improving the collection of income and value-added taxes.

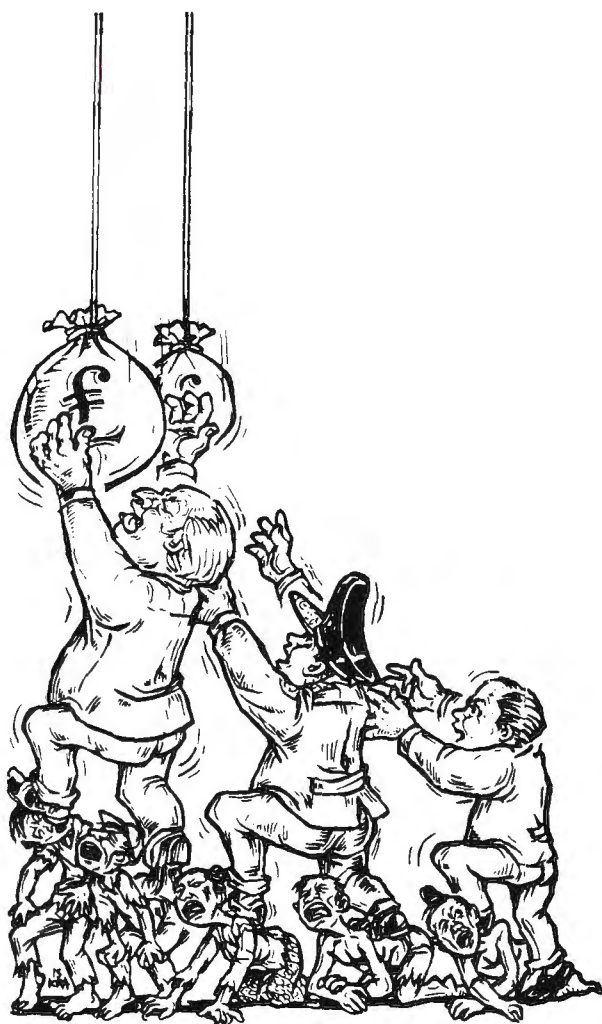
Other ambitious plans are to enhance non-oil export revenues. Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhamad announced a huge negative trade balance figure: non-oil imports grew by 32.4 per cent in the first nine months of 1995 while consumer goods imports went up by 70.9 per cent. Non-oil exports remained sluggish.

Rampant corruption

In the discussion about the economy, the question of corruption is often ignored. Although the level of corruption is hard to measure accurately, Indonesia stands at the top of the league. *Transparency International* in Germany and *Fortune Magazine* rank Indonesia as number one among corrupt nations. The rate of corruption figure is put by most

Indonesian economists at 30 per cent, including inefficiency and waste, which includes corruption and inefficiency within the bureaucracy, going down to village level.

It is more difficult to assess the level of corruption at the top. The authoritarian nature of the regime makes it virtually impossible to check what goes on among those in power who use state resources for personal gain. Some of Indonesia's top conglomerates, including those owned by Suharto's sons and daughters, have become gigantic, which is another form of corruption known as nepotism. Prominent social scientist Prof. Loekman Soetrisno recently warned that Indonesia was in danger of becoming a 'vampire state' (original, English) in which the state apparatus empties the state coffers. He drew a parallel with South Korea where two ex-Presidents (both generals) are on trial for their misdeeds.



External debt

Another worry is that Indonesia's external debt now exceeds US\$ 100 billion; Indonesia stands together with Brazil and Mexico as the world's three debt billionaires. Indonesia must pay back around US\$ 8 billion a year, consisting of principal and interest in roughly the same amounts. The debt servicing ratio will remain at 29-30 per cent of export receipts in the near future, according to Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad. The minister said he would scrutinise private borrowing to ensure more prudent foreign borrowing and a healthier balance of payments. Indonesia still urgently

needs multilateral and bilateral of US\$ 5 billion aid annually through the donor consortium CGI to keep the economy afloat, which only worsens the debt trap.

In a comparison between South Korea and Indonesia, Professor Winters writes that in 1960 the GNP per capita ratio was 1:1, in 1984 the ratio changed to 4:1 and in 1992 to 10:1 in favour of the Koreans. [Jeffrey A. Winters, *Suharto's Indonesia: Prosperity and Freedom for the Few*, Current History, December 1995]. He argues that South Korea achieved much more with far fewer resources. Between 1974 and 1990 South Korea received US\$8.7 billion external aid and took roughly a decade to produce rapid growth. In the same period, Indonesia received a staggering \$166.5 billion with a much more meagre performance. It has not brought prosperity for the many and the projected level of GNP per capita of US\$ 1,000 by 1996 is far from being achieved.

Soaring foreign investments

1995 was a bumper year for foreign investments. Foreign direct investment approvals (FDIs) reached US\$ 39 billion, an increase of 68 per cent over 1994. Domestic investments also went up by 31 per cent over the year before. It should be noted though that realisation of approved investments is relatively low. In 1994 only 52 per cent of approved FDIs were realised, increasing to 55 per cent in 1995.

The reason is the high rate of interest. While average world rates stand at around 8 or 9 per cent, in Indonesia the rate is 19 or 20 per cent. The other stumbling block is the 'high cost economy', another name for red tape, inefficiency and corruption. Minister for Investments Sanyoto Sas-trowardoyo is cautiously optimistic about the flow of investments in 1996. At the same time he warns about the shortage of investments on a global scale. The globalisation of the economy also means cut-throat competition from low-wage countries like Vietnam and China. [On UK-RI economic relations, see *Alatas does the rounds in London*.]

Serious rice shortages

A decade ago President Suharto proudly announced the achievement of *swa-sembada beras* (self-supporting in rice). In 1993 rice production fell; it fell again in 1994 by 3.2 per cent and 1995 was another disastrous year. In 1994 Indonesia had to import 2.4 million tonnes of rice and a similar figure is expected for 1995. This not only bears down heavily on state finances; it is becoming increasingly difficult to find large rice quantities in the world market. Rice shortages in China, the Philippines, North Korea, Bangladesh and Japan will create a serious global rice shortage in the near future.

Indonesia's rice problems are partly caused by natural calamities, in particular long draughts in the last three years. But other factors, like the growing population and conversion of land for industrial sites, are serious structural problems. Between 1983-1993, Java, the most densely populated island (also the most industrialised island), lost an estimated one million ha of rice fields.

But the centralised command-economics has also created structural problems in particular for rice-growing peasants. Rice production and distribution is state controlled which means that buying and selling is at fixed prices. Last year, when for the third year in succession rice shortages were evident, somebody had to be blamed. The Minister for

Food and Co-operatives Ibrahim Hassan was the scapegoat. Suharto removed him as head of *BULOG*, the state rice-marketing monopoly. In the eighties and early nineties *BULOG* was run by ret'd Lt. General Bustanil Arifin, part of the Suharto family and notoriously corrupt. It became more attractive for the rural population to grow vegetables or flowers for the growing middle class in the cities. The landless peasants are being further marginalised and driven to the cities for low-paid manufacturing jobs or to become workers in the growing plantation economy schemes.

Kalimantan's conversion to rice

Hugely overpopulated Java is still Indonesia's main rice producer. It produces 62 per cent of the country's total rice output. Rapid industrialisation has gobbled up land used for rice production and rice shortages have become serious, now that more people eat rice than ever before. The average Indonesian consumes 137 kg rice a year by contrast with an average in Japan of 60 kg. In addition, people who used to eat corn, sago or cassava as staple are switching to rice.

In Central Kalimantan, 1 million ha of land, former forest

ECONOMICS

land, is to be converted into rice fields and other food crops. Some 750,000 ha will be for rice and the rest for fruit, vegetables and cash crop plantations. This is roughly equivalent to the amount of land lost to food production in Java in the past decade. Eight departments are involved, including agriculture, forestry, transmigration, land affairs and public works. The project was launched in January with an initial 6,000 ha of land for 2,000 transmigrant families.

Initial capital of US\$250 million will come from the Reforestation Fund, a fund which is increasingly being used for anything but reforestation. Mega projects usually create mega problems. Kalimantan soil is not suitable for rice growing and the yield will be much below the average in Java. Irrigation will also be huge and extremely costly. To work the fields, 800,000 transmigrants are to be re-settled in the next few years, adding to the nightmare of this unviable project. *

Alatas does the rounds in London

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas extended his visit to London for the talks on East Timor by several days in order to meet a number of British ministers. He met Baroness Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, and Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine. A dinner for him was hosted by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Ian Lang. He also had a meeting with the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook.

His visit came at a time when Britain's commercial interests in Indonesia are growing by leaps and bounds. In 1994, British Trade Minister Richard Needham, who was a frequent visitor to Indonesia during the two years he held the portfolio, proclaimed that his target was for Britain to become the leading foreign investor in Indonesia. It sounded unrealistic at the time but the target is now close to being realised.

In 1995, the UK led the field in foreign investments in Indonesia, making investment commitments of \$6.32 billion. In second place was Japan which was way behind with \$3.79 billion. This took the UK to second place in the cumulative investments since 1967, with a total of \$20.72 billion, behind Japan's total of \$27.11 billion. [*Jakarta Post*, 28 December]

What is remarkable about British investments is that the projects are on average much larger and more capital intensive than projects from other countries. The \$20.72 billion committed since 1967 is for 178 projects as compared with 788 projects committed by Japanese investors worth \$27.11 billion. Overall, foreign investment is far more capital intensive than domestic investment, absorbing on average 87,277 workers a year which is paltry as compared with the annual increase of 2.5 million in the Indonesian labour force.

Britain under the Tories has shown a great eagerness to cash in on the so-called 'miracle' Tiger economics of the Far East. This orientation is expected to continue under a Labour government after the next election. Labour leader,

Tony Blair, made a point of delivering his first major statement on economic policy during a visit to Singapore in January.

Indonesia clearly sees Britain, its leading arms supplier, as its leading commercial partner in Europe. No wonder that Britain is Jakarta's foremost advocate in the councils of the European Union and is doing everything it can to resist Portuguese moves to restrict EU economic ties with ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, until such time as the question of East Timor is resolved. Certainly, Alatas will have had plenty to talk about with British ministers during his visit to London. *

continued from front page

threaten military action, insisting that there would be no negotiations, two of the missionaries returned to Mapunduma to continue talks with Kayoga. Two days later, more talks took place and the missionaries found one of the Indonesian hostages waiting to greet them, the husband of the woman who had been released earlier. From then on, it was clear that the remaining hostages would soon be released, as long as the army refrained from using brute force.

For the first time ever, West Papua became a centre of media attention, with journalists descending on the territory from Indonesia and around the world. This turned the kidnap into a serious embarrassment for the army, which was determined to end the crisis fast. Hence the threats of military action. Yet apart from resorting to bombing raids, it was difficult to see how the army could 'rescue' the hostages. Even commandos would find the thick jungle heavy going.

Preventing a bloody aftermath

Although the hostage crisis is likely to end peacefully, the fear is that troops now poised to strike will take their revenge, hitting out not so much at the OPM forces who are capable of slipping through the net but at villages which are suspected of supporting the armed struggle.

Street children in Indonesia

Street children may not be armed and organised as many resistance groups in Indonesia, but like the latter, their numbers are growing. They too remain a section of the constitutive diversity of Indonesia, which is actively denied a place in the government endorsed unity.

There is no official government category of 'street children' so there are no specific policies informing actions taken regarding them. Neither are they classified as 'neglected children' (*'anak terlantar'*) who are eligible for State benefits.

These groups of children are instead classified, together with transvestites, prostitutes, scavengers, beggars, the poor, the homeless and thieves as *'gelandangan'*. This term translates directly as 'vagabond, homeless, drifter' but is used as a convenient tidy-up term for those perceived as the patriarchs of non-productivity.

As such they are branded abnormal, morally corrupt, out of control and a threat both to themselves and society at large. This makes them objects of the government's aptly-named 'security approach' which consists of 'clean up' and 'raids', carried out by the Department of Social Welfare and *'tibum'* or 'public order', a special task force to secure just that.

As violators of social order they are removed and placed in special institutions, more commonly understood as being 'thrown away' (*'dibuang'*). There they are controlled, given skills, as well as 'mental training'. After this exclusion, they are reintegrated into society by being returned to their natal villages or families, from which they have generally run in the first place!

Street children, like other *'gelandangan'* also, it seems, have the option of transmigration. In practice though, this institutionalisation is considered the ultimate punishment. As such it is more regularly used as a threat to frighten children off the streets. Generally they are arrested on imprecise grounds such as 'loitering' and then made to do chores such as mopping up office floors. They are often humiliated by being made to wash naked in the rain. They are often intimidated with the likes of guns being held to their heads or being forced to sign promises like, 'if I am found on the streets again, I want to be thrown out to sea'. They are nearly always beaten up at some stage of the ordeal, before being released. Obviously, this achieves little in solving the problem.

But exactly what is the problem? To what extent does this group and their lifestyle comprise a real threat? Or are they unacceptable because their very existence threatens the image of Indonesia and Indonesian citizens that the government so energetically disseminates both nationally and internationally?

The government certainly revealed their image preoccupation by dramatically intensifying the 'security approach' through implementation of 'Operation Cleansing' in the run-

up to the APEC Summit in Jakarta in November 1994. This affected government critics and labour activists as well as socially marginal groups such as the street children.

Development is actively promulgated by the New Order government and there are strenuous efforts to foster appropriate images of the family, parents and children. These are incessant themes in public and commercial television broadcasting and advertising. The ideal image of children is explicit in the National Curriculum. They are presented as passive, malleable objects, to be shaped appropriately in order to carry out their function, in the process of development.

Street children on the other hand are highly independent and capable individuals. They have generally spent minimal time in formal education, live separately from their families and are employed in the informal sector. They refuse to play their officially endorsed role as 'potential human resources'. Is it useful therefore to compare them to the numerous labour activists, who are similarly refusing to passively accept the terms and conditions of development, dictated by the government?

None of this is to deny that street children do frequently commit petty crimes and no doubt do threaten others in this way. Through glue-sniffing and prostitution, they are also a threat to themselves. To propose that they pose a threat to national security seems distinctly precarious though. Even if this is not the case, various NGOs have provided far more successful approaches to the issues, based on relationships of mutual trust and respect with the children.

Although successful negotiations with the police at a national meeting of street children in July 1995 in Jakarta has apparently resulted in less heavy-handed handling of them, the battle for the rights of these children is far from over. According to NGOs with a long history of working with street children, it is not failings on the part of the children which prevent them from reintegrating into society. The biggest barrier is the institutionalised discrimination, through which they are legally denied official citizenship, in the form of an identity card or *'KTP'*. Without this, they do not officially exist. They cannot receive schooling, medical care, get married, have a home, a job or a burial - yet no one is prepared to take responsibility for this contentious issue.

Meanwhile, solidarity both among the dedicated NGOs working with street children and among street children themselves is growing, as part of a broader, growing intolerance and impatience with the New Order government's narrow and homogeneous definition of what and who is socially and cultural acceptable. *

Rumblings at the top presage instability

Thirty years rule is quite an achievement. The first two decades of authoritarian rule went fairly smoothly for Suharto with the armed forces united behind him. Things are more complicated now. 1995 will not be fondly remembered by Suharto. He has had several fits of anger. His rule has been challenged and the ageing dictator has had to act in ways never before contemplated, such as re-shuffling and sacking cabinet ministers. His Christmas speech in Mojokerto was also revealing.

Stability was always the buzz word for Suharto's rule and for almost three decades, successive cabinets were well-oiled machines with Suharto at top and ministers functioning as his assistants. They were either military or technocrats. The only political orientation was corporatism expressed through the political machine called Golkar. The power pyramid was clear and solid.

Times have changed and political and economic conditions have become more complex. Suharto's present cabinet contains few military but is packed with a new generation of technocrats and people usually described as technologists. President Suharto has injected fresh blood into the cabinet, based on loyalty to him or people who represent one or other political grouping. The technocrats are divided into the World Bank/IMF cronies and the more independent or nationalistic ministers, while the technologists are often lumped together under the leadership of Rudy Habibie, the powerful Minister of Technology. The technologists all belong to ICMI, the Muslim Association of Intellectuals.

A different power pyramid

The power pyramid has now changed. There are three political pillars, Suharto, the ICMI and ABRI, the armed forces. Officially Golkar is still the ruling party but many of the battles at the top take place outside Golkar, in particular the conflicts between ICMI and ABRI which have intensified. ICMI's ascent has meant decline for ABRI. More ICMI ministers mean less posts for ABRI people.

Another way to view the cabinet is the relationship between cabinet ministers and the president. It is apparent that some ministers function more autonomously than others. Some young technocrats function as professionals in their department and determine policy based on professional standards. This can contradict the wishes of the president or others minister who take decisions based on other considerations. Such complexities have given the ministers slightly more leeway to make decisions. Before, cabinet sessions were nothing but a monologue of directives to ministers. Now, the ageing dictator has to consult with his ministers.

All this has not enhanced the cabinet's cohesion. Cabinet meetings are less frequent; Suharto often consults with his ministers privately. The end result: ministers often disagree with each other, power struggles are more open and ministers have become more vulnerable to public criticism.

The sacking of Billy Yoedono

Early in December, in an unprecedented step, Suharto sacked Trade Minister Satrio 'Billy' Yoedono. The Pittsburgh and New York-trained economist was known to be honest, down-to-earth and diligent. Better known as an aca-

demic, his appointment as Trade Minister in 1993 came as a big surprise. Since he was sacked, analysts have tried to identify his cardinal sins. Some say he has been scapegoated for the flagging non-oil export figures, others say it has to do with his conflicts with Bob Hasan, the timber tycoon. Businessmen regarded Billy as rather unapproachable, in other words immune to bribery. Billy Yoedono was a cautious minister who tried to protect small business against conglomerates. He was also less co-operative with his APEC colleagues on the speed for establishing a free market zone.



Suharto's political gamble with ICMI

President Suharto softened the blow by creating a new Ministry for Industry and Trade, fusing Billy's function with the Minister for Industry, while Billy may soon go to Paris as Indonesian ambassador.

The Haryanto affair

Much more spectacular than the Yoedono sacking was the case of Transport Minister Haryanto Dhanutirto which began to take on the proportions of a Watergate scandal. Leaked secret documents intended for the president revealed corruption in the Transport Department on a huge scale, amounting to 9 billion rupiah. The documents came from Suharto's personal office, from the *Irjenbang* [Inspector-General of Development] office which reports to the president on all government projects down to village level. It

functions as the 'eyes and ears' of the president. Because of the secret nature of its reporting, *Irijenbang* is rarely in the news. The present head is retired Major-General Kentot Harseno, a military officer with a dazzling array of posts behind him. He was once an adjutant of Suharto, served for two years as commander in East Timor and from 1990 till 1993 held the prestigious position of military commander in Jakarta.

Kentot's document to President Suharto was hard hitting. It accused the Transport Minister of organising and collecting unlawful levies. The affair was soon in the headlines and Haryanto's affluent lifestyle became public knowledge. His nickname, Baron van Lembang, became the topic of the day. Several demonstrations were held in front of his Department demanding his resignation. Kentot had a private talk with President Suharto and then with Vice-President Try Sutrisno. In Haryanto's own words, he has accepted responsibility for five per cent of the charges. President Suharto advised him to carry out introspection. Haryanto was allowed to keep his job and by presidential fiat the case was declared 'closed'.

ICMI against the rest

The affairs of the two ministers throws the spotlight on growing conflicts at the top. Both Billy Yoedono and Haryanto Dhanutirto are ICMI stalwarts. The rise of ICMI has meant decline for other power groups, notably ABRI. Army bosses have often shown their disdain for the Habibie group.

Another group which has lost political clout is the *priyayis*, the social layer that used to fill the upper reaches of the bureaucracy. In the wave of new political groups [see *TAPOL Bulletin* No 132, December 1996], the *priyayis* can be tracked down in the *PNI*, *YKPK*, and *PSCMI*, all preparing themselves for the post-Suharto power struggle. ICMI is the obvious rival. In particular *YKPK* has quickly shown its presence, bringing former army generals, academics and politicians together.

ICMI's share of positions in the cabinet is quite impressive. Its congress in December reflected this when half of Suharto's cabinet joined its central board. ICMI has also penetrated deeply into the top echelons of the bureaucracy. After only five years, *ICMI* possesses a booming daily *Republika*, a quality political weekly *Ummat* and other smaller publications. The Muslim bank, Bank Muamalat was founded by ICMI and other business enterprises have become part of the network. The joke doing the rounds in Jakarta is: 'It is not the state co-opting ICMI but ICMI co-opting the state'. In many ways ICMI has become the expression of a growing Muslim middle class. Never before in the fifty years independence has a Muslim political group achieved so much influence in state power. ICMI's chair is often mentioned as the next vice-president or even as Suharto's heir.

Suharto's alliance with ICMI is quite a gamble. It has created much turmoil at the top which now involves Suharto's closest aides. The State Secretary Moerdiono, responsible for running Suharto's personal office, is principally responsible for Jakarta's Watergate. The whole Haryanto affair could end in an Moerdiono-Habibie clash.

The old political structures of the New Order are malfunctioning, even crumbling. New political groups have appeared, making political life more pluralistic and colourful.

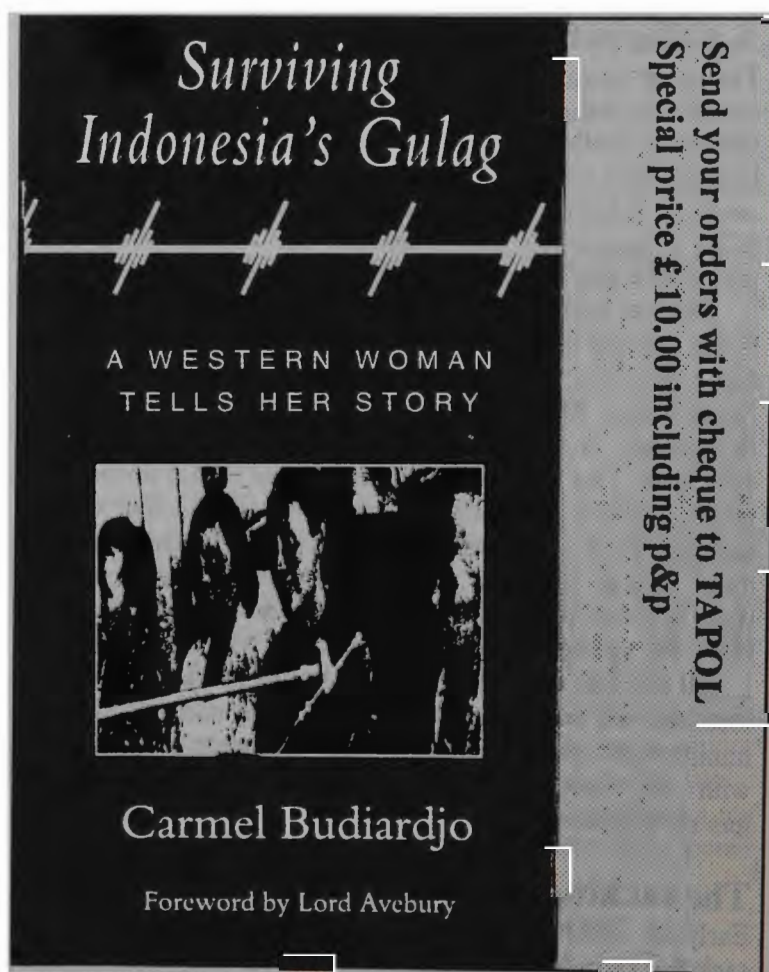
The succession battles will open new political avenues. Most political structures will turn into a Jurassic Park.

Suharto's tightrope walk

Suharto has alienated many former allies but his new alliance with ICMI is not stable. ICMI functions more as a political pressure group than a political party. It is still a big question mark whether ICMI is Suharto's natural ally. There are different outlooks within ICMI: from Suharto loyalists to those wanting better representation of Islam in the state machinery. Several ICMI leaders originate from the NGO community of the seventies and eighties and have kept their commitment to an egalitarian and just society.

Life has not become easier for Suharto. The political structures he built in the seventies and eighties are not functioning properly. The political parties PDI and PPP which were meant to be like wallflowers show increasing signs of becoming part of the opposition. His own party, Golkar, is top-heavy and very much disliked by the young generation. Last but not least, the wealth of the Suharto dynasty is more and more openly criticised.

Criticism of the First Family is widespread. Even in the affluent areas of Menteng, Kebayoran Baru and Pondok Indah, the main topic is the greed of the Family. Three days before Christmas Suharto felt the need to respond. Addressing a crowd in Mojokerto, a small town in East Java, he stressed his humble background, emphasising that modesty has been the guideline for his presidency. He also came to the defence of his wife's image, often nicknamed 'Ten Per Cent'. In 1980 when criticism from the army mounted, Suharto made a similar speech. In 1980 he showed anger, fifteen years later he showed resignation. Ageing is a natural process and Suharto seems to have lost his political skills, cunning and agility. *



SBSI activists harassed

The independent trade union SBSI has reported mistreatment of its members by government officials and military to Komnas HAM, the National Human Rights Commission. Ever since the union came into being in 1992 it has been harassed and intimidated by the authorities.

Led by SBSI Chair Muchtar Pakpahan, a delegation of 15 people went to complain to the National Human Rights Commission. They reported four violations by the authorities. The first was the disbanding of a training course for SBSI members in Sibolangit, North Sumatra on 22 November 1995. The military alleged that the course constitute a threat to public order and security. About 30 participants were taken in for questioning. A few days later another course was disbanded in Medan. SBSI chair Muchtar Pakpahan who attended the course was taken to police headquarters and questioned for ten hours.



'It's time to raise our wages'

The Regional Military Commander Major-General Sedaryanto has since banned all the union's activities in the region. The general described SBSI tactics as war-like and typical of the PKI, the banned Communist Party. The independent union SBSI is determined to continue to organise cadre courses for workers to empower them with basic knowledge of their labour rights and ways to negotiate with company bosses. The authorities allege that the courses include tactics to mobilise the masses for strikes and demonstrations.

Electric shock and other harassments

Some of the SBSI leaders have been mistreated by the police. SBSI has filed complaints about two SBSI members who were arrested by the police and given electric shocks. The two activists, Raswan, chair of the SBSI chapter in Tangerang, and Eliasa Budianto, chair of the SBSI chapter in Central Jakarta, were arrested for their involvement in labour strikes in Tangerang and Bekasi.

In a more recent case, a woman worker Roliati Harefa, vice-chair of the SBSI Binjai chapter, is also thought to have been ill-treated. She went to the police station in Binjai, North Sumatra on 30 December 1995 to file a complaint against her superiors at the timber company where she works. Roliati claims that she was assaulted twice by the supervisor following her complaint that she had been unfairly dismissed. She was not allowed home and was arrested and taken to police headquarters. A week later she was taken to the notorious Tanjung Gusta Prison in Medan but after four days she was sent back to police headquarters. The authorities are holding Roliati in detention to 'persuade' her to drop her charges against the company supervisor. The Medan chapter of LBH has taken up her case.

North Sumatra is the region where SBSI has its strongest base, which is why reprisals against the SBSI from the authorities have been most severe. It is risky to be openly identified as an SBSI member. To support the ban of SBSI activities issued by Major-General Sedaryanto, 149 company owners from Medan and Deli-Serdang gathered at the local military headquarters to pledge that they would not allow SBSI activities in their factories. This unprecedented demonstration on 9 December was also supported by the officially-recognised trade union SPSI and the para-military organisation *Pemuda Pancasila*.

International gathering stopped

On 12 December the authorities in Jakarta halted a seminar organised by the SBSI and the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) for security reasons. The seminar titled: "The Right to Organise in the History of the Indonesian Republic" was held to mark International Human Rights Day and was addressed by people like Sunardi, chair of *GRM* (*Gerakan Rakyat Marhaen*, Marhaen People's Front), Mrs. Supeni chair of *PNI* (*Persatuan Nasional Indonesia*, Indonesian National Unity) and Muchtar Pakpahan, SBSI chair. In the audience were a representative from the Australian Embassy and an AAFLI representative. Sukmawati Sukarno, daughter of Indonesia's first president, also turned up. The seminar was held in the tiny SBSI office.

The police stopped the meeting for security reasons. A small crowd of people had gathered outside the meeting shouting: 'Disperse this meeting', 'ban the SBSI' and 'burn down the SBSI office'. The small crowd of 10 men claimed to be members of SPSI, the officially recognised union. The police said that the participants might become victims of a 'riot' and stopped the meeting 'in the name of the law'. In a spirit of compromise, Muchtar Pakpahan agreed to disperse the meeting but politely asked the security officers to leave

the premises. The police officers refused to leave and instead unplugged the cable from the sound system.

Public gatherings and demonstrations are often countered these days by so-called spontaneous counter demonstrations. Tough looking types, often recognised as members of the para-military youth organisation *Pemuda Pancasila*, have even appeared in the courtroom to harass Sri Bintang Pamungkas [see separate item] and his supporters.

Letters confiscated

The SBSI delegation also filed complaints to the Komnas HAM on matters like tapping their phone over the past three years and a suspiciously erratic mail delivery. Muchtar Pakpahan says that he has evidence that the authorities have seized letters the union was expecting from labour unions in several parts of the world.

SBSI has achieved international recognition. Despite the extreme difficulties it has functioning as an independent union, SBSI activists have maintained their presence. The authorities have adjusted their strategy accordingly. Instead of a straight forward ban, SBSI has been consistently harassed. This has hampered its growth and at times it has seemed as if the union was close to collapse but the grave situation on the labour front and the determination of a handful of SBSI leaders has kept the union going.

Big strikes in Central Java

December was again a hectic month in many parts of Indonesia. In Central Java as thousands of workers in different cities laid down their tools to voice their demands.

One big strike occurred before Christmas at the huge textile company *PT Sri Rejeki Isman Tekstil (Sritex)* in Solo. This garment manufacturer, one of the largest in Asia, employing 12,000 workers, mostly women, has often been the scene of labour conflict. In 1993 the entire workforce went on strike. The latest action was supported by more than half of the workforce.

The recent strike lasted two days, with workers on the night and morning shifts joining in. They assembled in front of the factory and later marched to the local assembly. The main complaint was that the official minimum wage was not being paid by the management. The other complaint was sick pay, which the *Sritex* bosses have apparently never heard of. When workers are ill, they are paid nothing. Another grievance was the food allowance which was deducted from the salary. According to government regulations at present, the minimum wage does not include basics like food allowances.

The action had swift results and the management gave in to the demands. But the security forces were not so accommodating and arrested a few dozen people who took part in the actions. The new trade union *PPBI* (Centre of Indonesian Workers' Struggle) and other organisations like *SMID* participated in the action of the *Sritex* workers. The authorities then alleged that the action had been manipulated and planned by people outside the workforce.

Strike at kretek factory

A few days before Christmas thousands of workers from the clove cigarette [*kretek*] company *Jambu Bol* went on strike because they had not received their annual New Year

allowance in full. The workers were particularly angry that the official union had reached an agreement with the management to accept 75 per cent of the sum usually given. The workers went to the office of the official union *SPSI* to voice their grievances. On the way, about 500 workers from other *kretek* factories like *Pompa* and *Gentong Gotri* joined the demonstration with the same grievance. *SPSI* is a caricature of a trade union and usually functions as an extension of the company's interests.

Political dimension of strikes

Strikes have become a daily feature in Indonesia and the local press covers them extensively. In the last two years a number of NGOs and pro-democracy groups have become involved in labour affairs, leading the security authorities to claim that the workers are being (mis)used for political purposes. The head of the Manpower Department of Central Java H.R. Djijanto, has claimed that 40 per cent of strikes are political while the rest are 'genuine'. His criterion for a strike being genuine is rather arbitrary. As long as a strike is about 'normative' demands (e.g. wage demands) it is regarded as tolerable but 'if it is misused for political reasons, it becomes dangerous'. In a country with such limited basic rights like freedom of expression and freedom to organise, almost any activity can be identified by the authorities as 'political'.

In East Java alone, there were 195 strikes in 1995. According to Munir, chair of LBH-Surabaya, labour unrest is bound to increase in 1996. Two strikes in East Java have caught the national headlines: the case of *CV Maska Perkasa* [see below] and the protracted struggle of the workers at *PT Multi Manao Indonesia* [see also *TAPOL Bulletin* nos. 131 and 132].

Three students accused

The major action by workers at the shoe company *CV Maska Perkasa* in Jombang, East Java [see *TAPOL Bulletin* no. 132] is becoming a particularly nasty affair. The general public in Jombang support the plight of the workers and set up a solidarity committee called *KSBM*. On 18 October about 3,000 workers and members of the general public held

PARTNERS IN REPRESSION:

The reality of British aid to Indonesia

Paul Barber



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PARTNERS IN REPRESSION: The reality of British aid to Indonesia I

a long march in Jombang to the local assembly. The security forces forcibly broke up the gathering. Eleven people were interrogated by the police and by late December the Jombang police had summoned three students as suspects. The three students, active members of KSBM, Romli, Syamsunar and Misbach, are charged with organising the march and violating article 207, 316 of the criminal code. The students will be defended by lawyers from Jakarta, Surabaya, Malang and Yogyakarta.

In the meantime nothing has changed for the workers at CV Maska Perkasa. On 13 October they were sent home by the management and have so far received only 50 per cent of their wages. On 24 December, pending a decision of the court, all payments were stopped. On 9 January about 650 workers went on the streets again to demand their rights. The march was peaceful and this time the security forces left the demonstrators alone.

Minimum wages go up

In April 1996, at the start of the new financial year, the official minimum wage will go up. Minister of Manpower Abdul Latief has specified that the regional minimum wage (UMR) consists of the basic wage only and excludes allow-

ances. In reality many employers include all kind of allowances in the wage package which is the source of many conflicts. The UMR varies from region to region. In Batam, for example, the region with the highest UMR, it will go up to 7,350 rupiah (US\$3.20) while in Yogyakarta it will be fixed at 3,200 rupiah (US\$1.39). The increases average 10.63 per cent. Muchtar Pakpahan, SBSI chair, welcomed the decision but said it was far from enough. *'We believe this is a good moment to increase the wage even though it is barely sufficient to meet basic needs and not sufficient for a decent life'*. SBSI has campaigned since late 1994 to raise the average minimum wage to 7,000 rupiah (US\$3.04).

The Indonesian economy is often described by free market proponents as an 'emerging market'. Growth figures are robust, around 7 per cent, but Indonesian workers have hardly enjoyed the benefits. Their prosperity has hardly improved; minimum wage increases have been clawed back by the 10 per cent inflation rate. It is agreed by all analysts that these woeful conditions are due to the weakness of the trade union movement, which is harassed and intimidated on a daily basis. *

Sri-Bintang trial descends to farce

The prosecution in the trial of former Member of Parliament Sri-Bintang has had problems producing reliable witnesses. Meanwhile, he lost his case against President Suharto about his dismissal from Parliament but won his case against the Attorney-General's travel ban.

The prosecution's case against former Member of Parliament, Sri-Bintang Pamungkas has run into trouble because of the shaky testimonies of witnesses. Four prosecution witnesses, all journalists, were dismissed by the presiding-judge who deemed their evidence 'irrelevant' and 'a waste of time'. The judge also lambasted the prosecutor for using as evidence a cassette recording of Sri-Bintang's speech in Germany which was scarcely audible and for wasting the court's time trying to find the appropriate place on the cassette.

The case focuses on a lecture given by Pamungkas at the Technology College of the University of Berlin at the invitation of the Indonesian students association in Germany. He is charged with insulting the Head of State for allegedly comparing Suharto to Sukarno, Indonesia's first president who both 'behaved like dictators'. He faces a sentence of up to six years.

The four journalists who were dismissed were part of the President's entourage during his visit to Hanover and Dresden. None had attended the lecture and could only testify about meeting up with the accused on other occasions in Germany. The prosecutor was reprimanded for presenting these useless witnesses.

As for what Sri-Bintang said or did not say about dictators, several hours were spent over a dispute about the meaning of the word and whether dictators who came to power by peaceful means were more benign than those who used force.

Several prosecution witnesses, Indonesian students who attended the lecture, were caught out by defence lawyers for

being unable to explain the context in which Bintang's alleged remark was made. One even admitted under questioning that he only became aware of the remark after reading about it on the internet.

The defence team also called several Indonesian students who were present at the lecture to testify. From their evidence, it is clear that the remark was made not during the lecture but during the question-and-answer session. The phrase was used by someone in the audience which Sri-Bintang repeated before giving his reply. It was at this point that the prosecutor wanted to play the tape, with farcical consequences.

Sri-Bintang to sue Indonesian envoy

Sri-Bintang is not a man to allow anyone to spread lies about him. He has announced that he will initiate legal proceedings against Hartono M., the Indonesian ambassador in Bonn, for informing a German MP by letter that during his Berlin lecture 'he proposed the possibility of revolution in Indonesia'.

Perhaps in all the confusion about what Sri-Bintang has been saying, it is best to quote remarks he made in an interview with the AJI publication, *Suara Independen* [No. 5, October-November 1995]

As 1998 approaches, we want a new president. We have had enough of Suharto. Our new political party is being prepared for the post-Suharto period. The opposition needs to prepare a platform for a new type of political, economic, social and cultural development. *

AJI's first national congress

*The newly established independent journalists' organisation, AJI, convened its first national congress in Yogyakarta in October 1995. The meeting took place in a spirit of optimism despite the fact that three AJI activists had been sentenced a month earlier for publishing and disseminating the association's journal, *Independen*.*

'Though storms may rage, the show must go on', writes *Suara Independen* in its report of the historic two-day meeting.

One major result was a decision to wage a struggle to improve the welfare of journalists. The statutes were amended to include this new task, which means that AJI [*Aliansi Journalis Independen*] now assumes the character of a trade union. This is of great significance, given the weak position of journalists these days in confronting the press barons.

The congress was attended by about eighty people including journalists from the mass media, university press activists, NGOs and several experts on media affairs. Several foreign press attaches were also present.

One speaker, Atma Kusumah, Director of LPDS, a leading authority on the Indonesian press, advised the organisation to soften its tone so as to be able to recruit more members. Another speaker, the well-known columnist, Ariel Heryanto, said that in the coming period, journalists will have more problems confronting the interests of the press barons than confronting the state.

The Congress elected a new Presidium chaired by Santoso, with Satrio Arismunandar as general secretary. It also drafted a working programme for 1995-1997 and agreed on a strategy for struggle.

Bearing in mind the emergency conditions under which the organisation exists at present, it was not possible for the Congress to set up a working administration. It continues to come under attack from the Information Ministry, the officially-sponsored journalists organisation, PWI, and the security forces, whilst its members still face the threat of arrest and dismissal, all of which requires constant attention.

The Congress also agreed to establish close ties with university press activists, NGOs and other groups in Indonesia working for democracy and freedom of the press.

Suara Independen No 5, October-November 1995

300 US journalists call for the release of Ahmad Taufik

Three hundred journalists and media executives in the US, including some of the best known names in the profession, have signed a petition addressed to the Indonesian Government calling for the immediate release of AJI leader, Ahmad Taufik, now serving a three-year sentence for 'subjecting the government to hostility, hatred and contempt'.

The petition was organised by the New York-based *Committee to Protect Journalists* (CPJ) whose Executive Director, William Orme, said that it was part of a campaign

to press for the immediate release of Taufik and his colleagues, Eko Maryadi and Danang Wardoyo. 'The AJI deserves the support of journalists around the world for their courageous attempts to defend press freedom in Indonesia and throughout East Asia.'

The signatories include Peter Arnett, Carl Bernstein, Phil Donahue, Katherine Graham, Anthony Lewis, Dan Rather, William Safire, Howard Stringer and Ted Turner. It was delivered to the Indonesian embassy in Washington on 19 January.



You, smart aleck..!

Suara Pembaruan 31.XII.95

UNESCO convenes PWI-AJI meeting

Assistant General Secretary of UNESCO, Hendrikas Yushkiavitchus, took the unusual step of convening a meeting at the agency's office in Paris between representatives of the officially-sponsored journalists' union PWI and the independent journalists' association, AJI.

The purpose of the meeting, held on 29 September, was to seek a degree of understanding between the two organisations. In his opening remarks, Yushkiavitchus said that differences between journalists were quite common but it was essential to avoid victimisation of members of the profession because of such differences. He stressed the need for

professional solidarity.

Alain Modoux, Director of UNESCO's Division of Communications, said the multi-faceted character of the profession leads inevitably to journalists setting up their own groups. This has happened in the Philippines, Cambodia and Germany which all have more than one journalists' organisation. He said:

There is fierce competition, even boycotts, but nowhere else does it result in journalists being dismissed or prevented from writing simply because they have set up their own organisation. This is why we would like to see an end to the victimisation in Indonesia and call for the release of journalists who have been jailed only because they hold different opinions.

Tribuana Said, speaking for PWI, said the government only recognises a single organisation, PWI, and any other organisation is considered to be illegal. He said the sentencing of Taufik and his colleagues was a matter for the government. Modoux responded by saying it was true this was a matter for the government but it was also up to the PWI to try to end such victimisation. 'It is important to establish the principle of independence from the government,' he said.

Aidan White, secretary-general of the *International Federation of Journalists*, said that the PWI must share responsibility for the arrest and trial of AJI members. Hav-

CENSORSHIP

ing carefully studied Indonesian press laws, he pointed to a contradiction between the Basic Press Law which specifically excludes press bans and a ministerial regulation which gives powers to the minister to ban publications.

For AJI, Hasudungan, who has himself been victimised, described the PWI as an extension of those who hold power. 'They are in a position to exert pressure on editors not to employ AJI members or force them to resign,' he said.

The meeting failed to reach any agreement and no decision was adopted.

Interviewed by the BBC World Service in London, Hasudungan said he never believed that the meeting would reach any agreement. But it was an important event for AJI.

It shows that our organisation has gained international recognition, in this case by UNESCO which is a world organisation. It will also help combat the impression that AJI is just a crazy bunch of people without any legal basis. It shows too that we are very open to dialogue.' *

continued from back page

interrogation, one of the arrested party leaders, Iskandar Subekti, implicated Carmel. So, on 3 September 1968, she began her three-year journey through the prison underworld. Taken first to one of the army's principal torture centres to the south of Jakarta - *Satgas Pusat* - she encountered both at first hand and through her fellow female prisoners the interrogation methods of the Indonesian military inquisitors. Here was the seedy-faced Eurasian, Atjep, an ex-chauffeur at the US embassy (a cover for his CIA intelligence work), who stripped his female prisoners naked and delighted in inflicting gross physical abuse (the showing of pornographic films was a favourite method of heightening the sadism of his henchmen before torture); here was the Sumatran camp commander, Bonar, admirer of Eichmann, with his 'bulging eyes full of menace' and large-stoned rings on both fingers, which he used at will to inflict lacerating scars on his torture victims.

Spared direct physical torture herself, Carmel's book gives voice to the stories of some of the remarkable women who survived gulag with her: the legendary Sri Ambar, a leading activist in the All-Indonesia Trade Union Organisation, who endured unspeakable torture at Atjep's hands, Dr Sumiarsih Carapobeka, the 'miracle doctor' whose ministrations saved so many of her fellow inmates in the Plantungan female labour camp in Central Java, and the devout Minahasan Christian, Ibu Charlotte Salawati (died 1988), the first woman mayor of Makassar, MP and specialist on military affairs, whose work in the PKI's women's organisation, Gerwani, marked her out for special treatment at the hands of army interrogators. It was this last who put into words what many of those who sacrificed themselves in the independence struggle against the Dutch felt when confronted with the abuse of their fellow Indonesians. Confronted by a threat from the camp commander at the Jakarta women's prison, Bukit Duri, that henceforth the only food the inmates would

BOOK REVIEW

receive would be rice twice a day, Ibu Salawati, had stepped forward and spoken as follows:

I was imprisoned many times under the Dutch, many times they mistreated me and held me unjustly for my beliefs. Yet, never, in all my experience, did the Dutch, bad as they were, supply their prisoners with nothing more than rice. Never! Now, go back to your bosses and tell them that. I have nothing more to say.

It was the pre-war nationalist, Raden Mas Soetomo (1888-1938), who remarked that it was futile for Indonesia to gain its independence if the moral and spiritual qualities of its inhabitants were not sufficient to make that political freedom meaningful. *Surviving Indonesia's Gulag* underscores the truth of that statement. The violence and suffering inflicted by Indonesians on fellow Indonesians (and, in the New Order era, on East Timorese and Papuans) has been altogether more ruthless and sustained than anything perpetrated by the late colonial Dutch state.

One day, Indonesians will be able to take stock of the human cost of their fifty years of independence, and hear for themselves the voices of those crushed beneath the juggernaut of Suharto's *pancasila* Republic. In the meantime, the publication of Carmel Budiardjo's fine book brings that day all the nearer. *

Peter Carey



Surviving Indonesia's Gulag, A Western Woman Tells Her Story by Carmel Budiardjo. Foreword by Lord Avebury. Cassell, January 1966. Price: £12.95. [See p.14 for special price to TAPOL Bulletin readers]

There is an Indonesian saying that 'the crocodile is swift to dive, but very slow to surface'. Nowhere is this more true than in the murky realm of Indonesian politics where events occur with savage suddenness, yet years pass before their causes are explained. The failed *coup* attempt of 30 September 1965, known in Indonesia as GESTAPU (*Gerakan September Tiga-Puluh*) and its terrible aftermath, which left between 500,000 and a million 'communists' dead and a further one and a half million in jail (where some still languish), is but the most striking of these seismic, yet still unfathomed, moments in modern Indonesian history.

In any other society, such an event would have spawned a veritable library of books and commentaries. The Jewish holocaust, the Khmer Rouge terror regime in Cambodia (1975-78), the 'dirty war' in Argentina in the 1970s, have all been plumbed to the depths through the memoirs of survivors and participants. Yet in Indonesia, apart from a few exceptions [Pipit Rochiyat, 'Am I PKI or non-PKI?', Indonesia No. 40, October 1985]; Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Nyanyian Sunyi Seorang Bisu* [The Silent Song of a Mute] - reviewed in TAPOL Bulletin No. 128 - and Oei Tju Tat's *Pembantu Presiden Sukarno* [President Sukarno's Assistant] - reviewed in TAPOL Bulletin No. 130 - are among the few that spring to mind), the trauma which saw the birth of General Suharto's bloody 'New Order' (1965 to the present) has yet to find its chroniclers.

This is why Carmel Budiardjo's gripping account of her experiences in the prisons and torture chambers of the New Order 'gulag' is so important. Here, for the first time, from the hands of a woman, is a record of the 'season in hell' which the Indonesian army reserved for its political enemies, those who did not succumb first to the feckless violence and torture of its myrmidons. The fact that it is by a British national, now renowned internationally as the founder of the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, Tapol, whose own Jewish family escaped the pogroms of pre-war Poland, makes it all the more striking. In just over 200 closely written pages, Carmel tells of her Indonesian odyssey (significantly, the *Il- iad* was one of three books - the others were a study of Shakespeare and the Bible - she chose to take with her to prison) from her time in post-war Prague (1947-52) where she first came into contact with Indonesian socialists, amongst them her future husband, Bud, to her pre-prison years in Jakarta (1952-1968), where she eventually became a member of the central executive of the leftist Indonesian Association of Scholars (HSI) and a translator and commentator on economic affairs for both the Indonesian Foreign Ministry and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), then at the height of its powers. Housed in one of the most fashionable areas of Jakarta, with two growing teenage children and her husband now an Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Sea Communications, the Budiardjos seemed set for a comfortable and unexceptionable middle age.

On 30th September 1965, this world collapsed. In the anti-communist hysteria which followed the failed *coup*, Bud

was imprisoned and Carmel herself only narrowly saved from the same fate by a sympathetic intelligence officer, who himself later fell victim to intra-army purges. Her job at the Ministry now untenable, the PKI in disarray and the HSI a banned organisation, Carmel supported her family by giving private English lessons. Even then, the pressure was unremitting: her daughter, then seventeen, was hounded from her state secondary school and forced at one stage to witness the torture of one of her school friends at army hands. Buoyed by her own courage and perhaps a false sense of security as a European (although by this time, she was no longer a British national), Carmel worked hard for her husband's release, even meeting General Ali Murtopo, Suharto's sinister intelligence czar, and the toad-like General Sumitro, then, the assistant to the army chief-of-staff (later head of the all-powerful Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order [Kopkamtib]), who has now recycled himself as an anti-Suharto 'democrat'. Carmel's description of this last encounter is a graphic illustration of the power wielded by members of the military top brass in the anti-communist campaign:

He picked up a phone ... panting slightly from the exertion of having to get up from his chair, and started dialling. [When], finally he made the connection, I realised he was calling the CPM [Military Police Corps]. 'About Budiardjo. Yes, the Budiardjo case. Release him..... What? No need for him to report, just release him.

I hadn't spoken a word. So this was how, twenty months ago, he had picked up the phone, dialled the CPM's number and barked the order: 'Arrest Budiardjo!'

Bud's release in December 1967 soon proved a hollow victory. The following year, the PKI underground organisation in South Blitar was smashed by the army, and, under

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