



TRUTH WILL OUT

**INDONESIAN ACCOUNTS
OF THE 1965 MASS VIOLENCE**

EDITED BY DR. BASKARA T. WARDAYA SJ

TRANSLATED BY JENNIFER LINDSAY

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Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence

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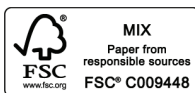
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We were constantly being moved, like stinking, disgusting filth. We were kicked and driven out. To keep us uneasy. That's pretty much the way the authorities thought of victims of the 1965 tragedy.

Al Capone (pseudonym), victim.

Basically, the situation at the time was terrifying. Truly. I often think about it and wonder whether this was the path of the Indonesian nation.

Dr. Sofyan Djaenuri (pseudonym), witness.

*For the witnesses and survivors of the 1965 tragedy
and for all who love Indonesian history*

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About the Herb Feith Translation Series

The Herb Feith Translation Series publishes high-quality non-fiction manuscripts not yet available in English, which enhance scholarship and teaching about Indonesia. Published by the Herb Feith Foundation in conjunction with Monash University the books are available for 'Open Access' or free download.

The Herb Feith Foundation was established in 2003 to commemorate the life and work of Herb Feith (1930–2001), volunteer, scholar, teacher and peace activist. Its mission is to promote and support work of the kind to which Herb Feith devoted his life, including the study of Indonesia, through a range of educational activities including research and teaching and in the publication and promotion of such work.

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Translating accounts of the 1965–66 mass violence in Indonesia

Series co-ordinated by Dr Kate McGregor and Dr Jemma Purdey

Until recently there have been very few accounts available in Indonesian or English of the 1965–66 mass violence as told by witnesses, survivors or perpetrators. Today an increasing number of memoirs and short testimony collections are available in Indonesian, however, very few are yet available in English language. This has prevented a greater understanding outside Indonesia of how this violence continues to impact on Indonesians and of how they now understand this traumatic period of their nation's history.

These translated works are valuable resources for all who seek to understand Indonesia today, and especially for undergraduate students of Asian history and the history of mass violence and genocide. This book is the first in this series of translated accounts of the 1965–66 mass violence in Indonesia.

Translator's introduction

To translate is to bring writing to a new audience. Otherwise, translation would not be needed, obviously. In any work of translation, the translator has to negotiate between the original readership and the new one, but in bringing this book, *Truth Will Out*, to English language readers, some particularly difficult translation issues emerged.

The original edited volume was written for Indonesians by Indonesians, and consists largely of transcribed oral interviews in Indonesian. Given the nature of the topic and the oral history project that produced the interviews, the specificity of the original intended readership was particularly significant in shaping the book.

As the introduction explains, the volume came about as the result of an oral history project involving students and researchers interacting with former political detainees and their families, together with witnesses and perpetrators of the Indonesian 1965–66 mass violence. Unlike many other books that have emerged recently with first hand accounts of these events, this particular book was not written or edited by an ex political detainee. The oral history project was conceived and based at an academic institution in Yogyakarta, and involved students and researchers dealing with a subject that had long been taboo.

Anyone born between about 1970 and 1985 in Indonesia went through their entire education during Soeharto's New Order, with its thorough and devastatingly effective propaganda about the events of 1965–66 and its aftermath. (Those born between 1986–1992 experienced a partial but formative New Order education at primary school). Even at the time of the oral history project that produced this book, namely 2008–11, just a decade after the fall of Soeharto in 1998, questioning the official version of events was, if not now so risky, still deeply uncomfortable.

A sense of caution and discomfort permeates this book. The language tries to be neutral, gently nudging the (original) readers along to reconsider their received ideas about events, and most particularly, their received ideas about people labelled and stigmatized as communists and communist supporters. One senses the learning process of the researchers themselves as they interviewed people they might otherwise never have met and discussed subjects otherwise never broached.

Readers of the English translation, living as they do outside of Indonesia and not themselves the product of New Order education, might at times find this tedious. Vocabulary, for instance, is often problematic. Throughout the volume, the term ‘1965 tragedy’ is used copiously. In the original Indonesian, the word ‘tragedy’ was capitalized and the year written with an apostrophe, so ‘Tragedi ‘65’. The phrase is a signifier for everything sensitive and formerly taboo. Just mentioning the year ‘1965’ is enough to convey deep, troubling resonance in Indonesian. When linked to the word ‘Tragedi’, the phrase attempts to be inclusive and non-accusatory – in the book there is little use of words like ‘atrocities’, ‘killings’, ‘slaughter’ or ‘massacre’. The term ‘mass violence’ used in this English edition book title (to satisfy English language library search and readership purposes) does not appear in the Indonesian title, which was ‘Suara di Balik Prahara: Berbagi Narasi tentang Tragedi ‘65’, literally ‘Voices behind the tempest: sharing narratives about the 1965 tragedy.’

Another example of problematic vocabulary is the word ‘victim’. The Indonesian word here is ‘korban’ (which is the same word for ‘sacrifice’), and is used throughout the book by commentators, interviewers and interviewees. In Indonesian, as in English, the word has a passive connotation of suffering. Many ex detainees in Indonesia now prefer to use the English word ‘survivor’, even when speaking in Indonesian. There is no catchy single word in Indonesian to capture the agency of the English word ‘survivor’. However, to change the word ‘victim’ used in Indonesian to ‘survivor’ throughout in the English translation of the book would obscure the original choice of ‘victim’ and that particular point of view.

There is also use of euphemism. In criticizing religion, particularly Islam, the phrase ‘a particular religion’ is often used. This is common practice in public discourse in Indonesia, where people are afraid of being accused of slandering ethnicity, race or religion. Readers will thus find reference to ‘a certain religious group’, or phrases like ‘the Duta Masyarakat newspaper, which was linked to a particular religious organization’. Some writers or speakers might dare to be more direct and use ‘Islam’ in such instances; however the nature of the oral history project that produced this book – interviews conducted by researchers working under the umbrella of a Catholic university – lead to particular caution when referring to Islam.

During the New Order period, referring to communism and the communist party involved the same kind of euphemism. Everybody knew what the phrase ‘a particular ideology’, or ‘a particular political party’ meant, but avoided the word ‘communist’ not for fear of slander, but because of the

heavy dread it bore. This euphemism is rarely heard now, but it crops up in the introduction to the book as retrospective comment on the New Order ('Sometimes the accusations were that people involved wanted to revive a "certain" political party').

Translators make choices. I could have chosen words other than 'victim' or '1965 tragedy' which are repeated *ad infinitum*. It was tempting, for it would have made the English a smoother read. But this particular book is important not only for the content of the accounts therein, significant though they are, but also for the way these accounts were researched and presented. It records how a group of Indonesians, based at an academic institution and mostly educated during the New Order, were dealing with a terrible aspect of their history, just a decade after the fall of the New Order. From this point of view, the language used is significant, showing how, 50 years after the events discussed, these Indonesians speak and write about them. Getting people to talk and reflect requires gentle, non-confronting terms, and an implicit acknowledgement that everyone in Indonesia was affected by the '1965 tragedy'. Getting other Indonesians to read the book requires being non-confrontational. The translation thus tries to convey the Indonesian relatively faithfully – with its repetition, its hesitancy, and its caution – rather than create a totally smooth English text.

Another factor inhibiting 'smoothing out' the English text was the fact that the bulk of the book comprises transcriptions of oral interviews. The Indonesian text tries to preserve the sense of orality, faithfully representing all the repetition. This makes more sense in the Indonesian, because this is the language of the original speech and transcription. It is more jarring in English, but I chose not to edit the repetition in translation, as I felt this would betray the original purpose of the editor.

The editor Baskara T Wardaya SJ ends his introduction to the book with the following words:

Through listening to the voices and narratives behind the 1965 political-humanitarian catastrophe in Indonesia, which come from varied perspectives, we hope to jog all our memories of what happened at that time, and what happened after it. And in this way we will better learn from what happened in Indonesia for all of our sakes, wherever we are.

The book's readership and point of view is evident. The 'we' is Indonesians today confronting their own history, jogging their memories, questioning their consciences and received truth, painful though this is. But there is another 'we' implied – the 'we' of 'wherever we are', who can learn from what

happened in Indonesia, and from ways that Indonesians are dealing with it. This includes the ‘we’ of the readers of the book in English translation.

– Jennifer Lindsay, 28 February 2013

Stories restore history, stories restore dignity

Introduction

Ronnie Hatley¹

Each new story brings us closer to a history that is more truthful. This is particularly so when these stories speak about a dark past, or about memories sensed as shameful and thus are stifled, ignored, cleansed or forgotten, including when we lie to ourselves. More stories are especially necessary to shed light on historical periods that have thus far been repressed or deliberately hidden. The collection of accounts in this book is important because it provides both new perspectives not yet published, as well as personal experiences of survivors of the catastrophe of mass violence carried out against Indonesian people who were identified with the Indonesian Communist Party, following the military seizure of power on 1 October 1965.

Bright light of witness and testimony

The accounts in this book reinforce stories about the 1965 massacres in Indonesia which many people have already often heard. For instance, about the suffering the victims experienced; about the same methods of torture being used in emergency detention centres that sprung up across the country; about female detainees being stripped naked under the pretext of a search for a non-existent mark of political identity, only to be raped; or about forced labour, year after year, until death.

At the same time, this book also presents new information given by people who were witnesses at the time rather than victims, and who have been totally mute for the last five decades about what happened in 1965 and afterwards. About the terrible suffering experienced by victims and people at the grass roots; about a warehouse full of detainees who were taken out one by one at night to be ‘disappeared’; about bodies floating in the rivers; about schools forced to close because there were no teachers; about ricefields deserted because those who worked them had vanished; and so on.

Amid such stories of calamity there also emerges examples of moral dignity and humanity. For instance, stories of people prepared to protect

¹ Ronnie Hatley is a academic consultant at PUSdEP who feels fortunate to have three homes: the United States, Indonesia and Australia.

people on the run; about the willingness to adopt children who suddenly became orphans; or about the courage in hiding people being hunted. Then there are the explanations by people who subsequently came to the realization that the victims of the 1965 violence were not only those who survived, but also every citizen of Indonesia, who in some way or another suffered loss, because it was a great national tragedy.

In this way, this book gives a new perspective to Indonesian history by inviting readers to see the 1965 tragedy not standing alone, but in the context of what happened before and after it; and not only from the viewpoint of survivors, but also from the viewpoint of witnesses from varied backgrounds. This shines a light to expose and reconnect those parts of Indonesian history that have to date appeared dark – or which have been deliberately kept in the dark.

Restoring peace

The bright light shone by the testimony in this book demonstrates the importance of efforts to unearth history through interviews with observers who are not direct victims. From them we obtain useful information to complement that from survivors. In this way, we can get a more complete picture about what went on at the time.

Even so, there is something even more important in this book than historical truth, namely the acknowledgement that the massive violence, human rights violations, suffering and social upheaval of 1965 actually happened. This acknowledgement is important because it is the first step necessary to move beyond denial and more towards healing the wounds of the past so there can be social reconciliation.

Whether true or false, history plays a large role in shaping our future. True history can be used for good. We can extend what is right and what works best, and we can work to repair and to limit – if not overcome – our failings. Falsified history only perpetuates the conflicts and violations it attempts to cover up. So with each truth unveiled regarding 1965 we have the opportunity to reshape our future. In this sense the truths and acknowledgements of this book also give us an idea of how far we have to go in recovering both our history and our future.

One way to understand the sufficiency of the truth of our history is to read books like this one, measuring its revelations against what still remains to be done to reconcile the social differences of 1965.

Shared future

In reviewing the work of dozens of truth and reconciliation commissions in dozens of countries, Audrey Chapman summarizes what she sees as the steps necessary to national reconciliation in societies divided by conflict and violence.² Chapman argues that the initial understanding regarding national reconciliation is commitment to a shared future. That we all will participate in defining our future is what reconciliation is. She explains six requirements for reconciliation.

First, truth. Discernment of the truth about the dimensions, causes and perpetrators of the conflict, violence and abuses in the past. In order to involve more parties, she sees that this effort should preferably be facilitated by a body with official status.

Second, acknowledgement. What is meant here is the open and shared acknowledgement of injuries suffered and losses experienced (both people and wealth) in relation to the past event being discussed. According to Chapman, 'it is one thing to know, it is yet a very different social phenomenon to acknowledge'. 'Acknowledgment through hearing one another's stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step toward restoration of the person and the relationship.'

Third, 'victims' willingness to let go of the past and forbear from seeking vengeance.' Just as 'those who inflicted the harm and those who were complicit by their silence and failure to stop the wrongdoing' need to show 'acknowledgement of moral responsibility' in order to restore their sense of person, so do survivors of abuse and violence need to 'acknowledge the humanity of those who have committed the injury [which] may entail the communication of mercy and forgiveness.'

Fourth, justice. Justice is indispensable for reconciliation, but in this case what is meant is restorative justice, which seeks to repair injustice, to compensate for it, and to effect corrective changes in relationships and in future behaviour.

Fifth, restoring relationships between adversaries. Practical reconciliation requires a commitment to repairing and restoring relationships broken by

² See Audrey Chapman, 'Conceptions of National or Political Reconciliation' in Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*, 2001, pp. 257–277. This section quotes pp. 266–267. We should note that in all the states she discusses the primary perpetrator of violence was the state, as also was the case in Indonesia in 1965.

conflict and violence. Recognition of contrition and forgiveness facilitates the restoration of relationships. Coexistence enables greater sharing.

Sixth, common future. All members of the community must explicitly establish the terms of a new and common future. Inclusion and equity are principles that support sustainable community.

Truth will out!

Referring to Chapman's steps, it seems that this book is part of the drive for communal truth about the dimensions, causes and perpetrators of the conflict, violence and abuses of human rights that happened in Indonesia in the past, in this case in the 1965 tragedy. Indirectly, this book is also an attempt to provide opportunities for 'acknowledgment' and to process the experiences of those who at that time were witnesses but to date have chosen to be silent. As for the 'person' of the victims, the perpetrators and the witnesses, this book is part of the attempt to restore a sense of person to all those involved. It is an attempt to *nguwongke*³ them.

The survivors' stories told in this book stress that almost all survivors have accepted their past, in the sense that they no longer regret their loss and suffering. And while all still question 'What did I do that was wrong', most no longer harbour revenge. But in all these (and more) stories by survivors about their experiences, we rarely read explicit expressions of forgiveness of those who victimized them. In relation to this, we must remember that forgiveness requires acknowledgement of wrongdoing. And in the case of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia this kind of official acknowledgement – except for that of the late President Abdurrahman Wahid -- has not yet occurred.⁴ There is a general reluctance to acknowledge that the 1965 violence was an abuse of human rights, and to take responsibility for that abuse. This factor lies behind the absence of an explicit expression of forgiveness.

An essential requirement for national truth, justice and reconciliation about the abuses of 1965 is that the state must acknowledge and assume responsibility for them. The state must admit that it is responsible for the violence that it perpetrated. The 1965 abuse happened only because the state organized it and carried it out. And it will only be when the state

³ *Nguwongke* is a Javanese words meaning to view or treat someone as a person, or in a humane way.

⁴ Another exception is the effort by many young members of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) together with the survivor support and advocacy group 'Syarikat Indonesia' to bring about reconciliation at a grass roots level in their communities.

acknowledges responsibility and facilitates remedy for its wrongdoing that repair and reconciliation will take place.

For instance, the outstanding report of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), *Gender-based crimes against humanity* (Jakarta: 2007) is perhaps the best summary of what is necessary to restore justice and restore victims' rights.⁵ In Indonesia, reconciliation and restoration can only occur if the state wishes to involve itself in the process.

In this book, in the experiences of the survivors we hear that at the neighbourhood level many aspects of genuine reconciliation have long been practised. Across the nation it is the case that among neighbours and family, reception of survivors into full family and community life has been widespread. But we can see too from some of the stories in this book, that too many of the outcomes of the 1965 tragedy are not reconciliation. In fact, in many neighbourhoods, victims and perpetrators have been practising false or partial reconciliation for years and divided families have been only formally reconciled. Many renewed relationships are in no way true reconciliations, but instead represent a forced recognition of inequality of appropriation and loss wrought as the outcome of the political upheaval of 1965.

Thus this book also reminds us that we need many more stories. More stories of survivors are needed soon, because they soon will be gone. So we urgently need a concerted effort to collect these stories. The book also shows that apart from collecting stories of the survivors, we also need to collect stories from witnesses who followed what was going on and yet chose to remain silent. Whether or not those witnesses show sympathy with the victims, we still need to hear their voices.

The process of national reconciliation after the violence and the suffering of 1965 will be a long one. Americans are still in conflict regarding their

⁵ The recommendations of the Commission include: 'The Government adopt the decision of the United Nations General Assembly of December 2005 regarding "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" as the foundation for a national reparations program for victims of the 1965 tragedy. In this program, the concept of reparations would include the right to restitution, namely to restore the victim to her condition before the violation occurred, including the restoration of liberty, fundamental human rights, identity, family life, citizenship, residence, work, and possessions; compensation for economic damages proportionate to the violation suffered; institutional reform to ensure non-recurrence of violations; and satisfaction that includes cessation of violations, admission of the truth, the search for the whereabouts of the disappeared—including the exhumation of mass graves—an official declaration or judicial decision that restores the dignity of the victims, an official apology, sanctions against the perpetrators, and respect for the victims through commemorations and monuments.' [p.186]

Civil War of the 1860s; the caste conflicts of India are thousands of years old. And there will soon be no one from the 1965 generation still alive, so reconciliation will need to be carried on by their descendants. To discover and facilitate this process, the stories of the young will need to be told, collected and listened to. And of course the future will be shaped and recorded by this new generation.

Indeed, the questions that the young scholars and human rights activists who collected the stories for this book asked their elders, provide the model for hastening the reconciliation of 1965.

While the greatest respect must be extended to those who suffered and yet were brave enough to speak in this continuing climate of enforced silence, we must also thank those who have long been silenced but speak now in this book, and we must especially thank the young compilers for their example. For it is by questioning our elders that the secrets of the past will be known in order to gain future reconciliation. Truth will out!

Hearing silenced voices

A foreword

Baskara T. Wardaya SJ

Generally, a historical narrative is not made for oneself. It is made for certain purposes, including social and political among others. This is why almost every social group feels the need to convey its history from one generation to the next. As Paul Thompson says in *The Voice of the Past*, it is through history that people try to understand the upheavals and changes around them, whether they be social, political, cultural or economic. A historical narrative, for instance, is expected to help society better understand that events which occurred in the past actually do not cease in the past, but rather 'live' and influence movement and ways of thinking of people in the present. This influence continues even into times yet to come.⁶

In conveying historical narrative, societies usually use written or oral methods, or a combination of the two. While the former employs writing tools, the product of which can be read over and again, the latter prioritizes direct narration without writing. The former is most commonly used by societies long familiar with the writing tradition. The latter can be found in societies where the writing tradition is less familiar. It is also found to be used between people who have been isolated for a long time, or whose access to the tools of modern education has been limited.

Both written and oral media are of use to the historian in carrying out historical research and writing. A historian, in his or her research and writing, can use both written and oral sources from society. To historians, both written and oral sources are important in research and the study of history-as-knowledge, and in understanding and explaining history-as-event. If carried out well, the writing of history based on oral sources (often just called 'oral history') can enrich both the writing of history itself and the understanding of a society's or nation's past, with all the dynamics involved.

⁶ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1–2. In P. Swantoro's words, 'the past is always actual'. See P. Swantoro, *Masa Lalu Selalu Aktual* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2007).

Even stronger

One of the advantages of oral history is that through it we can give wider 'space' to people who thus far have not received sufficient opportunity to narrate their own histories, especially the under-classes, the unprivileged, and the defeated.⁷ Furthermore, oral history gives historians opportunities to convey historical and social messages by listening to and narrating the thoughts and feelings of those people. Oral history can be a kind of alternative to the grand, official narratives that are produced and reproduced by those in power and which for long periods circulate widely and are accepted by the majority.⁸

Paul Thompson puts this well:

By introducing new evidence from the underside, by shifting the focus and opening new areas of inquiry, by challenging some of the assumptions and accepted judgements of historians, by bringing recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored, a cumulative process of transformation is set in motion ... History becomes, to put it simply, more democratic.⁹

As often happens, a totalitarian power tends to repress memories that do not concur with its interests, including memories that are personal, local, or which originate from the victims of that totalitarian power. Such regimes want their people to remember only the narratives they themselves sanction.¹⁰

Even though this is the case, it does not mean that official historical narrative originating from totalitarian powers should be automatically dismissed. There are certain elements in the authorities' official version of history that should still be examined because these elements are a reflection of a particular reality or interest. We are becoming increasingly aware that every 'text' is born from a particular 'context'.¹¹ So too with historical texts that are born from authoritarian powers.

⁷ Dominick LaCapra goes so far as to say that a writing of history can mean that the writing of trauma experienced by subjects follows the position of trauma in the writing of social history. See Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press 2001).

⁸ Thompson p. 7

⁹ Thompson p.8

¹⁰ Thompson p.2

¹¹ For discussion about text and context in the field of cultural studies, see Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge), pp.81–121.

This is why a historical study becomes more interesting if it contains narratives conveyed by the authorities, with all their interests, together with those who are outside the interests of that power and those who have become victims of those interests. By juxtaposing material obtained orally from victims and those outside the circles of power interests, with material originating from people within the circles of power, one hopes that a historian can reconstruct the past in a more realistic and profound way. This is important when we remember that so-called reality is multidimensional. Through oral history, a historian can help to point out the multidimensionality of reality.¹²

Thinkers such as E.P. Thompson and James Hinton are pioneers in the writing of history that does not use the power elite as its source. Even so, they both still base their works on written documents of officials employed by governments. The materials they obtain are not entirely the result of direct meetings and interviews with people at the grassroots. Today, there is a stronger push to write history that involves sources coming directly from members of society from below.

Memory

One needs to be aware that the process of writing oral history is advantageous not only to society and readers in general. It is also advantageous to historians themselves. By interviewing sources, for instance, the historian is encouraged (read: given the opportunity) to meet and collaborate with someone else, rather than just being preoccupied alone in some airconditioned room filled with piles of documents and books. Through oral history, a historian gets an opportunity to enrich his or her experience in human relationships. And at the same time, the historian obtains the space to listen to and share experience on a human level. In other words, the historian can relate to another person not in the context of the relationship of the researcher on one side and the object of research on the other, or between the 'knowing' person and the other, considered to know less, but rather between two equal human beings, even though their experience and views probably differ. Further, interviews in the framework of oral history can serve to bring together people from different values and viewpoints, making them talk together directly – something

¹² Thompson, p. 6.

which might not be possible or would otherwise be difficult – and this can help the oral historian open or renew his or her own horizons.¹³

This is why historians should try to ensure that the relation between them as researchers of history and their sources, and the relation between history and society, is not a linear or one-directional one, but rather one that is reciprocal, dynamic, dialectical and mutually enriching. In other words, when the historian is writing in this spirit, and compiling his or her study among concrete people in the field, one hopes that he or she will help other people to become more human too.¹⁴

This is worthy of note if one recalls that history should be able to encourage a historian (or anyone) to continually critically reflect on old understandings of reality and at the same time encourage them to routinely carry out change, whether that be change at the level of the individual or society. Going further still, by writing history which involves sources obtained from both the elite and orally from ‘below’, the historian encourages others, and him or herself, not only to reflect upon the world but also to change it.¹⁵

A basic element in oral history is, of course, what is called ‘memory’, and in particular, the memory of those sources who are the subjects of oral history research. Their memory is the primary material that the historian employs to produce an oral history narrative. Even so, experience shows that memory and its relationship to research and the writing of oral history is far from straightforward. Particularly when the subjects of the research and writing are victims of human rights abuse and their memories are full of violent practices that afflicted them in the past. In many cases, such victims have repressed such elements of memory, or they have even tried to wipe them. This could be because of outside pressure, or because of their own inner pressure. This can emerge through fear, for instance, or because of other factors.

The victory of memory

With reference to the ideas just discussed, it is clear that the historical narratives in this book are not presented for their own sake, but for certain purposes. One of these is to help people understand what lives and develops around them, and at the same time to be aware that many events that

¹³ Thompson p.12

¹⁴ Thompon pp. 23–24

¹⁵ Thompon p.22

occurred in the past did not suddenly stop in the past, but are still ‘alive’ and have influence to this day – and into times to come. Many narratives are presented in this book. The sources of most of them are oral stories from informants. Some of the narratives are from people who were victims of violence and human rights violations in the past in Indonesia, namely those who were victims of the mass arrests, imprisonment and slaughter of people accused of being communist over 1965–1966, which is often simply called ‘the 1965 tragedy’. Others are from witnesses, or those people who were not victims of the tragedy, even though they are not grouped among the perpetrators. By juxtaposing material gathered orally from these two groups, it is hoped that this book will assist readers to reconstruct the past in a more realistic and complete way. Once again, reality is always multidimensional. It is hoped that historical narrative sourced from different parties will help to capture this multidimensionality.

Concerning the memory of informants, as we have already suggested we should be grateful that at least those in this book have been able to overcome their fear. As Ronnie Hatley says in his introduction, they have the courage to recall their memories of so much injustice and violence they experienced in the past. They have the courage to overcome this fear so that, to the best of their ability, they can convey what they went through. This is why, in a certain sense, readers of this book are invited to ‘celebrate the victory of memory’. They are invited to be grateful that memory has overcome various forms of violence and human rights violations such as torture, abuse, accusation, detention and imprisonment without any clear justification, uncertainty of the future, false memories forced upon them by those in power, and all kinds of other repressive actions. We are invited to witness that, eventually, memory wins out. And further, because these oral stories were written for a wider circulation, readers are invited to continue to hope that this memory which has survived will produce new ideas and the seeds of new lives.

Relational space

From the outset, ‘memory’ was extremely important to the informants in this book (particularly former victims). In the midst of all the suffering they experienced at the time, they were able to survive because their memories ‘rescued’ them: memories of people dear to them who they had been forced to leave behind when they were arrested and imprisoned. They might be parents, children, husbands, wives, friends or neighbours. And behind these

memories lay flickers of hope that later, when they were free, they would meet again those they had left behind but who lived on in their memories.¹⁶

As we are often aware, memory is important to us all. As Passerini says: 'After all, memory is the tool we have in order to give meaning to our lives, if we understand it in the sense of an inter-subjective (or inter-human) word that connects different generations, times, and places.'¹⁷ In other words, memory is in principle relational, meaning it always involves others – or at least, events we experience with others. This is why our hope is that the memories which form the basis of the narratives in this book can help to create 'relational space' comprised not only of the relation between the reader and the informants, but also between one group and another and one generation and another, such as between the generation of those who lived through the 1960s and those who were born well after this time.

Critical thinking

As far as Indonesian history is concerned, engagement with memory of the past is urgent, mindful of the fact that from the mid 1960s and for subsequent decades the Indonesian people were under a totalitarian system of government that wanted to control almost every aspect of life. This occurred during the regime of President Soeharto, known as the 'New Order'. The regime set out to control not only political freedom and the people's economy, but also society's memory of the past, or its history. The Soeharto government was fastidious in publishing history books, but at the same time banned and checked history books with a different point of view, particularly any from the point of view of the people. This concurs with what Luisa Passerini says in her book *Memory and Totalitarianism*. Totalitarianism involves not only politics, but also other fields such as mentality, language, cultural expression and memory of the past. Totalitarianism enforces uniformity, limits freedom of expression and encourages the importance of activities of repetition and imitation.¹⁸

Interestingly enough, even after the totalitarian New Order fell in 1998, attempts at control and domination of the Indonesian people's memory of the past did not just cease. Even though the situation relaxed for a while, gradually totalitarian efforts have reappeared. History books supporting

¹⁶ Luisa Passerini, "Introduction" in Luisa Passerini (ed.) *Memory and Totalitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 2

¹⁷ Passerini, p. 3.

¹⁸ Passerini, pp. 7–8

official narratives that advantage power interests are allowed to circulate freely, while texts that attempt to reject existing historical distortions are banned or even burnt.

Faced with this situation, the need to carry out various kinds of research and writing of Indonesian history whose aims are broader than merely perpetuating a power interest by controlling social thinking, is all the more pressing. It is all the more urgent for research and writing of Indonesian history to be carried out which aims to encourage critical thinking; for people to be able to understand the past more holistically; and to be more open to the voices of those who have thus far been stifled. In this way, historical narrative will no longer be dominated by the official account produced and reproduced by the power elite, but will rather be open to the participation of the wider society. This, among other things, is where the importance of research and the writing of oral history in Indonesia lies.

It is from such a premise that the narratives presented in this book become important. Through this book, the reader is presented with accounts of what happened in Indonesia in the mid-1960s: not narratives from the power elite, but rather those who were its victims.

Of course, one does not have to agree with all the narratives. It is not necessary to accept them all at face value. Remember that the narratives presented in this book are based on personal memory, it is perfectly possible that certain things are emphasized and other things not; certain events are recalled, but others are probably forgotten; and so on. It is quite probable too that when they have to give meaning to the past, the informants moralize the narrative based on views or personal values that are extremely subjective.

All this is understandable, of course, when one is mindful that the outcome one hopes for from the explanations of the narratives in the book is not the creation of a black and white acceptance or rejection, support or opposition. One hopes the outcome will be awareness that whether we accept or reject the narratives, their purpose is to stimulate us to critical thinking and to encourage us to convey our own narratives.

Further scrutiny

Taking all the above into account, it is hoped that we can see the humanitarian tragedy of 1965 in Indonesia more fully, and see how the history of this tragedy has been narrated and understood thus far by Indonesians as a whole. It is important to remember that, as we have suggested, for a very long time – 32 years of the New Order – the dominant narrative in circulation in Indonesia was that produced by the government in order to prop up its own interests.

Meanwhile, the narrative originating from society – and in particular from those thought of as the ‘defeated’ or ‘in the wrong’ was rarely heard.

It is well known that according to the official narrative of the New Order government, what happened in relation to the 1965 tragedy was a linear process of cause and effect that was chronological, made sense, and was easily understood. It was said, for instance, that on 1 October 1965, seven military generals were kidnapped and murdered by the ‘Thirtieth of September Movement’ which was led by a political party, namely the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI). After the kidnapping and murders, the corpses of the generals were taken to the Halim Perdanakusuma Airfield. There, according to this narrative, the corpses were mutilated by a group of women who were members of the Indonesian Women’s Organization (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, or GERWANI), an act that was cruel and barbaric. The story goes that the women danced erotically in a ritual dance, the so-called ‘fragrant flower dance’. Then the corpses were put in a well, called the ‘crocodile hole’.¹⁹

Support for this official narrative then being fabricated was sought in the mass media. According to the newspaper *Angkatan Bersendjata* (linked to the military powers at the time) in the 11 October 1965 edition, for instance, the victims eyes were ‘gouged out’, and their genitals were mutilated. The daily newspaper said ... ‘The Gerwani volunteers played with the Generals, rubbing their genitals against their own’. The following day, 12 October 1965, the *Duta Masyarakat* newspaper, which was linked to a particular religious organization, stated ‘... according to reliable sources, the Gerwani women danced naked in front of their victims.’²⁰ There is no explanation as to the identity of that ‘reliable source’.

According to the narrative of the New Order powers (to-be) at the time, it was because of this brutality that the people of Indonesia were fired with anger and carried out revenge against Communist Party members all over the country. Thousands of people were killed in the revenge that took the form of mass murder, but according to this narrative, such action was acceptable because the principle was ‘kill or be killed’. Meaning that if one did not murder Communist Party members, they would murder you. When

¹⁹ People sometimes think that ‘crocodile hole’ is the name of the well, but in fact it is the name of a geographical location.

²⁰ Komnas Perempuan, *Kejahatan Berbasis Gender: Mendengarkan Suara Perempuan Korban Peristiwa 1965* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2007), p. 9. For more on the events of 1965 and the crushing of the women’s movement in Indonesia see Saskia E. Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, Houndmills, Basingstoke [etc]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

the murder frenzy was over, the new regime under the leadership of General Soeharto arrested and imprisoned without trial people suspected of being Communist Party members who were still alive. They were detained in local and national prisons. Many women who were members of Gerwani were also arrested and imprisoned.

And then – because according to the narrative of the authorities at the time, those who were arrested were members of the Communist Party and the Communist Party was the state ‘traitor’ – once they were released from prison they still had to be watched, given negative labels, harassed and ostracized. Their identity cards were given a special code, ET for Eks Tapol – or ex political prisoner. The regime needed this code to show that the holders were ex political prisoners, and therefore had to be specially guarded. Throughout the New Order, the regime could on the one hand claim that they had been ‘successful’ in destroying the Communist Party to its very roots (using methods including murder and mass imprisonment), yet on the other hand could tell the people to be constantly alert because according to them there was a constant ‘communist threat’ and ‘latent danger’ to the nation of Indonesia. Contradictory, indeed.

Even without either condoning or condemning this kind of explanation, there are certain things that can (and should) be further scrutinized, even questioned anew. For instance, the ambiguity about who exactly were the people responsible for the Thirtieth of September Movement. What about the fact that the three leaders of the Thirtieth of September Movement, namely Lieutenant Colonel Untung, Colonel Abdul Latief and Brigadier General Soepardjo, were all Indonesian military personnel and had never officially been members of any political party whatsoever? And what about the testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latief as one of the members and leaders of the September Thirtieth Movement and his claim that he had given prior report, before the kidnapping of the generals, to General Soeharto about the Movement’s plans?²¹

Why too, did Soeharto, who was the Commander of KOSTRAD (Army Strategic Reserve Command) at the time, even though he knew there was to be a large event in the capital, Jakarta, not report to his superior, namely General Ahmad Yani, or to the Supreme Chief of the army, namely President Sukarno? And what about the probability that the international context, specifically the dynamics of the Cold War, played a part as the

²¹ A. Latief, *Pledoi A. Latief: Soeharto Terlibat G30S* (Jakarta: Institut Studi Arus Informasi, 2000), p. 31–33.

background to the 1965 tragedy? Then, there is the report of the ‘mutilation’ of the bodies with razor blades which, it transpires, does not concur with the result of the *visum et repertum* noted and reported by the official medical team from the University of Indonesia appointed to carry out the autopsy. Moreover, the news and official narrative of the mutilation of the victims’ bodies had already been circulated and had fanned the flame of the hysteria of mass killing and imprisonments over 1965–1966.²²

Open field of study

As we know, as far as the events in Indonesia of 1965 are concerned, there are actually two events that are linked but should be differentiated. The first event is the kidnapping and murder that occurred in the early hours of 1 October 1965 in Jakarta. The second event is the mass slaughter that began in Central Java in the third week of October 1965, continued in East Java in November, then December in Bali. In the first event, the victims were seven high ranking military officers, all of whom lived in Jakarta. In the second, the victims were hundreds of thousands of civilians who lived all over the Indonesian archipelago. There was about a three week period between the first event and the beginning of the second.

While the official narrative of those in power at the time explains at great length the event of 1 October 1965 (the first event), how does the narrative or explanation of what happened after the third week of October (the second event) compare? The victims were numerous, namely half a million Indonesians. It is still unclear, for instance, why, if the mass slaughters were acts of ‘spontaneous revenge’ carried out by the people in retaliation for what happened in Jakarta, including the (so called) ‘mutilation’ of the bodies of the victims at the Halim airfield complex, the mass murders occurred in a sequence of waves. In October, as mentioned above, the killings happened in Central Java, then in November in East Java and in December in Bali. Why was there no mass killing in West Java? Even though, geographically, West Java is the closest to the capital?

And what justification is there for the arrest and imprisonment of someone merely because his or her name is the same as a wanted person who cannot be found, as happened to one of the informants in this book? And what of

²² Further on the 30th September Movement as the pretext for murder and mass imprisonment in 1965 and after, see John Roosa *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Subarto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

the people accused of being Communist Party hotheads or ringleaders even though they were only in their early teens at the time of being arrested? There still remain many other similar questions that need to be addressed. Questions also need to be answered about the victims in so many places in Indonesia who were arrested and imprisoned, without any prior legal process according to Indonesia's own laws. If the Communist Party was in the wrong, why were so many of President Sukarno's supporters arrested and imprisoned? For instance, the ministers who were arrested on 18 March 1966 on the order of General Soeharto were state ministers, and specifically not members of the Indonesian Communist Party, let alone involved with the kidnapping of the generals early on 1 October 1965.

In other words, as far as the 1965 tragedy is concerned – whether that be the 1 October incident in which seven military officers were killed or the incidents of mass murder of Indonesian people that began in the third week of October 1965 – there remain many unanswered questions. Particularly when people rely on the official narrative of the New Order, with all its interests. Once again, let me say that without stating whether or not the New Order narrative is true or false, such narratives should be critically examined and compared to others. These other narratives might come from professional, independent researchers (historians, for instance) but also from people outside the circles of power, from witnesses of history, or from the victims of the human tragedy of 1965 themselves.

So, one hopes that the terrible events of the mid 1960s in Indonesia can be seen more holistically, and become an open 'learning space' to all in the process of gathering experience from the past.

Remembering and processing

These ideas expressed above, inspired this book. Aware that there are still so many unanswered questions about the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia when the only existing narrative is the official one, this book sets out to invite the reader to be open to other narratives about those events. Of course, everything must be viewed critically and with the desire to learn together as much as possible.

There are many other similar books in Indonesia that set out to do the same thing.²³ What distinguishes this particular book, is the attempt to

²³ See for instance HD. Haryo Sasongko (Penyusun) and Melani Budianta (Penyunting), *Menembus Tirai Asap: Kesaksian Tabanan Politik 1965* (Jakarta: Amanah-Lontar, 2003); John Roosa, Ayu Ratih dan Hilmar Farid (ed.), *Tabun Yang Tak Pernah Berakhir*:

convey voices that have thus far not been heard in the shaping of alternative narratives about the political and humanitarian catastrophe that was the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia. These voices and narratives are from two different groups. The first is that of victims, the second is that of witnesses. The other distinguishing factor is the accounts from the younger generation who were neither witnesses nor victims. Towards the end of the book two young researchers present the results of their observations about how a religious institution (in this case the Catholic Church hierarchy in Indonesia) related to the tragedy.

What is meant by ‘victims’ in this book are those who, when the 1965 tragedy happened in Indonesia, directly experienced its effects. They were arrested, imprisoned and were victims of various kinds of physical and psychological violence. There were some who, at the time, were activists defending farmers, some who were ordinary students, and there is a village girl who was in her teens looking after her younger siblings. There is also a primary school student who in 1965 had no idea at all about politics and was not arrested, but who later had to suffer because her father and husband were former political prisoners.

What is meant by ‘witnesses’ here is those who consciously witnessed what was happening around them in the 1965 tragedy, but who were not themselves involved in acts of violence. They were not perpetrators, but when the events occurred they also did not actively defend the victims. They took part in witnessing or even experiencing themselves what took place before, during and after the 1965 tragedy, but they were not involved in the hysteria of violation of human rights at the time. Their position can be called ‘neutral’, like the position of an ‘observer’ of an event.

The account of the witnesses is interesting because apart from their testimony as to what they saw or heard, they also convey how, personally, they comprehended, analyzed and gave meaning to what was going on in 1965. They also convey their reflections about what they saw then, and the way they see it now, when the 1965 tragedy has become an event of the past, but remains part of public discourse.

Memahami Pengalaman Korban '65, Esai-esai Sejarah Lisan (Jakarta: Elsam, 2004); Hersri Setiawan, *Kidung Untuk Korban: Tutur Sepuluh Narasumber Eks-Tapol Sala* (Surakarta: Pakorba Sala, 2006); and Ita F. Nadia, *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2009). For a study of victims of the tragedy from a gender viewpoint, see, for instance the publication by Komnas Perempuan, *Kejahatan Berbasis Gender: Mendengarkan Suara Perempuan Korban Peristiwa 1965* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2007).

This book deliberately invites the reader to first ‘meet’ the witnesses through their narratives. The purpose of this is so the reader can listen to and get a broader picture of what was happening at the time, at least from their point of view. It is thus a deliberate choice to have informants from different backgrounds. There are representatives from the military, from Muslims, Catholics, Chinese, and followers of traditional Javanese spiritual belief (*Kejawen*). It is important to state, though, that there is no intention whatsoever that these people ‘represent’ a specific group. They were asked to be informants only because, coincidentally, they came from different backgrounds. At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that their membership in these groups does influence the way they view the 1965 tragedy, both before, during and after the events took place.

Only after following the narratives of the witnesses is the reader invited to meet the informants who were victims of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia. The purpose here is for the reader to have the opportunity to listen directly to the voices of those who were the targets of one of the biggest humanitarian tragedies (outside of war) in the 20th century. One important thing to note here is that the informants themselves are thankful that although they were victims of extraordinary cruelty, they were still able to survive and thus could still relate their experiences to the reader. They are aware that on the one hand they were able to stay alive, but on the other hand there were hundreds of thousands of people like them who died. There were those who died bloody deaths suddenly in the midst of the brutality of a regime towards its own people. There were those who went mad or who decided to kill themselves because they could not bear the torture and suffering they experienced as captives of the Indonesian New Order government. And of course there were also the survivors who made it through all this but who have since been called to their Maker.

Great hopes

As readers will see, from the point of view of some witnesses, the 1965 tragedy was the culmination or climax of political tensions that had been raging in Indonesia. Campus life in the early 1960s was normal enough, but by mid decade, tensions could be felt. This was also the case outside of the campus, for instance in Kotagede, near the city of Yogyakarta. Even so, as the witnesses’ narratives relate, these tensions did not have a physical manifestation. The tension was more psychological; seen, for instance, in

competition for election to the Student Senate, or in social, cultural or political activities in urban neighbourhoods.

Among the witnesses, some can explain this in broad terms within the context of national politics, but others are merely stunned as to why such tensions, which were local in nature, could change into mass action that sacrificed so many people. However they understand it, all the witnesses try to give meaning to what they experienced, while drawing lessons that might be of use to people today and in the future.

But at the same time, readers will see that from the point of view of some of the victims, no matter what the background was to the 1965 tragedy, it was a personal tragedy that occurred randomly, with extraordinary cruelty, and arbitrarily. Take for instance the experience of one of our informants, Mujilah. In 1965 she was a young girl of fourteen and lived near Prambanan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. One day she was minding her younger sister in front of the house as her mother was busy cooking in the kitchen. Suddenly an official came up to her and asked if her name was Mujilah. When she answered that it was (for indeed it was her name) she was immediately loaded on a truck and taken to Wirogunan prison in Yogyakarta, and later moved on to the women's prison in Plantungan, Central Java, for 14 years. She was a victim of mistaken identity. By chance, the person intended for arrest was a teacher who had the same name as her, but this teacher was somewhere else. Whatever the reason, Mujilah lost 14 years of her life just like that. And when she was finally released, there was not a single word of apology from those in power, let alone any recompense for what she had suffered and all she had missed in life.

A similar thing was experienced by another informant whose real name is not used in the book, Agatha Sumarni. She was a student in Yogyakarta when she was suddenly arrested. After torture, it turned out that the official realized that he had made a mistake, and gave her a letter of release. Sumarni then tried to return to her former life as a student. But for unknown reasons, there was another attempt to arrest her. When Sumarni said that she had no relation to the accusations made against her, and showed her letter of release, the officials then used this same letter of release as a pretext for rearresting her – because she had once been arrested. Sumarni was unable to resist arrest. She was then imprisoned for over a decade, and tortured.

Another victim, called 'Al Capone' by his prisonmates, tells in the book of how at the age of nineteen he was suddenly arrested without being given any opportunity to explain himself. He was exiled to the island of Nusa Kambangan in Central Java before later being taken with a crowd of others

in a dilapidated ship that broke down at sea for days and almost sank en route to the island of Buru, Eastern Indonesia. He witnessed many things over the more than ten years he spent in this isolated prison camp. For instance, he witnessed how other detainees were tortured or shot like animals in front of their barracks, with not a glimmer of humanity. Al Capone tried to remember as much as possible so that he could later note it down and tell readers in this book.

By following the accounts of both victims and non-victims in this book, we hope that readers will be able to see what happened in Indonesia in 1965 and afterwards as not merely a list of statistics, or a guessing game as to who were and were not the masterminds or '*dalang*' of the events, but rather a human tragedy whose victims are ordinary people, just like us. The victims also have names, places of residence, parents, brothers and sisters, faces with varied expressions, and longings and hopes as all people do. They are ordinary people just like other people who make up the nation of Indonesia. For as a result of the efforts at demonization carried out by the regime and its followers, the victims have often appeared in the memory of other Indonesians as terrifying 'monsters' always on the ready to wipe out their political opponents.

The tumult of the political storm in the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia was extraordinary indeed, with an extraordinary number of victims. Their suffering and that of their families was almost unbearable. And yet those who did survive are usually reluctant and fearful of talking about what they experienced. They choose silence. Even those who were not victims but who witnessed what happened usually also choose to remain silent. Through this book, both groups are given the opportunity to make their voices heard – the voices behind the catastrophe – which have thus far tended to be hidden. It is hoped that the voices and narratives presented here will not make readers dumbstruck or paralyzed in despair, but rather to take steps forward with hope.

Shared narratives

How did the 'history' appear in this book? Perhaps the reader is also asking this. For a number of years, we at the Centre for History and Political Ethics (Pusat Sejarah dan Etika Politik, or PUSdEP) at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, together with others have been concerned about the ways that narratives of this nation are conveyed and given meaning. As a centre of study involved with the study of history and political ethics,

PUSdEP saw there were areas of concern that should be examined and for which resolution should be sought.

First, for a long time – the period of the New Order to be precise – narratives of Indonesian history were tightly entwined with interests of the political regime. We have already discussed this earlier. Second, apart from banning history books that did not concur with its interests, the regime was very active producing historical narratives according to its point of view, via books, films, the print media, obligatory courses, or other forms of media. Third, many narratives that emerged from the circles of power at the time tended to ignore voices or accounts of people outside power. Even though, as we have seen, voices of ordinary people have an important role in the understanding or writing of history. Fourth, while the interest of young people in Indonesia in their nation's history is increasing, this interest is not fully satisfied.²⁴ Fifth, as globalization of the economy, politics and culture becomes stronger and transnational movement increases, if we are not careful the Indonesian people might forget their own history and identity even more. Six, over the last few years in Indonesia, there has been evident a deterioration in political and public ethics, both among decision makers and outside of them. Seven, the communal direction of Indonesia as a nation-state is increasingly unclear. Possible causes of this are the shallowness of Indonesians' roots in their own history, also because of minimal experience in sophisticated engagement with experience of the past.

So with these concerns at the forefront, PUSdEP initiated collaboration with as many parties as possible, both within and outside Indonesia. The aim was to encourage people to be more attracted to the study of history and to engage with national collective experience. Many bodies worked with PUSdEP in this, including the Salzburg Global Seminar, the central office of which is in Salzburg, Austria. When we first put our ideas to them, the Salzburg Global Seminar generously agreed to assist us through the Institute of History, Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR). The IHJR head office used to be in Salzburg, but it later moved to Paris, and is now in The Hague, Holland.

As luck would have it, IHJR was working on an international effort to form what was called the 'Shared Narratives' program, namely to present

²⁴ When in late 2010 the committee for the conference "*Indonesia and the World in 1965*" in Jakarta announced an essay writing competition for young people about the 1965 tragedy and reconciliation, there were about 1000 entries. This seems to show that interest of the youth is not limited to the 1965 tragedy, but also the history of their nation.

narratives from two parties that were, or had been, opposed through social, political or military conflict. Each group was asked to write down stories and viewpoints about the conflict they were experiencing, or had experienced, with the aim of making them understand each other so as to be encouraged towards reconciliation. Among the opposing parties IHJR asked to write down narratives, were those involved with conflicts in Serbia-Bosnia, Turkey-Armenia and Israel-Palestine.

With the Indonesian connection, IHJR supported PUSdEP's proposal to record and transcribe narratives from parties who had been directly or indirectly involved in the terrible 1965 tragedy. The purpose was the same, namely to create a critical approach, mutual openness and understanding, which would encourage a process of reconciliation. With IHJR's support, PUSdEP then gathered a group of both senior and junior researchers with an interest in history, to search out, request, listen, note and process the experiences of informants of the 1965 tragedy. Together with them, we formed a research team (qualitative) by interviewing informants with varied backgrounds to reflect the 'shared narrative', which was the common purpose.

At the beginning, we divided into groups to research and interview witnesses with various backgrounds: Muslim, Christian (Catholic), Javanese mysticism, Chinese, military, and Indonesian revolutionary fighters. As we went on, we found the need to widen the scope of our research to include those who were victims of the 1965 tragedy. Particularly when we realized that informants who were former freedom fighters in Indonesia's revolutionary period were also among the 1965 victims. Our intention was to remain faithful to the spirit of 'shared narratives'.

How they remember

The accounts in this book are not intended to prove whether what the informants say is true or not. The purpose is more the wish to view together how the 1965 tragedy is viewed by the informants. Here they are given space to present their *memories*. In relation to the witnesses, this means appreciating how they view, analyze and give meaning to what happened in 1965. With regard to the victims, this means paying attention to ways they experience, analyze and give meaning to what they experienced in that tragedy. In other words, this book does not primarily want to convey 'what happened in the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia', but rather 'how informants remember and give meaning to what happened in the 1965 tragedy'.

In part three of the book, we present the writing of two members of the History Commission at PUSdEP, made up of a report and reexamination of the results of their research into the attitude of religious organizations (in this case, the Indonesian Catholic Church hierarchy) towards the 1965 tragedy. As members of the young generation in Indonesia who were neither witnesses nor victims in 1965, they interviewed informants and read some of the relevant literature to present their own views. We hope this part of the book can provide another dimension to the narratives in parts one and two. Ideally, there would have been more than one report in this section, but because of time constraints we were able to present only one.

We feel it necessary to point out that this book is absolutely not intended to be an effort to ‘whitewash’ those groups who the Indonesian government in its official version has to date accused of being the ‘guilty’ parties in what happened in 1965–1966; whether that be those linked to the Indonesian Women’s Movement, members of the Communist Party, supporters of President Sukarno or even President Sukarno himself. To reiterate, this book merely sets out to convey narratives that come from memory, and attempts at giving meaning to these, from a few Indonesians who either directly or indirectly became witnesses or victims of the humanitarian tragedy of 1965.

We have used various methods in our oral history research to make these accounts available to readers. One was through direct interviews which were then transcribed and edited. There were also hand-written accounts by informants after our intentions had been explained to them. There were also oral interviews which were later supplemented with written interviews. There were narratives which were the result of rewriting of interviews with information then supplemented with earlier writings from that informant, in the form of books or seminar papers. All of these are presented here so that, in viewing history, and particularly with regard to the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia, the reader can obtain a more comprehensive picture.

This book began as a compilation by Indonesians, with an Indonesian perspective for Indonesian readers. Now, with its editing and translation into English, some changes have been made to make the book more intelligible and (enjoyable) to readers outside of Indonesia. Even so, we cannot guarantee that we have had complete success in that. It might be that the Indonesian nuance is still too thick, making the book difficult to appreciate. We apologize if this is the case.

Finally, to add a technical note, we point out that almost all the names in this book are pseudonyms. Apart from respecting and safeguarding the privacy of informants and because of their own request for this, we have

done this so that the reader's attention is not primarily focussed on the individual, but rather on their narrative. Whatever the explanation, it seems clear that in this case *what* is being narrated is much more important than *who* is narrating it.

Listening to voices

Any historical narrative is not written for its own sake, but for particular social purposes. One of the functions of historical narrative, as we observed at the beginning of this chapter, is to assist society to understand what is going on and flourishing around it, socially, politically and economically. This is why every society and every generation feels the need to continually convey its history to other societies and generations.

As far as the historical narrative of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia is concerned, as is well known, it has been dominated by the official narrative from the government that was extremely close to the powerful interests of that time. As a result, the way that Indonesian people understand what is going on around them is very much coloured by the purposes behind the official narrative. The end result is distortion or damage of Indonesians' views not only in how they view the past, but how they view themselves in the present and the future. If these distortions are not corrected, this negative effect will never end.

In the past, any attempts at listening to and recording narrations about the 1965 tragedy from the perspective of the people or victims were stamped as efforts to spread 'certain' views, namely, leftist views. Sometimes the accusations were that people involved wanted to revive a 'certain' political party. Today, it seems that Indonesian people – the young generation in particular – are aware that such accusations cannot be perpetuated. Indonesian people are more aware of the importance of conveying narratives from the people's perspective in order to open the space for dialogue so that there will also be space to learn together about the history of this nation. And of course this does not mean history according to the version of powers-that-be, inseparable from their interests – whether that be political, social or religious powers – but history according to all parties concerned with Indonesian history.

Through listening to the voices and narratives behind the 1965 political-humanitarian catastrophe in Indonesia, which come from varied perspectives, we hope to jog all our memories of what happened at that time, and what

happened after it. And in this way we will better learn from what happened in Indonesia for all of our sakes, wherever we are.

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We hope that the result of all this communal work will produce a result that is useful not only to readers, but also to as many people as possible, both in Indonesia and elsewhere. As we know, every human event contains useful lessons for other people wherever they are and at whatever time. Many products of historical writing have assisted us in drawing lessons from humanitarian events of the past. We hope this book will become a tool for us to take and engage with lessons from past events, specifically that which occurred in Indonesia in the 1960s, a decade that was full of movement and socio-political upheaval.

PART I

WITNESSES' ACCOUNTS

Introduction

The narratives in Part I are from people who were *not* victims in the 1965 tragedy – or at least not direct victims. As such, they can ‘distance themselves’ from what happened at the time, can view it in a wider context, and tell this to you, the reader.

Informants from the military, for instance, saw what happened in 1965 as the climax of political tension that had been escalating since 1963. According to their accounts, the murder of the military generals on 1 October 1965 sparked the anger of certain people in the military. President Sukarno’s avoidance of taking strong action against the Communist Party of Indonesia (which military circles saw as the party responsible for the murders) lost him his authority. This was particularly the case when he refused to dissolve the Communist Party. According to our informant, Soeharto took the initiative to keep the situation under control. And the arrests and exile to Buru island of political prisoners took place after President Sukarno had been toppled from the presidency.

Other informants see that the difficult economic conditions of the time made the populace anxious and easily provoked. Apart from the difficult economic conditions, President Sukarno’s ideas about NASAKOM – the slogan for cooperation between Nationalist, Religious and Communist groups – also encouraged political parties to tensely eye one another and raised the political temperature of the time, the effects of which were sensed by society as a whole. In a situation like this, propaganda spread as news via the mass media, was easily swallowed whole by the people. They then formed their own opinions, and based on these opinions carried out certain collective action. However, as this informant says, much of the news in circulation at the time was fabricated to mislead public opinion without the public being aware of it.

There are two interesting narratives from informants from the same urban neighbourhood or *kampung* in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. They both observed there was no particularly worrying social tension in the lead up to 1965. Whilst it was true that there was competition between a certain religious group and the People’s Youth group (*Pemuda Rakyat*), which was close to the Communist Party, this competition was basically carried on in the artistic arena and in a kind of ‘banner war’. They both stress that there was no physical violence or anything like that. They were therefore shocked

that, in late 1965, such large-scale collective violence could suddenly occur, whether arrests, murder or imprisonment.

One of the non-victim informants believes that the 1965 tragedy occurred because people had transgressed God's laws. According to him, however, every transgression has its consequences. This informant's reflections on the situation at that time remind us that people should not accuse, kidnap, let alone judge one another. People do not have the right to judge others. According to him, only God has the right to judge and punish.

Unlike our informants who see transgression against God's laws as the cause of the tragedy, another points to the Western Bloc in the Cold War, led by the United States, as the important factor. America and its allies were afraid that if Sukarno were allowed to stay in power, their own interests would be at risk. As 'proof', this informant shows that in post-1965 Indonesia, it was America that gained the most economic advantage.

Apart from whether observations such as these are correct or not, we can see that from the perspective of those who were not direct victims of the 1965 tragedy, there are many possible reasons given as to why it happened. Some see the cause as political tension among the elite, some believe that the cause was economic difficulty that was manipulated at the centre, some see it as part of the conflict of interests within the context of the Cold War, and others are convinced that the cause is transgression against God's laws. All of this shows that, if one sees the 1965 tragedy outside of the official narrative, our views become richer.

It is hoped that the narratives in this section will inspire you (and all of us) to think more critically and openly about the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia, and about other important moments in the history of mankind.

It was just unavoidable fallout

The 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a member of the military

Born in 1938 in Malang, East Java, Indonesia, Dr. Sofyan Djaenuri (not his real name) is our narrator below. His father was in the army. After he graduated from high school Sofyan continued his studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as a student on a government bonded scholarship. While he was at university he became active in student organizations.

Having completed his studies in Yogyakarta he did further study at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, and later worked at the Institute for History and Anthropology in Jakarta. One of his assigned duties was as Assistant Researcher at the National Monument (Monas). Apart from this, he had a military career for 30 years. In 1995 he retired, at the level of Colonel. Even though he is retired, he still works as expert staff.

The following narrative is an edited transcription from a written interview with Col. (ret.) Sofyan Djaenuri. The writer conducted the interview at the Museum Satria Mandala in Jakarta, a museum run by the army.

My name is Sofyan Djaenuri. I was born in 1938 in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) I started school. But then along came the revolution which began in 1945. My father was in the army, so my family had to keep on the move. But I was not allowed to say that my father was in the army. We moved from Jombang to Ponorogo, to Malang, Plaosan and so on [all in East Java]. I was even ‘orphaned’ because I was always being left by my father. I went into an orphanage. My father was always moving. My schooling was also interrupted, because I had to move too. I then returned to Malang in East Java to go to high school there (SMA Negeri I) and I entered the ‘A’ section which was for literature, and followed the Dutch educational system. In 1958 I graduated from high school. I then continued my study at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta on a government bonded scholarship. This was the easiest way to study at the time – there was no selection or enrolment, you just turned up. But after I passed I had to work for the government.

Then I went to work for the History and Anthropology Institute. I had many duties. One of them was as Assistant Researcher at the National Monument (Monas) in Jakarta. I worked in the military world for more than

30 years. After I retired in 1995 [Sofyan Djaenuri's last rank was Colonel, ed.] I continued to work as expert staff.

Speaking of history, to me history is change. Every generation has its own history.

Heating up

As for the 1960s, I can speak from personal experience. I experienced this time with awareness, and as an educated person. I was aware because I was already educated, I had higher education.

I started out as a student in Yogyakarta in 1958. I studied in the Faculty of Literature and Culture (Fakultas Sastra and Kebudayaan) in the History Department at Gadjah Mada University. My background was Muslim. Therefore, when I was studying at Gadjah Mada I became a member of the Association of Muslim University Students (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, HMI). The name of the head of the Commissariat at the time was Taufik. I was a member of the HMI Commissariat of the Faculty of Literature.

At that time, relations between students were friendly enough. There were large student organizations, like HMI, GMNI, CGMI, PMKRI, GMKI and PERHEMI,²⁵ but relations between them were fine. In my department there were about 50 students, and we all got on with each other, we even felt we were one 'corps'. That's how it was. There were no problems. This was the situation around 1958–1959. It was fun being a student at that time.

But little by little the situation was heating up, and it got hotter by the day. Particularly as of 1963. Groups began to compete with each other. There was competition here and there. And along with the rise in the political temperature, competition between students became more overt. Moreover, the atmosphere at the time was 'revolutionary'. Competition between student organizations was on the rise.

How to measure this? By observing the process of the election of the Head of the Student Senate. The situation was tense, then it was hot. There was

²⁵ HMI, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Association of Muslim University Students; GMNI, Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Students' Movement); CGMI, Konsentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Movement Concentration); PRKRI, Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Indonesia (Indonesian Catholic Students' Association); GMKI, Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Protestant-Christian Students' Movement); PERHIMI, Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian University Students' Association) [Chinese].

heavy conflict between leading figures and the various groups. The figures at the forefront of the Association of Muslim University Students (HMI) were Taufik, who I mentioned earlier, and later Yusuf Sakir – the same Yusuf Sakir who was once a Member of Parliament. There was also the late Muhamad Qolil. At the Indonesian Student Movement Concentration (CGMI) there was Mas Tjipto. I am referring to the one who was nicknamed ‘Short Tjipto’, not F.A. Sutjipto who later became Dr. F.A. Sutjipto. There as also Suparto Ibnu Ruslan. He was a member of CGMI. Between these figures there was competition. Competition to become head of the student senate. When the elections were held, it was not CGMI that won, but GMNI, because it was more popular. The election itself went off comfortably, but the situation was heating up. This was 1962.

Open competition

The heated situation of the time was also seen in the competition and ‘affiliation’ claims between groups. One group would claim itself to be ‘communist’ and another ‘nationalist’. The Association of Muslim University Students (HMI) was said to be ‘counter revolutionary’. But HMI was daring too. Basically, all three groups were about the same in this. Well this is understandable, as they were all made up of young people.

In this kind of situation, I ‘knew my place; as a bonded student. For someone like me, there were certain requirements. Actually, we were free, but after all we had a tie to the government.

When I finished my studies with a Bachelor of Arts degree, I immediately looked for work in Jakarta. And from then on, between 1962–1965, I didn’t know what the situation was like in Yogyakarta. People said that it was heating up. In Jakarta I worked while I was attending lectures in the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia. Well, it turned out the situation there was just the same. Just as hot.

At the University of Indonesia there was competition between CGMI, GERMINDO (Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia, Indonesian Students’ Movement), PMKRI, GMKI and others. And there was PERHIMI. This was the association of Indonesian students of Chinese descent. It was a minority group. Its orientation was ‘leftist’. Those on the left were, for instance CGMI and PERHIMI. Those considered ‘right’ were, for instance, HMI, PMKRI, GMKI and PMII (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Student Movement). But PMII was small.

When I was in Jakarta [between 1962–1965, ed.], you could already feel the heat of the conflict between HMI and students whose position was centrist but revolutionary, namely GMNI. GMNI was left leaning. But the real left ones were CGMI and GERMINDO. I didn't see any PERHIMI in the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia. Perhaps they were there, but I didn't see them.

Competition between them was heating up. How did you know? Well, at student orientation time. It was really evident then. In Yogya, orientation used to go on smoothly. But at the Faculty of Literature at UI it was hot. Whereas in Yogya this heat only happened at the time of the election of the head of the senate, at UI it happened both at the time of the election of the head of the senate and at orientation. It was really sharp then. I was not involved, but I saw that it even came to fighting. I was not involved much, because from 1962 I was already a civil servant.

The heated atmosphere in Jakarta was seen in the street demonstrations. From 1962–1965 the atmosphere was getting hotter. Demonstrations were allowed. The political tension was between the 'revolutionaries' and the 'counter-revolutionaries'. People said that the situation started heating up after President Sukarno's speech titled 'The Rediscovery of Our Revolution' on 17 August 1950. Then there was public competition between the Murba Party and the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI). Both of them were leftist, but different. The Murba Party's basis was 'Madilog' [Materialism, Dialectics, Logic], but the Communist Party's basis was MDH or Materialism, Dialectics and History. They were under one roof, but different. They were even longstanding foes. So there was accusation going back and forth between the Communist and Murba Parties. It was the most bitter competition, number one. Number two was the competition between the army and the Communist Party, or the Communist Party and the army. But the Communist Party was on the one hand opposing Murba, and on the other, the army. Meanwhile the politics of the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI) were different, split. Their concept was Marhaenism. There was competition between the PNI and the Indonesia Party (Partai Indonesia, PARTINDO). This competition was all open, and you could read about it in the newspapers. It was competition in the political arena.

In the fields of culture and literature there was competition between the Islamic group and The Institute of People's Culture (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, LEKRA). The Islamic Group was represented by Hamka, among others, while Lekra was represented by Pram [Pramoedya Ananta Toer].

You could see this, for instance, in the competition between the daily *Harian Rakyat*'s leftist column 'Bintang Timoer' and dailies like *Merdeka* and *Berita Indonesia*. Newspapers were divided into three groups at the time, leftist, centrist and rightist. The centrist was the newspaper called *Suluh Indonesia* whose orientation was Marhaenism. *Suluh Indonesia* was centrist in orientation but veered to the left and was owned by the PNI. You could not really gauge the voice of *Suluh Indonesia*. But its purpose was clear, to perpetuate Sukarnoism.

So, clearly at that time, if the left was oriented towards Marxism, the right was oriented towards Islam. Well, what was in the middle was not really clear. Basically, they wanted the status quo in Indonesia, and they were Sukarnoist. That's how I saw it. The economy at the time was still based on 'Dekon', or Economic Democracy. Meaning that the economy was under direct state control. This was all totally open – you could read about it in the newspapers. They were all confronting each other, and competing in using the term 'revolutionary'.

So, now for the open competition between the army and the Communist Party. The Communist Party attacked the army with its concept 'Nasakom Unite/s' (*Nasakom Menyatu*). The army answered back by saying 'Nasakom is my Spirit' (*Nasakom Jiwaku*). This became a serious political issue. The army supported Sukarno, but was anti the Communist Party. This was a problem. This was also open competition of the time.

Extraordinary

Now, as for the role of Pak Karno, President Sukarno.²⁶ At the same time, from 1959, President Sukarno had been proclaiming what he called the 'New Revolution' (*Revolusi Baru*). The idea was probably from the French Revolution. In the French Revolution, there were two stages. The first stage of the revolution was followed by the second stage led by Danton, Robespierre and Marat. This is what in world history is often referred to as 'the second revolution'. Well, from 1959 Sukarno held up the ideal that there had to be such a 'second revolution'.

In actual fact, his wishes at the time were noble and worthy. Put into words, they would probably go like this: 'I want, before I die, for the nation of Indonesia to be united. Unity between the ideologies of 'Nas' (Nationalism), 'A' (religion, *agama*) and 'Kom' (Communism). Return to the 1945 Constitution

²⁶ To refer to President Sukarno, the informant sometimes deliberately uses the term 'Pak' rather than 'Bung Karno' which, for Indonesians, is a familiar term of address that has revolutionary nuance and emotional intimacy.

which will support Indonesian socialism, because the ideals of the revolution are for the realization of Indonesian Socialism or Social Justice. Return to the ideals of the Revolution.' Sukarno judged that the democracy that had been in existence from the 1949 Round Table Conference until 1959 was what is called Liberal Democracy. Sukarno was the one who used the term 'Liberal Democracy'. You can see that in Sukarno's speeches of the time.

Sukarno conveyed the concept "*samen-bundelling van alle revolutionaire krachten*", namely gathering all the existing socio-political forces into one revolutionary force. That was it. The ideals were noble ones. Sukarno wanted to overturn the old, outworn values with new values. This was similar to Nietzsche's ideas. He wanted to overturn liberal values. To overturn them, there had to be that '*samen-bundelling van alle revolutionaire krachten*'. That was Pak Karno's intention.

Sukarno's actions were closely monitored by the Communist Party and the army. They agreed. There was the concept of 'Nasakom is my Spirit' (*Nasakom Jiwaku*) supporting democracy, and so forth. And the Communist Party said 'Nasakom United' (*Nasakom Bersatu*) and wanted to dominate. Within the frame of gathering the support of the people and so forth, the Communist Party declared its revolutionary offensive. This was all declared openly. If you opened the pages of the daily *Harian Rakyat*, you would often come across the terms: revolutionary offensive. So all forces were summoned through mobilizing the masses and so forth for the purpose of that revolutionary offensive. In every field. For instance in carrying out the Unilateral Actions (*Aksi Sepihak*).²⁷

In the field of culture and literature, there was tension too. For instance there was tension between the KKPI group and Lekra. The KKPI were then called the 'Cultural Manifesto Group' (Kelompok Manifes Kebudayaan), which was shortened to 'Manikebu'. This was a term that sounded pejorative or insulting, because it was associated with the sperm (*mani*) of buffalo (*kerbau*). You can read about all this in books that discuss the situation at the time, for instance *Sebelum Prahara* by Rosihan Anwar.

In the field of politics, tension broke out in August 1960. Sukarno banned both Masyumi and the Indonesian Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis Indonesia, PSI) [via the edict UU No. 200/1960 ed]. Leading Masyumi and PSI figures were arrested and detained, at Wisma Jl. Keagungan, Jakarta

²⁷ The forced seizure of land by the people based on the Agrarian Land Reform (Undang-Undang Pokok Agrarian, UUPA) and UUBH (Undang-undang Bagi Hasil) of 1960. Most of these actions were initiated by the Indonesian Peasants' Front (Barisan Tani Indonesia, BTI) which was under the umbrella of the Communist Party, ed.

in particular. Others were detained elsewhere. This can be read in Mochtar Lubis's book *Harimau, Harimau* [translated into English as *Tiger! trs*]. There was also the polemic around the Murba and Communist parties, between Murba and the Communists, between the supporters of Tan Malaka and the Communists. Interesting. And then, the Communist Party drew up what was called 'Teachings of the Grand Leader of the Revolution', namely the teachings of Sukarno. This was just like the 'red book' with the teachings of Mao Tze-Tung. These teachings were published in all newspapers.

A strange thing at the time was the writing in the newspaper *Suluh Indonesia*. There was reaction against the 'Teachings of the Great Leader of the Revolution', namely with the way the newspaper published all Sukarno's writings and speeches from beginning to end every single day. This was intended as a reaction against the writing of Sajuti Melik whose pen name was S. Juti, with the title 'Understanding Sukarnoism'. That was the reaction. It was strange. For 'Understanding Sukarnoism' was first published in the newspaper *Suluh Indonesia*, which was an Indonesian National Party (PNI) newspaper. So, you see the study of PNI is important! Its mass media was like Murba, but then became leftist.

This was all going on around 1965. At that time, reading the newspapers was enjoyable. Newspapers were popular, because they all talked about politics. There was no just 'so-so' newspaper. Their political contents were clear. Once a newspaper was seen as 'yellow journalism' you could be sure it was considered problematic. It would certainly not get its publishing licence (Surat Ijin Terbit, SIT). This is what happened until 1965, until the G30S (*Gerakan 30 September*, 30th of September Movement). This was what being 'progressive revolutionary' was all about. You could sense the atmosphere strongly at the University of Indonesia where I was studying, particularly around the issue of whether or not students' initiation was necessary.

Another issue that raged at the time was of course Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia. This was 1964. It was big. But the thing that was the biggest at the time was the tension between the 'revolutionary' group, the Communist Party's term, versus the 'counter-revolutionaries'. If someone or a group was called 'counter revolutionary' you were finished. Done. You can read all this in the mass media.

In the field of the economy, Sukarno's concepts were admirable. Amazing. For instance '*berdikari*' [*berdiri di atas kaki sendiri*, or standing on your own two feet]. I admire Sukarno's ideals in this. His ideals for changing society were extraordinary. In the terms that he created, Sukarno wanted to change Indonesia from a 'soya bean cake nation' to a respected nation. He wanted

Indonesia to become the nation that led oppressed and colonized nations. Sukarno did not want to use the term ‘under-developed’ countries, but rather ‘developing countries’. If I am not wrong, this conference was held in the 1960s. The overseas visitors to the conference stayed in a place called the Colombo Complex near where the Sanata Dharma University campus in Yogyakarta is today. This is why the street near there is now called Jalan Colombo. The conference itself was held in various locations, including the Gadjah Mada University campus.

Good career

As for what happened in 1965, I have two sources, namely my own personal experience and the result of my study. My personal experience was like this. At the time, I lived in the area of Cikini in central Jakarta. I was boarding with a friend of my father’s called Mukhlas Rowi. He was head of the Islam Spiritual Centre. I was with him from 1962 to 1966. He was a sort of second father to me. He was on Achmad Yani’s staff. His office was not far from the Cathedral in Jakarta. When the 30th of September Movement took place, I didn’t know. Pak Mukhlas Rowi also did not know. Well, it was a coup d’etat after all. So it was secret.

Much later I thought about this, I researched it, wondering why so many people did not know [about the coup d’etat] except for those with interests in it. Then I read a book titled *The Coup d’Etat*. It was about cases of coup d’etat. I forgot the name of the author. But he was an American. As for the 1 October Incident [1965], after I thought about it, indeed it was exactly as the book *The Coup d’Etat* said: the way it was planned, carried out and so forth. There was indeed a coup d’etat against Pak Karno. The theory and points are just like what is discussed in that book. There are other books that also talk about coup d’etats. The nature of coup d’etats is that they are secret.

The question now is who exactly were the perpetrators of that coup d’etat? It is clear that the coup d’etat was led by one group, one intrigue, that was secret, led by Lieutenant Colonel Untung. The first stage of the coup d’etat was successful, but the second stage failed. There has been much analysis about this. The second part of the coup d’etat was open, so that many people knew about it. And then a figure arose, called Soeharto. The question is, why did Soeharto arise so that Untung had to face him? Who was Untung, really? Why did he lead a coup d’etat force? What was his ideology?

If you read the daily *Kompas*, Untung’s original name was Untung Kasmuri. Not Samsuri. He was a member of the Digdo Battalion. This was

one of the battalions from the Surakarta division under Brigadier Slamet Riyadi. Pak Digdo's full name was Sudigdo Honggotirtono. Giving names to battalions copied the Japanese occupation. So when there was a battalion it was named after its commander. So there was Bedjo Battalion, Malau Battalion, Mukhlas Battalion, Sumitro Battalion and so on.

Pak Digdo was a former PETA soldier [Pasukan Pembela Tanah Air, or Defenders of the Homeland volunteers army formed by the Japanese occupiers to fight against the allies, trs]. But Pak Digdo was also leftist. And he had been involved in the Madiun Incident of 1948. He took part in the rebellion in Solo. One of the members of Digdo's Battalion was called Untung. It is clear that he was a former NCO. Back in those days, if you were an NCO, your personal registration number [Nomor Registrasi Personil, NRP] had six digits. Officers had five digits. That's back then. I have no idea nowadays. But your NRP was for life. Then Untung's career just kept on rising until he became Commander of the Banteng Raiders. In Semarang. If I am not wrong, he replaced Pak Sugijono. That is, Lieutenant Colonel of the Infantry Sugijono, the Chief of Staff of KOREM 72 [Komando Resort Militer, Military Area Command] who was later murdered in Yogya. His second was Brigadier General Katamso, the Commander of Korem 72 Yogyakarta. But before this, when Pak Harto was in the Trikora operation, Untung was in the Mandala Army Unit that was parachuted into West Irian. And according to Ben Anderson, Untung once landed in a Dutch camp, or he was arrested or something ... anyway, he came to a bad end there. But in the military, yes, his career was good. He kept rising up the ladder, becoming experienced in the field, even though he had little education. But I saw that, as an ex member of Digdo's Battalion, he was already communist in ideology. Maybe later on some things changed, some things stayed the same and so on. That's another matter.

Extremely close

Now, many people ask how come the relationship between Soeharto and Untung came to be so close, and so on. Well, you see in the Army there are certain ties. People who do not study the military often make wrong judgements. It's like this. In the history of our army, the TNI [Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Army] began as the Revolutionary Army. The Revolutionary Army was part of the 1945 generation and existed until around 1982 or so. Katherine McGregor [the author of *History in Uniform*, ed.] gets it wrong. She does not know about the Revolutionary Army.

During the Revolution, we did not have an army. There was just the people's army. And back then, everyone was free, anyone could take up weapons.

The organized army came later, namely after 5 October 1945. It began with the BKR [Badan Keamanan Rakyat, Body for the People's Security]. The BKR was born from a suggestion, not an official directive. The BKR came out of Pak Karno's suggestion: 'Hey, you should form an army.' But at that time the people themselves knew they wanted to fight for independence. So there were some who joined BKR, and some who joined militia, I mean militia with various ideological backgrounds. Basically, they were all revolutionary. And then came what was called the 'revolutionary army'. But in order to understand this 'revolutionary army' a special study is needed. As for me, I compare our revolutionary army with the way the Soviet Union revolutionary army was formed. Or with the way the revolutionary army was formed in the United States. Remember that the American army started out as a revolutionary army too. As for the armies in Malaysia, India, Pakistan and so forth, none of them is a revolutionary army. They are 'reform armies'. Many books discuss this.

So the revolutionary army has a special character. They are all like that. The Chinese army too. First is the strength of a sense of solidarity or kinship between them. Nowadays we would say their 'esprit de corps' is extremely strong.

The revolutionary army is also democratic. So our army started out with ideals like this. It was democratic. Might sound strange, a democratic army. A *contradictio in terminis*. But this was the revolutionary army. And people who write about the military in Indonesia just don't get it. Even though our army started out with a background as a revolutionary army. So the ties are of one corps, one spirit: this is your 'Father', and the others are his children.

Apart from this, revolutionary armies also feel that they have political rights. They make no division between politics and the military. They see themselves as fighters, either armed fighters or political fighters. The person who made the division between political fighters and armed fighters was Nugroho [Notosusanto]. But it is clear that they all see themselves as fighters, as freedom fighters. That is the character of revolutionary armies.

But as for education, that is quite another thing. Back then, even illiterates were taken into the army. But their spirit of defending their right to freedom was extremely strong. So their motivation for fighting was strong. Even commanders might have only junior high school education. Just take a look at the backgrounds of those in the army. There were some

with high school education or academics, but they were the minority. You could count them on the fingers of your hand. Nasution for instance. But most were freedom fighters. Just imagine, a Pak Bedjo who was illiterate was a battalion commander. And there was Malau, Abdullah who was a becak driver – all of them battalion commanders. And they got on just fine. Their subordinates were utterly loyal to them. It was rare for someone in the army to understand politics and so forth. But their solidarity was high. Just like the Soviet Union. So the character of a revolutionary army is a universal thing. And we in Indonesia were like that. Once you felt you were part of a corps, you became extremely close.

That's why I find it strange that people puzzle about the closeness between Soeharto and Untung. When Soeharto came to Untung's wedding, people saw it another way. But why shouldn't he? He was his former battalion commander, after all. Untung was the commander of the battalion that was parachuted into Irian. And Pak Harto was an army man through and through. There are lots of stories about Pak Harto that point out the strength of his 'esprit de corps'. And Untung was his subordinate. Many non-military researchers just don't seem to understand this. They don't get it. But to Pak Harto, anyone he considered had served under him was someone he would accept and help. This was because he had such strong corps solidarity.

This is the case not only with Pak Harto. Take Bung Tomo, for instance. I once went to his home in Jalan Blitar. There I saw lots of guests, and all of them were men who had served under him. This could only happen because of extraordinary 'esprit de corps'. Even after so many years had passed. Bung Tomo treated me as his one of his men, and he felt he was my 'father'. This was common back then, between members of the '1945 Generation' army. We were never ashamed to ask our former superiors for help. But nowadays, well, don't even think of it. Totally different.

From this strong 'esprit de corps', 'bapakism' (father-ism) was born. It was not a matter of *primus inter pares*, but a patron-client relationship. Non-military researchers usually do not understand this situation of revolutionary armies. To someone in a revolutionary army, even if you do not like someone, you will still show that person respect, because he is a revolutionary buddy. This is what many non-military researchers do not understand.

We are talking of the particular case of Pak Harto. But the same sort of thing could happen in Egypt or anywhere. The revolutionary soldier is a patriot, a defender of the nation. Pak Nasution once said that the army is the 'primary stakeholder' of the Republic. That's what Pak Nas said. And this shows that the 'esprit de corps' of the military is very strong. This is what

writers of military history often do not undersand. If you want to know more about the relationship between Soeharto and Untung, you have to know the relationship is of a Commander or Officer and his men.

If a former subordinate meets his former Officer, the former Officer will already know what his former subordinate is doing. I mean, he will know if there is a problem with his welfare and so forth, whether his kids are going to school or whether someone in his family is ill. Even though the relationship of the unit is broken, the spiritual relationship is still there. So if a former commander accepts an invitation by one of his former men, that is completely normal. I myself would do the same. I would take it as an honour. The honour of reciprocity between him and me.

So you shouldn't see the relationship between Pak Harto and Untung as anything other than part of the nature of the revolutionary army. The relationship between subordinates and commanders is very close. If a former subordinate wants to 'pay a visit', then the commandant knows at once that he must need something, and he will usually give it. This was normal among members of the 1945 Generation army.

Buru Island

As for Pak Harto himself, he started out as a corporal in KNIL²⁸, the Dutch colonial army, before the war. He joined in Gombong, central Java. It was there that he had military training. And he had cadet school. Basic training. Then from that he kept rising in the ranks until he finally became general.

When the 30 September Movement happened, Pak Harto knew who the leader was, namely Untung, because it was broadcast on national radio (RRI). Actually, Pak Harto already knew who Untung was. Untung had served under him, after all. He also knew that Untung was close to the Communist Party, to the communists. Now, not many people know this. Why did Soeharto act? There are many interpretations about this. Different ones.

Even though, it was actually like this. At the time, Pak Harto was second in command of the army after General A. Yani. He was commander number two. He was commander of KOSTRAD [Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat, National Strategic Command]. The first commander was named General. In June 1962, President Sukarno carried out a reorganization of the Indonesian Army. This is information from my reading. He changed the

²⁸ *Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger*, the colonial army of the Netherlands East Indies

old system which was a staff system, like Army Chief of Staff, Navy Chief of Staff, Airforce Chief of Staff, into Commander. So the former Chief of Staff was now Commander. So now there were Army Commander, Navy Commander, Airforce Commander and Police Commander. In other words, it was a commanders all round. And these commanders were under their Commander-in-chief.

The Commander of the Army at the time was General A. Yani. Below the Commander of the Army, called PANGAD, was the Army's National Strategic Command, called KOSTRAD. Even though it had commands, KOSTRAD was only a branch. It did not have special forces. Its forces were dispersed. KOSTRAD was led by the PANGKOSTRAD who was under the PANGAD. The PANGAD was also superior to the KODAM (Regional Military Command) and to their various PANGDAM (Military Region Commanders). The PANGKOSTRAD had no forces. Its forces were dispersed. Dispersed among the KODAM. Untung and the Banteng Raiders were a KOSTRAD force, or, more precisely, under KOSTRAD. And they were in Semarang. For instance, the Kujang Brigade. This was under KOSTRAD. But it was there, not in Jakarta. In Solo there was also a brigade. It was below KOSTRAD. KOSTRAD itself had no forces. So, KOSTRAD supervised territorial forces. At the time, the terms were A, B, C etc. Not numbers. For instance, the Katamso Battalion in Kentungan, Yogyakarta, was a territorial force. It was under PANGDAM. So, the managing was a local matter. The supervision was under KODAM, not KOSTRAD. KODAM was not allowed to mobilize forces.

So, the highest in command of the army was Yani. If the second in command was Soeharto, then why did Soeharto take action? Because he knew that his commander had been murdered. Six high-ranking generals of the army had been murdered. Who had murdered them? It turned out to be Untung. What a bastard this Untung was. And here was where the esprit de corps came to the fore. Because he then studied, who was this Untung? How could Untung be a traitor? And who was behind him? It turned out to be the Communist Party. And apart from the Communist Party, who else could possibly be supporting Untung? It turned out to be the Air Force. This was the result of his interrogations, of course. Pak Harto analyzed everything that had taken place on that 1 October. Very fast. Soeharto was really amazing. We have to give credit for that, his speed in analyzing situations. Who was this? Untung. So then. Untung must be the Communist Party, that was his immediate conclusion.

How did Pak Harto know it was Untung? Well, of course because he already knew him. Untung was his subordinate. Where was he based? Halim [Halim Perdanakusuma airfield]. Who was there? Omar Dhani? So he summoned the RPKAD (Regiment of Army Commands) to secure the situation. To restore the situation. This was called the counter-coup. So there was a coup d'état and then a counter-coup to topple it. So the coup failed. And who was the perpetrator? The Communist Party. The Communist Party, you see? The PKI was an element of Nasakom. The army then asked Sukarno: 'So Pak, how about the Communist Party?' To the army, it was clear 'They have murdered my colleagues ... So, in short, what's to be done, Pak?!' The army or Soeharto firmly demanded for the Communist Party to be banned. So Sukarno was in a tricky situation.

So – let's cut it short shall we? Basically, the army could not accept that their Commander-in-Chief and his colleagues had been murdered by the Communist Party using Untung. So they complained to Sukarno: Pak, what about the Communist Party, the matter is clear, and so on. But it seemed that Sukarno was dragging his feet or something. But that's my own interpretation, okay? Based on what I read about the dialogue between Sukarno and Soeharto, basically Soeharto said: 'Pak, ban the Communist Party. If the party is disbanded, then we are safe, Pancasila is safe.' That was the conversation. Then Pak Karno answered as usual: 'To [meaning Soeharto], we have Nasakom. And I have made Nasakom renowned the world over. We have unity between the nationalists, the religious, and the communists. They are all one. If the Communist Party is banned, then what about this concept of mine? I will be ashamed in front of the whole world.' That was the first thing.

The second thing Pak Karno said was: 'If the Communist Party is banned, then the party leaders will carry out political guerilla action. You will find it difficult confronting them'. Well, Pak Harto got that message, and he analyzed it. He thought: 'Pak Karno, Mr President, actually does not want to ban the Communist Party. It is all just talk ... promises, just promises. He is just delaying action.' In Soeharto's eyes, leaders such as this cannot be trusted. Pak Harto no longer had any faith in Pak Karno. Basically, in the eyes of the army, Sukarno's prestige had declined. In Pak Harto's eyes, Sukarno's prestige had fallen. So the situation was critical. In the army's eyes, Sukarno had become unjust. He had veered to the extreme left.

His conclusion was; if this is the case, Sukarno is defending the Communist Party. That was the first thing. The second, about the political guerilla movement, Soeharto also analyzed those words of Sukarno. And he

thought: 'rather than ... rather than be hassled by the Communist Party leaders, arrest them and their cadres. Gather them together in one place.' So that was where the idea of exile to Buru Island came from. The basis of it was from Sukarno's own words. To Soeharto, rather than have the trouble of political guerilla action, it would be better to take certain measures to avoid it. So Soeharto took Pak Karno's own words to be used for his own thinking. Many were arrested, but then that caused problems to do with the provision of food and so forth. It was difficult. So they had to be put in one place. Once again, this was where the idea arose of sending them to Buru Island.

Checkmate for Sukarno

Well, at the same time there was a political tussle going on, namely the political tussle between Sukarno and Soeharto. Political tussle. Yes? So if you read B.M. Diah's book, Pak Karno lost this tussle. Why did he lose? According to B.M. Diah, it was because Sukarno was fighting alone. He was alone! Truly alone. He was alone in facing pressure from the army. Where had all Sukarno's supporters gone? Well, actually Sukarno's supporter in this time of crisis was the Communist Party. But there were already 'operations' against the Communist Party, it was already dissolved. It had not been formally dissolved, but it was already scattered. That was the first thing.

The second thing, apart from that, was all of Sukarno's assistants had been isolated from him. The military term for this is 'knocking the props'. The army had already carried this out. 'Crash! Crash! Crash! There they went, the supports knocked down, and Sukarno was left alone. His props were his supporters, especially the masses. As soon as there was 'knocking of the props', dok-dok-dok, he was destroyed.

The third thing was that Soeharto succeeded in miniaturizing, diminishing, all of the organizations Sukarno had made. Not only the ones Sukarno made, but all the organizations that supported him. The 'props' were people. But this was organizations. These organizations were miniaturized.

Take for instance KOTI [Komando Operasi Tertinggi, Supreme Operational Command]. As the head of government, Sukarno's position was that of President. But as the Commander of KOTI, he was Supreme Commander [Pangti, Panglima Tertinggi]. As Supreme Commander of KOTI, Sukarno's power was extraordinary. But Pak Harto was able to miniaturize it. At the time, it was the height of the 'Crush Malaysia' campaign. Pak Harto turned KOTI into KOGAM [Crush Malaysia Command]. Pak Karno was then no longer the Supreme Commander of

KOTI but just the Supreme Commander of Crush Malaysia Command or KOGAM.

Remember that after the 30 September Movement, Soeharto was ordered to restore security and order, so he formed a command called KOPKAMTIB, or the Command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order. While diminishing the role of KOTI, the role of KOPKAMTIB increased. KOTI was miniaturized, while KOPKAMTIB was enlarged. And got really ... huuuge. Even though KOPKAMTIB was just an 'offshoot' of KOTI. Sukarno didn't even realize that he was being locked in. Done ...! Then Sukarno couldn't do a thing. The only thing he could do was 'crush Malaysia'. Maybe he was 'Supreme Commander', in fact the power was with Soeharto. When KOTI was dissolved Sukarno had no power at all. Soeharto succeeded in miniaturizing Sukarno.

Soeharto used KOPKAMTIB firstly to wipe out the Communist Party, but at the same time to miniaturize Sukarno. And Sukarno was unable to oppose the force of the army which was extremely well organized. Sukarno was also unable to do much when there were student demonstrations. On the one hand the students were the spontaneous element, but on the other hand they were also part of the operation to miniaturize Sukarno. The students were part of the social-political operation.

In confronting their opponents, revolutionary armies use two 'weapons', namely technological weapons and social weapons. Tehnological weapons are used when confronting armed opponents, but social weapons are used to confront non combat opponents. These can take various forms: it might be pressure, or slander, or other things. Student demonstrations are part of the 'social weapons' to oppose non combat opponents.

And it turned out that Sukarno was unable to face this. In this contest he kept on losing. The climax of his loss in the contest was the emergence of the Order of March 11 [1966] called *Supersemar* (Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret). People might laugh, but the Supersemar letter showed that Sukarno could be tricked. It was 'checkmate' for Sukarno. Well, at least this is my interpretation. But it is based on analysis.

Power gone

It was clear that Sukarno could no longer do a thing. What could he do? Scream, not even that. His props had all fallen down. There were no more supporters. His supporters had been isolated. The organizations that supported him had been miniaturized. You see?

And meanwhile, the army was absolutely organized. Compact. The army was unified, except for those sympathizing with the Communist Party. But those who sided with the Communist Party were quickly hunted down with full military force. Particularly after Sukarno said that revolutions often eat their own children. But it turned out that revolution doesn't only eat its own children, but also its 'Father'. The proof is that Supersemar letter.

As for the Supersemar letter, there are many versions of this story. But these versions are just lies. It is clear that Sukarno had lost, he couldn't do anything. His power had all been locked up. He was finished. He even asked Soeharto, [in low Javanese] 'So, what are you going to do with me?' Sukarno was finished. Pak Harto was a Javanese. When he was asked this, he still kept his language polite.

There was no manipulation behind the formulation of the Supersemar letter. At the time, Pak Harto was sick. Whether this was sick of politics or not, I don't know. But it is clear that the ones who went to the palace in Bogor were people loyal to Pak Karno. They were true Sukarno loyalists. Like Basuki Rachmat. He was Sukarno's former secretary in his role as Commander of PEPERTI (Supreme Military Administrator). M. Jusuf was also a Sukarnoist. Amir Machmud, when he served Sukarno, was totally committed. He would do anything. Umar Wirahadikusumah even more so. In army circles he was known as 'Sukarno's stooge'. Sabur even more so. Sabur was Sukarno's own adjutant. He was Commander of the Cakrabirawa, Sukarno's personal guard regiment as president. His deputy was Maulwi Saelan. Panggabean did not go to Bogor Palace. You can check all this in the palace log book.

As for the text of Supersemar, according to me the first draft was handwritten, dictated to Sabur by Sukarno, and then typed up. The text of the Proclamation was written by Sukarno. But the text of Supersemar was written first by Sabur. Then it was typed.

Basically, with the Supersemar document, Pak Karno's power was finished. It was checkmate. He was at stalemate. That's how I see it. I have no interest here in defending Sukarno or Soeharto. According to me, there was no treachery in the formulation of Supersemar. How could there be? There were three people writing it. So it is impossible that they deceived Sukarno. Especially as these were soldiers. When soldiers see their superior commander, they are afraid. The distance is like earth and sky. The soldiers' love of Sukarno was amazing. No one dared to replace Sukarno. And after all Sukarno was President for Life, right?

Fomenting revenge

Well, once people began to see Sukarno as unjust, there was no other way. Sukarno was a leader but could not be trusted. The army felt that. That's my conclusion. Sukarno had to be replaced. But how to replace him, that was difficult. Who would dare to replace Sukarno? Remember, he was President for Life. And that was legal. That had been a parliamentary decision. But Pak Harto was clever. He called parliament (MPRS). He called those members who remained after the cleansing.

You could not topple Sukarno with a coup d'état. The people would not accept it. So Pak Harto called parliament. He said, your help is needed. Then Sukarno was summoned. And he gave various speeches. One of them was his Nawaksara speech. Basically, in the interest of history he said that there were people who were not good, that there were the leaders of the Communist Party who had gone astray, and so on.

And there were various interpretations. But the question was whether Sukarno had dissolved the Communist Party. If he had, why had he not reported this. And this has given rise to various opinions. Some people like Asvi [Dr. Asvi Warman Adam] say that this was creeping coup d'état, while John Roosa [Dr. John Roosa, the author of *Pretext for a Mass Murder*, ed.] said something else, and so forth. Pak Harto said to the Assembly: 'This is the problem. It's up to you what is to be done about it.' As for whether the Assembly wanted to 'cut in on' Sukarno, that was their affair.

Now, in relation to this, there was one force within the military that was seen to be implicated in the 30 September movement, and that was the Air Force. According to my research about whether Omar Dhani was Communist Party, this has never been proven. In Javanese you can ask 'how many things have you found' (*ketemu pirang perkoro*) to show Omar Dhani is implicated with the Communist Party? Meaning, how could he have been involved? His background was different. He was an aristocrat. If I'm not mistaken, he was of aristocratic descent, wasn't he? That's the first thing. The second is that his life style was bourgeois, not proletariat. And what's more, he was a handsome man. He was called 'Gatotkaca'. According to the study of communism, how could someone like him be a member of the Communist Party? If someone wanted to join the party, they were 'tracked', there was a search on their family background, their profession and so forth. They had to be of proletarian descent. But Omar Dhani was of aristocratic descent, feudal. So he could not join the Communist Party. Impossible, in other words.

The question is, how did he come to be accused of being involved with the Communist Party? Because he was a Sukarnoist. He was ‘unreservedly’ Sukarnoist, as the phrase of the time went. Sukarno himself felt at home with Omar Dhani. He was able to raise in the ranks in super swift time. He told me that himself. I knew Omar Dhani.

He was Sukarnoist through and through. He was a sensitive man. The way he saw it, he would oppose anyone who interfered with Sukarno. He would defend Sukarno to the last drop of blood. Probably he got information or a whisper that there was going to be a movement that would endanger the Great Leader of the Revolution. So he immediately jumped in. But he forgot that he was Commander of a Force with extremely large power! The largest in Southeast Asia, probably. So, because of this I conclude that actually Omar Dhani did not understand politics but joined in politics. He was an army man who was used by politics. Used. He did not just let himself be drawn in, he was used. He was not a political man. He was a soldier. He did not understand politics. Yet he supported the 30th September Movement and even issued an order. To him, it was all Sukarno. Sukarno. He did not know that Sukarno had become the ‘pawn’ of the Communist Party. The theme of the 30 September Movement was to ‘safeguard Sukarno’, yes? And on the other hand Soeharto was accused of being counter-revolutionary and going to murder Sukarno. But the reality is that Sukarno was kept safe, wasn’t he?

Then there was the Supersemar letter I already mentioned. From then on Pak Harto took over various political actions, like forming the presidium and so forth, and Sukarno just kept quiet. He couldn’t do anything any more. He was still giving speeches about ‘Jasmerah’ [*Jangan sekali-sekali meninggalkan sejarah* or ‘don’t ever abandon history’]. But who were his supporters? There weren’t any left. Or if there were, they did not dare challenge Pak Harto. After all, those in the army that supported Sukarno and the Communist Party had been crushed. The Communist Party leaders were nervous. They were being hunted everywhere. The only one doing anything was Sudisman who was known for his ‘Criticism-Autocriticism’. He criticized Aidit’s leadership. According to him, Aidit had become a dictator. He was no longer democratic as he used to be. The tradition of criticism-autocriticism had vanished. Sudisman strongly criticized Aidit for trying to make Indonesian society like Chinese society. He wanted to just plant Chinese Communist Party ideas in Indonesia. The ideas and struggle of the Chinese Communist Party he just wanted to adopt. Aidit’s views were identical to Mao Tze-tung’s. No more than a ‘photocopy’.

Sudisman gave the example of Aidit wanting to instil ideas about evil landlords. But here we did not have landlords. There were *kyai*, but Aidit forgot about the social leadership of *kyai*. Aidit criticized them as landlords. Even though it is different. And then, well there were the Unilateral Actions [*Aksi Sepihak*] and so on. These direct actions later produced an extraordinarily strong sense of resentment, extraordinarily terrifying.

Going mad

My own views about the [1965] national tragedy are, well, complicated, aren't they? What is clear is that the tragedy cannot be wholly laid on the army. After all, it involved the masses. And I, well ... it was an outcome. The outcome of Communist Party actions at that time, which they called 'progressive revolutionary'. They offended people, they offended their opponents. For instance, by considering our society to be the same as Chinese society, as I said. It seems that our society agreed and did not mount a counter offensive. But the instant their movement failed, the people who had previously been called counter-revolutionary took action ...

But that's that; this is the history of our nation that is really terrifying ... and regrettable. Even so, it all happened. Was the violence that took place violence between the feudal class and the proletariat – well no. What happened was proletariat against proletariat, farmer against farmer. How could this be? Particularly when the Communist Party had already lost, there was no other way except ... [the sentence was unfinished, ed.]. That's enough ... [sentence is unclear, ed.]. It was a conflict which ... I cannot imagine. Even now, so long after the event, I still feel it.

At the time of the incident, I was in Jakarta. I had become a civil servant in Jakarta. But I knew what was going on in the regions. For instance, what my mother experienced in Malang, East Java. My mother had a big house. She worked as a trader. She bought food ingredients that she resold. Like corn. In front of the house was a field, or front yard, which was used for drying ingredients. And there was also a big shed where the foodstuffs were stored.

Now, at the time of the G30S Incident, the army asked to use the storehouse to house detainees. There were male detainees, and female ones. The purpose was unclear, whether they were being secured or imprisoned or what. My mother was terrified. She did not dare go out. There were many held there, but there was only one toilet.

The people there were 'plucked out' (*di'bon'*) by other people. There were only a few soldiers. After all, how many men did the Regional Military Command (KORAMIL) have? According to my mother, many were

‘plucked’. Meaning that they were taken away and usually never returned. Some screamed, they did this or that. Understand that among the detainees there were many women. Some were arrested in their homes, some were arrested at other places. Terrifying.

People who worked just as horse-cart or buffalo-cart drivers to carry goods were arrested too. The reason was just because their boss was a communist and they were his coolies. So they were arrested. Some of them were actually *santri*, but they also went ‘missing’, who knows where. Even though they regularly went to the mosque. Back then, if someone wanted something, they went to the mosque, did the ritual bathing, prayer and so on. So people were regularly going to the mosque. But because their boss might be communist, then they were arrested. There were women, men ... look, talking about all this makes me sad. It’s uncomfortable. Yes, that was ... I think that was just justification for ... oh it was so savage when progressive politics was being proclaimed.

But this is all the way I see things now, after having the opportunity to think about it and so on. And these are also my reflections as an old person, whose knowledge is much deeper than a young person like yourself. I have been young, but young people have never been old, ha ha ... Basically the situation at the time was really terrifying. Truly. I often reflect and wonder, if this is the path of Indonesia? What should a leader do, and how, with such heavy responsibility?

In East Java, the atmosphere was absolutely terrifying. So much so that when Onghokham²⁹ went to East Java and saw the corpses in the Brantas River he went mad because of the stress. He couldn’t bear it. He started shouting: ‘Long live the Communist Party! Hidup PKI!’ As a result he was arrested and detained. He was released only after the intervention of Pak Nugroho Notokusanto.³⁰

Politics is important

There are various lessons we can take. First, for leaders and political parties. Leaders and political parties, in their politics, should not involve the army.

²⁹ Onghokham (1933–2007) was a lecturer at the University of Indonesia and a prominent historian in Indonesia. Amongst other things, he published *Wahyu yang Hilang, Negeri yang Guncang* (2002).

³⁰ Nugroho Notokusanto (1930–1985) was a Minister of Education and Culture (1983–1985). He had previously been Rector of the University of Indonesia, Jakarta (1982–1983). His career was in the military and education. He is known as a historian who was extremely pro the New Order government.

Do not bring the army in to achieve power, To achieve power, do not use violence. This is my reflection as a military man.

Secondly, for the military, if you do not understand politics, do not take part in politics. The result can be fatal for this nation. It should have stopped with the Generation of the revolutionary army or the 1945 generation. That's enough. Enough.

So, if you join the army, be the army, do not join politics. Lieutenant Colonel Untung was army. But he wanted to play politics. The army should not play politics like those who have really been trained for politics. The ones who meddle in politics outside the military, and the ones who meddle in internal military politics both want political power. Intervention in politics can truly harm the nation. It is dangerous for the state. As for the 'dual function' of the army, that should stop with the 1945 generation. It's enough. Done. Over. With Soeharto's departure, that's it for political involvement. Soekarno was part of the 1945 Generation. That's enough. Let the generation of the revolutionary army be like that. But that's enough. I am neutral, see? In today's terminology, I mean, go back to being professional. There's no need to take part in politics. And political parties should not drag the army in to intervene.

The danger is that people always want to have everything. Hey, what have you got? You've got intelligence, weapons, personnel, and so forth. So just touch them a bit and they can react.

If people want to attack one another in parliament or wherever, let them do it, but there should not be military intervention. It was enough for the revolutionary army generation to intervene in politics. Close the book, and let that be part of our history. They should not be blamed, though. Regard it as - that's Indonesia, that's our history.

If historians want to comment this way or that, well that's their business. But it's clear that this is our history. Politics is important. The army is also important, but the army that is professional. Not the opposite, where the army joins in organizing politics. I know, the Communist Party slogan back then was 'Politics is the Commander'. So the army could also be political and be the object of politics. Well, this is what Pak Karno copied, and so did Pak Harto later on. But now all of this should be closed with the resignation and death of Pak Harto. So, that's it, the revolutionary army generation is finished. And as for the 'dual function' cadres, what of them? Well, if they are still needed that's okay, but actually that's finished. Because dual function is the product of the revolutionary army generation.

Times are different now

The 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a Muslim

The narrator of the following account was born on 26 December, 1937. His unofficial name is Suberjanto, and he has six children, all male, and all of them married. He comes from Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His last education was at the Academy for Fine Art. When the 1965 tragedy happened, his first son had only recently been born, and was aged 3 months. As a member of the Muslim organization 'Muhammadiyah' at the time, he worked in the Muhammadiyah Health Clinic (Pusat Kesehatan Umat, PKU).

Suberjanto's account presented here is edited from an interview conducted by Mohammad Subkhi Ridho, a young Muhammadiyah activist and alumni of the Masters Program in Religious and Cultural Studies at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. The interview was conducted in Suberjanto's home in Kotagede on 3 September, 2009.

My name is Suherjanto. I was born on 26 December 1937. I have six children. They are all boys, and all of them are married. My highest education was in visual art. I attended the Visual Arts Academy (Akademi Seni Rupa) in Yogyakarta. I married in 1964. In 1965 my first son was born. At the time the G30S/1965 incident occurred, my first son was just three months old.

In 1965 I was working at the PKU, the Muhammadiyah Health Clinic. I was helping the organizers. I was very active in health and education.

I was born into a family that was active in the Muhammadiyah movement. I became a member of Hizbullah when I was still small. But as for me, in 1965 I was not very active in the goings-on in response to the G30S, because I just had my first child who was only three months old. So I was more at home.

When the G30S/1965 incident happened, I thought to myself the house must not be left empty. My parents, my father, mother and later my older brothers, also Pak Asnawi and Pak Basori, they were the ones who were active in the movement to response to the G30S incident. At the time, Muhammadiyah definitely had certain forces and cadres to call on. Their top figures were very active in this matter.

Raising alert

In 1948, when the communist uprising in Madiun occurred, in Kotagede [Yogyakarta] there had been a Muhammadiyah movement dedicated to 'crisis response'. In 1948 I was still in the third grade in primary school, so I did not really know what was going on. But officially, Hizbullah stood against the Communist Party-Muso movement [the Communist Party under Muso's leadership]. At the time, Hizbullah was very zealous. Their activities at the time included holding meetings, prayer meetings (*pengajian*) and so forth. All of this was in the context of firing up a spirit of opposition among Muslims in Madiun. Through prayer meetings, sermons in the mosque and so on, the information was circulated that over there [in Madiun] there were actions being carried out by the Communists.

Before 1965, there were often scraps between people in Muhammadiyah and the Communist Party. These were primarily scraps between youth. On the Communist Party side, the youths were represented by the Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth), whereas the Muhammadiyah side was represented by Pemuda Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Youth). Often, when there were youth activities that involved the people at large, like celebration of holidays, whether Islamic holidays or national ones, a kind of competition went on. The Pemuda Rakyat often competed or did something intended to interrupt or ruin the activities that the Pemuda Muhammadiyah were doing. This sort of thing was very prevalent at the time.

The activities meant as interferences were not usually aggressive. There were no attacks or anything. It was just interrupting, or frightening prayer groups. Just that sort of thing. For instance, preventing people from going to the prayer group. So the disturbance was just frightening people or blocking their way. Well, actually not even ambushing them. Just doing certain things to make people frightened. Actually, if I am not mistaken, at the time there was once a clash between youth, fighting or physical contact, and some people were hurt, but it was not serious. Nothing big. It was just local, normal stuff.

To say it again, even though here was psychological competition between the Pemuda Rakyat and Pemuda Muhammadiyah groups, there was never any physical fighting or violence. The Islam side never did anything aggressive. They were conscious of being respectful. The important thing was to safeguard that the Muslim faithful not be harassed and that they should not harass others. So there would not be conflict.

At the time, on the Islam or Muhammadiyah side, what was going on was just awareness raising, and constant surveillance of their movements [the

Communist Party, ed.]. For instance, if you were going to have an activity, there always had to be coordination. Apart from that, the Islam side also often paid people to check what the other side [Communist side] was doing, so we'd know what they were up to and what we had to look out for.

Unacceptable

There was a time when I heard directly from a broadcast, but I didn't know who was broadcasting. According to the broadcast, the Communist Party was going to carry out a coup d'état and overturn the government. Therefore the people had to be on their guard. They had to guard their homes. And remember, at that time news was going round that a document had been discovered with a list of names of prominent people in Kotagede who were targets for killing by the Communist Party. So based on news like this we gave information that 'X' was the son of a Communist figure, or his family was involved and so on, so we had to be on our guard against them and so on.

We got information about the coup d'état mainly via the radio. It was through the radio that we got the first news from the centre that there had been a coup d'état carried out by the Council of Generals and all that. But the news was confusing. Listening to all that information made us confused. Which news was true? The first news was that there had been a coup d'état carried out by the Council of Generals. But I listened to information that explained that it was Lieutenant Colonel Untung who had carried out the coup d'état. There was no other information. And even more, what about Sukarno, there was no word at all from him. There was nothing, there was no statement about how he was and so on. At the time, I heard that the coup d'état had been carried out by Untung. Then there were also Communist Party figures.

Well, as soon as there was information that it was the Communist Party that had carried out the coup d'état, people here started to get prepared. Remember that Kotagede was one of Pemuda Rakyat's training centres. Their location was east of Jalan Kemasan. Wow, that used to be the 'red' territory. But *alhamdulillah*, after it had been clearly established that the activity [coup d'état] had been carried out by the Communist Party and their stooges, we prepared ourselves to face that territory. Then after coordination and that kind of thing, and information was clear and so on, then we began to help the government officials, which at that time meant the military. And that's when the arrests of the 'reds' started.

Men and women were arrested. Everyone. Communist Party members, Gerwani, Pemuda Rakyat, all of them. There were men and women. Basically, the activists who had been active before the Gestapu [30th September Movement, trs.] were all put on the list [to be arrested, ed.]. We knew them because of the incidents of competition or the scraps that had happened before the G30S incident. That's how we knew who the main figures were and so forth.

From Muhammadiyah itself there wasn't any kind of official letter that rejected the existence of the Communist Party. But it was clear that everyone, especially the Muslim community in Kotagede the majority of whom were Muhammadiyah, could not accept [the existence of the Communist Party]. But it seemed that there wasn't any [official letter of that nature]. Or maybe I just don't know. What is clear, is that whether or not there was an official letter, within Muhammadiyah itself there was good cooperation in the effort to deal with or respond to and oppose the G30S movement.

Vigilance

The arrests of Communist Party, Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat figures in Kodagede was largely carried out by security officials. Many among them [those arrested, trs] came from Kotagede, and after they were arrested they were exiled to Buru Island. But *alhamdulillah*, after the main figures were arrested, those who remained and lived in Kotagede, well you could say were totally powerless, weren't they? Many of them could be persuaded to return to the teachings of Islam.

Those who at the time were still small, just born, or still in the womb of course had no inkling of what was going on. That's why I think that if their rights are also reduced, well, I don't think that's right.

But as for those who at the time were adult or youths, they certainly knew what went on. That's why I think the policy of attaching the code 'ET' or 'eks tapol' [ex political prisoner, trs.] on the identity cards of those Communist Party people is alright because it is all in the context of keeping people vigilant so there will not be a similar incident for the second time.

But if this policy continues to their grandchildren, meaning spread equally, well that's not right. If this policy is eventually revoked, I think this is right. But we have to keep instilling vigilance. Even though their rights have been restored, they should be given a declaration, for instance a declaration that they were not involved in G30S, so that if there is any doubt, it can be sorted out.

Peaceful way

The way I see it, the present is different to the past. Nowadays, if someone follows a certain ideology or joins a certain group, this is all done with awareness.

Because of this, if someone wants to join an organization, they should really know about the organization they want to join. If they want to join Islam, it should be clear what kind of Islam. Because it turns out there are all kinds of Islam. There are the hardliners, whose steps and actions are often not in keeping with the guidelines of Islam that is peaceful, gentle, friendly and kind. So, if I want to follow a certain belief, of course I should really know about that belief. It shouldn't be just because this school of thought is well-known or trendy. We should not follow a group without knowing their mission and vision. As for Muhammadiyah, this is clear. It is a social organization not a political one. Its method is to coax someone so they will join, or through sermons, so they will follow religion carried out in a gentle way.

So, if someone choses to join Muhammadiyah, they will not be influenced to become hardline. Muhammadiyah's way of upholding religion is the peaceful way, the way that can be accepted, because its guidelines are *amar ma'ruf, nahi mungkar*. So *amar ma'ruf* comes first, meaning to encourage or invite, [to do good deeds] and not *nahi mungkar* [abandon bad deeds] which is to forcefully get rid of sin. Instruction comes first. Only when instruction bears no result and so on is there the need for force. But force that does not cause problems.

Right now there are still 'reds', meaning former communists, living around the area of Ledok [Kotagede]. Even now. But I can't rememer their names exactly. Some of them are former teachers who were detained and after their release they were given duties here again and they mixed with society again. And we can accept people like that, as long as their attitude in society is good. Usually they ones who used to be teachers, after release they work as masseurs and that sort of thing. They open massage places here and so on. And we accept them.

The people who approach the ex-communists to help them improve are those who in 1965 were already active in Muhammadiyah leading prayers or sermons (*dakwah*). The ones who invite them to get involved are from the Muhammadiyah leadership and basically those Muhammadiyah people who at the time were already active in *dakwah*. We invite the former communists to join us and we do not consider them enemies. We do not consider that

all communists have to be treated as enemies. No. We only have to do ‘you know what’ to the main figures, but as for the others, if we can, we include them. If they really resist and so on, then we keep an eye on them. If they are active, we report them. Then it is the officials who handle them, so that in the end many want to go to the mosque, join in prayers ...

The Muhammadiyah women’s group or Aisyiah is also active with ex Communists so they embrace Islam. They are given guidance. Basically we work with the ones with potential. But if there are some who remain oppositional, or are still obstinate, usually we coordinate with government officials to ensure the ones who continue to cling to communist idealism will not be left to do whatever they like.

When the ‘reds’ [ex political prisoners] are invited to embrace Islam there are some who refuse, although there are many who accept. There are those who want to accept and join, but there are still some who do not. All kinds. But most of those who are from Muslim families usually want to return. But those who were not originally from Muslim families do not necessarily want to.

Our methods of bringing them in are often not formal, but personal. As I already said, there are ‘reds’ who have a member of their family who is Muslim. So, through a personal approach they end up interested, and marry a Muslim. That’s one way. There are also people of ‘red’ ideology who later become related with a Muslim family via marriage, for instance, as in-laws.

Actually there is no formal approach. Usually they are invited to come to a meeting. If they come, they are greeted warmly. It is not necessary to mention their political background. You especially don’t mention whether they are ex political prisoners or not. If they come along, then they have to be greeted warmly. So the method used is the family way.

We must remain vigilant

The 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a Muslim

Born on 23 January 1944 in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the informant in the following narrative, with the pseudonym Asnawi, was the youngest of three in his family. His family was traditionally Muhammadiyah, like Suberjanto in the previous chapter. His father was a Muhammadiyah activist at the branch level and active in various social activities. When the 1965 tragedy occurred, he was 20 or 21 and a member of the Muhammadiyah Youth (Pemuda Muhammadiyah). At the time he was a student in the Economics Faculty of Gadjah Mada University (UGM), Yogyakarta.

The following is an edited version of an interview conducted by Mohammad Subkhi Ridho, a young Muhammadiyah activist and alumni of the Masters program in Religious and Cultural Studies at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. The interview was conducted on 17 September 2009 at the office of Baitul Mal wa Tamwil (BMT) an-Nikmah in Kotagede, Yogyakarta.

My name is Asnawi. I was born on 23 January 1944 in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. I was the youngest in the family. The oldest was a girl, who now lives in Wonosobo, central Java, and then there was a boy, but he died in 1999. I have one daughter. My son-in-law is from Pekalongan, central Java, and they have just given me my first grandchild.

I was born into a traditional Muhammadiyah family. My father was a Muhammadiyah activist, even though only at the local branch level, not at the central level. My father was active in social activities. For instance in the neighbourhood (kampung) cooperative. My father was head of that.

When the 1965 tragedy happened, I was 20 or 21. I was still a student in the Economics Faculty of UGM [Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta]. At the time, I had just started my studies, but then lectures stopped because of the Gestapu [30th September] incident.

At that time, all activities at UGM stopped for one semester. Lectures started up again in 1967. I finished my bachelor's program in 1972. After I started out as a student, I got active in the Muhammadiyah organization, namely Pemuda Muhammadiyah. I was even head of the Pemuda Muhammadiyah around 1968–1970, before I graduated from UGM.

After finishing my bachelor degree studies in 1971, I moved to Jakarta at the end of 1972 and worked there. I was away from Yogya for about

30 years, and became a civil servant in Jakarta, and in 2003 I returned to Kotagede. In Kotagede I was asked to manage activities at Baitul Mal wa Tamwil or BMT.

Yes there was tension

As far as the 1965 tragedy goes, both before and after it I was merely an 'extra', to use the term from the world of film. Meaning my role was way below a supporting role, neither an intellectual actor or an activist. Yes, every night I was on the nightwatch rounds, but still no more than wandering around and joining in, not actively involved, let alone knowing in detail about all kinds of things. At the time I was still small fry. I was not yet active in the Muhammadiyah organization. I had already joined the Muhammadiyah Youth, but only as a member.

What's more, from 1960 to 1965 I was still young. I was just a pup. I became a member of the 'Sanggar Bulus Kuning', an art group run by Muhammadiyah in Kotagede. I became a member of the Publications Division. My duty, amongst other things, was to make banners, to make pictures using wood or paper. The art group was made to 'compete' with the arts programs of Lekra, which was close to the Communist Party.

In Muhammadiyah there were lots of arts events. Particularly among the Pemuda Muhammadiyah and Nasyiatul Aisyia (NA). NA was a Muhammadiyah organization for young women. Their activities included playing angklung, and they were organised to keep up with Lekra's activities of ketoprak performances and Genjer-genjer dance. But as to exactly what the Genjer-genjer dance was, I don't know. I only know that in the years leading up to the 1965 tragedy it was well known. It used to be performed in Jalan Sopingan here in Yogyakarta.

At that time in Kotagede, Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, the Indonesian Women's Movement) was not prominent. The one that was prominent in the arts was Pemuda Rakyat. So NA was not a competitor with Gerwani. And NA was really famous at the time. NA were the ones who got angklung going in Kotagede. Every time there was a big Islamic holiday, apart from lectures and the like there was usually musical entertainment. The music was angklung and Islamic dances. It was the people from Kotagede themselves who performed the Islamic dances, particularly from east Kotagede, like Mertosan, Jampitan and Piyungan.

As for specifically how Muhammadiyah treated the 'reds' [leftists or Communist Party members, ed.], I don't really know. What I know is that before the 1965 tragedy there was indeed tension. What I am talking about

is the tension that happened when Muslims held prayer events (*pengajian*) and so forth, and the 'reds' held other events like ketoprak performances, gatherings and so on that were meant to 'compete' with the activities in the mosque.

No physical clashes

I heard the information about the Gestapu Incident only a few days afterwards. I got the information that the incident was carried out by the Communist Party. I got this information from a member of my family who happened to work with the intelligence. He told me that the perpetrator of Gestapu was the Communist Party. He was the one who told my parents that there were such and such movements going on. Then he told my father, 'But you do not need to worry, you do not need to take cover because this house is being well looked after.' That's what my older brother said.

The information that the perpetrator of G30S was the Communist Party was actually confused. I myself really did not know. All I knew was what I got from my older brother. He said I should not go out alone at night. That's all I heard.

When the generals were murdered in Jakarta, there was indeed a kind of counter attack against Communist Party activities. So every night Muhammadiyah members did nightwatch rounds and held self-defence practice. Amongst Muhammadiyah youth, routine practice in self defence was pretty normal. Before [the G30S] it had not been very strict. But I didn't join. Back then I preferred drawing and painting. Basically, activities that were closer to the arts. Because since I was small I've been thin, so I was never attracted to join self defence activities.

What is clear is that back then all activities were carried out with cohesion, both the arts and self defence activities. This cohesion could be seen in the nightwatch which was well coordinated. And then later the communal kitchens that the NA organized and located in mushola and nearby.

What I most remember in the arts and culture field that could be seen as confrontation with Lekra artists, was when we were both making propaganda using billboards. That was the worst it got. So it was merely a kind of war of words via what we made. There were no physical clashes.

Remaining vigilant

As for the policy of giving a special code on the identity cards of people considered to have been communists, I think that was necessary during the

New Order. But now with advances in human rights it seems it is no longer right to give such codes.

Back then, not long after the 1965 incident, Muhammadiyah people in Kotagede tried to carry out reconciliation, through socialization and proselytizing (*dakwah*). This was done by meeting communist figures. But I was not involved in this, because I was too young. According to me, after the 1965 tragedy there was an upsurge in proselytizing in Kotagede. You could see it in the emergence of many mosques. Before the 1965 tragedy there were only two mosques here, the Mesjid Gede and the Mesjid Perak. But after the 1965 incident, every neighbourhood (*kampung*) had its own mosque and mushola. And that's still going on today.

These days, I myself am active in proselytizing. And I also attend prayers at the Mataram mosque. The Mataram mosque is the very old one and it is right next door to the ruins of the royal graves. You still find a lot of superstitious practices going on there. Like spells to make people sleep (*sirep*) and so on.³¹ We have to fight against his kind of thing.

I think that one of the ways to banish these kind of beliefs is by community programs and by telling those who still make spells that this sort of thing is wrong. These practices are cultish, worshipping spirits and the like. This sort of thing is not in accord with the rules of religion. All religions are the same in that, aren't they? So the way is through community education programs. I think we need those and proselytizing. We need sermons along the lines of those by Pak A.R. [A.R. Fachruddin], that's the fresh and persuasive way.

The persuasive way is ... for instance, if you say to your neighbour, 'what, you haven't said your prayers?' Well ... your neighbour will probably be resentful. You have to find other ways. For instance, through *takjilan* [the Muslim tradition of distributing food shortly before breaking the fast in the evening during the month of Ramadhan. Trs]

Or it could also be the economic approach. For instance, these days there are many people who are working for less than the minimum regional wage. There are workers who fit buttons on shorts, and they earn only Rp 4,000 or Rp 5,000 a day. That's far, very far from the minimum wage. Just multiply that by 30 [days]. The total is between Rp 120,000 and Rp150,000. Even though the regional minimum wage for Yogyakarta is Rp 672,000 now. If someone earns less than this it means he or she is still poor.

Now this kind of poverty is very similar to the kind of poverty in the past. Many factory owners are extremely rich, but the workers are dirt poor.

³¹ Making people fall asleep so that thieves can steal their possessions.

Situations like this must be overcome by outreach sermons. Apart from this, the economic means of the *ummaḥ* must be improved, particularly those at the grass roots. I am convinced that if the people's lives are prosperous, there will not be a re-emergence of things like before. People will not go all strange. If life is prosperous, people will think: 'ah, why should I try to find work that is not lawful?'

I think that in the past the most dangerous thing was actually their ideology. Nowadays, the role of ideology is not prominent any more. There are still schools of thought, economic systems, capitalism for instance. But as for monotheism and anti-monotheism, believing in God or not – now it seems that people think more rationally. Even so, we have to remain on the alert, so that there will not be ways of thinking like before. Nowadays times are different. But we have to remain on the alert, so that the latent danger does not emerge. But yes, probably as long as Russia or other countries don't bring ideas like that into the open [communism. ed], then there is very little chance of it emerging again. But that doesn't mean that we can ignore it, does it?

Pride in being Indonesian

The 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a follower of Javanese mysticism

What you are about to read is an account about the 1965 tragedy as seen by a follower of Javanese mysticism. The speaker is Agung Priyambodo (of course this is not his real name) from Yogyakarta. When the 1965 tragedy took place he was a teenager aged 14, still in junior high school, and a member of GSNI (Gerakan Siswa Nasionalis Indonesia, The Indonesian Nationalist High School Students Movement).

The narrative below is a summary of an interview with Agung, transcribed by Kiswondo, a member of the History Commission at PUSdEP who has been active in the student movement since he started studying at Gadjah Mada University. Kiswondo is interested in carrying out further research and working together with survivors of the 1965 tragedy.

My name is Agung Priyambodo. As far as official choice of religion is concerned, mine is Islam, but in cultural terms I am a follower of traditional Javanese mysticism. I live in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. When the 1 October incident happened, I was 14 and at junior high school at SMP Negeri II Yogyakarta, in the 3rd grade. At the time I was active in the extra curricular organization called the Indonesian Nationalist High School Students Movement or GSNI (Gerakan Siswa Nasionalis Indonesia).

All cultures live

The way I see it, there really were those political categories, the nationalists, the religious (particularly Islam) and the communists. Even at school they were there. But not particularly acutely. They just competed, and there were no violent clashes. At least at school there weren't. That's what I experienced anyway. But outside, for instance in neighbourhoods (kampung), it was very clear. There was competition and clashes. In the kampung there were the youth groups Pemuda Rakyat from the Communist Party, Pemuda Marhaen from the National Party (PNI) and there was also Muslim Youth. This boxing into different categories was really acute in the time leading up to the eruption of the 1965 incident. At that time, the situation felt tense.

As far as the concept of NASAKOM went, the way I understood it at the time was as a formulation to show that in actual fact in Indonesia there

were three groups, the nationalists, the religious and the communists. But all three could be united with Pancasila. What was promoted was Pancasila. People could group together in order to move towards Pancasila. At that time, according to Sukarno's teaching, the nationalists in Indonesia were not like the nationalists of Hitler's time, meaning very extreme nationalist, who felt that their nation is the best or highest among nations, in other words, very chauvinistic. No. And then religion in Indonesia is not religion that supports extremism, where people become totally righteous. The religious in Indonesia remember that the foundation of their country is Pancasila. That's how it is. So the groupings were merely groupings based on ideology. They were divided clearly. But even more important, at the time all of the groups adhered to religion. It was only their political ideologies that differed.

So it didn't mean that the nationalists and the communists did not embrace religion. My friends who were active in Pemuda Rakyat also professed a religion. Maybe there were some who didn't. But that was their own business. In Indonesia that is how it is. Not like overseas. Here the grouping was based on political views: Nationalism, Religion, Communism. These are political views, not a sense of 'Godhood'. I think that at that time all people embraced religion, believed in God. Especially because the country is based on Pancasila, particularly the first of those five principles, namely belief in the one and only God. That is what I got at the time, when I was still 14.

In Sukarno's time, even though society was divided into groups, in the cultural arena the atmosphere was brighter. The PNI had their own *ketoprak*, so did the Communist Party. Funnily enough, at that time the impression was of closeness and harmony. Culture thrived and we were proud of our own culture. We were really proud of our identity in the cultural field.

Great potential

If you follow all the stories that have flourished in society and in history books from the New Order period and afterwards, it is as though the social situation prior to the 1 October 1965 incident was disastrous. It is as though everyone was ready for war, ready to murder other fellow citizens. That is not true! According to me, the situation at that time was not as tragic as it is now. At that time there was clear leadership. Even though there were differences of opinion here and there, the sense of national pride was strong.

For instance, there was an incident when the Pemuda Marhaen undertook a long march, with all their paraphernalia, from Klaten to Yogyakarta, and they were stopped at Prambanan by the Communist group. There was a bit of fighting for a while, but it was nothing like the street fighting today. Today fights break out between students from different universities. Even between different faculties, as often happens in Jakarta and Makassar. There are often fights between junior and senior high school students in Jakarta. In the past it was not like that. There were just a few troublemakers who liked to goad their opponents so they could get into a fight, and then it was over. It was not scary and prolonged like now.

When the 1965 tragedy happened, actually Indonesia was confused and kept questioning: what exactly was going on? Then suddenly there was the G30S, the 1 October 1965 incident. In his speech, Sukarno did not call it 'G30S' but 'Gestok', meaning Gerakan Satu Oktober (1st October Movement). It turned out that Sukarno had been whisked away to Halim [the Halim Perdana Kusuma airfield, ed.] and so on and so on. Everyone knows the story.

As far as my memory of the time goes, there was a critical political situation, and there were actually two blocks within the army itself. There was the bloc that was consumed by communist ideology, and then the bloc of the nationalists and religious. They were both competing for influence. This happened because of political party influence within the army. So the army was split and consumed by political parties, which resulted in clashes and conflict.

That's what I remember of that time of my youth. But back then I could not link one event with others. 'What on earth is really going on? What is moving this country and breaking it apart? Who is involved?' At the time, there was General Soeharto, the KOSTRAD commander (Army Strategic Reserve Command) who for the sake of security ordered the arrest of the 'rebels'. The one who was prominent in the field was Colonel Sarwo Edhi Wibowo. I saw for myself Colonel Sarwo Edhi Wibowo³² arrive on the northern alun-alun (square) in Yogyakarta piloting a helicopter, and being greeted.

But after the incident was over, only then did I become aware that there were elements of national division within the army itself. The army should be the protector of the nation, the protector the Revolution, but in actual fact

³² The commander of the army's Komando Regiment (RPKAD), a special military force charged with leading the anti-communist purge.

it was fractured and there was internal competition. But at that time I did not have any developed political view. I only knew what I knew – not much. So those generals' victims were evidently all faithful Sukarno supporters.

They were all murdered. In Jakarta there were six generals and one high ranking officer killed. In Yogyakarta there were two, namely the Commander and Chief of Staff of the Military Area Command (KOREM). At the time I happened to watch the funeral procession of those two commanders in Yogyakarta. The procession included tanks, and passed by my school at SMPN II Yogyakarta. From the direction of Jalan Malioboro the procession turned left into Jalan Senopati, and then to the Heroes' Cemetery. I saw all of that. According to the story that went around, the murders had happened in Kentungan, in the north of Yogyakarta.

In Yogyakarta, the army was split. The 403 Battalion that was famous as Yon L, short for Battalion L. Yon C [Battalion C] was stationed at the Vredenburg fort. Yon L, they say - and remember this was gossip and I was still young and didn't know much - was already infiltrated with communist ideology. Meaning it supported the communist party.

The most important thing was that although the situation was confused, the people's economy went on as usual. For instance, civil servants went to work as usual. There was no chaos or social confusion. My mother worked in the private sector as a tailor. She continued to take sewing orders, embroidery and so on. All of this went on as usual. It was just that there were particularly tense times, there were night curfews, there were blackouts, and we were not allowed to light big lamps. We could only light small lamps.

And then followed the arrests of Communist Party members. I have no idea whether they knew anything about rebellion or not, whether they were part of it or not, whether they knew politics or not, but basically they were all arrested. The term used was '*ciduk*' or 'scooping'. People were 'scooped'. I saw that with my own eyes. One day when I was coming home from school with a group of kids I saw how that scooping worked. I saw the arrest of the husband of the woman who sold *gudbeg* just south of the Mijilan arch (*Plengkung Mijilan*). But I did not know whether he was sent back home again or not. Maybe he died in custody or he was murdered or something. I forget his name. I witnessed that incident myself. If I go there to buy *gudbeg* today I always remember that the husband of the woman selling *gudbeg* there was arrested. I remember it clearly. The woman is old now, but still spritely. That is one incident that I remember.

With regard to the 'scoopings' and kidnappings, I think that the situation at the time was not particularly chaotic. At least in the area where I lived. I

lived in the Kraton district in Panembahan, Yogyakarta. The head of Pemuda Rakyat, who I knew, was taken. He was taken along with a painter. There were also people from Lekra [Lembaga Keduayaan Rakyat, the Institute of People's Culture]. At that time, remember that many artists were adopted by Lekra. They actually had terrific potential. Ketoprak performers, painters, and people involved with gamelan – they were arrested too. Two ketoprak performers from Rotowijayan, Yatin and Kdhariyah were their names, were also arrested. I know that.

Ravine

In the time leading up to the early morning 1 October 1965 incident, my neighbourhood happened to be in the process of building a community centre. It was called 'Balai RK' or Harmonious Kampung Centre, because back then we used the term '*kampung*' not '*kelurahan*'. As a fundraising effort to build the centre we put on a ketoprak performance titled 'Kridho Mardi' at Sasono Hinggil [the large open pavillion on the northern square or alun-alun, trs]. I went to watch because my father happened to be on the organizing committee. The prominent ketoprak figures in Panembahan all happened to be associated with Lekra. I can still remember the ketoprak performances I watched as a kid. The stories were really great. If you compare them with ketoprak stories today there is a big difference. They were much better. Back then the performers could really perform character. That's about all that I remember.

As for the killings, I didn't see them. At the time I was still at school, although then school was stopped for a while. In August [1965] I should have had my junior high school examinations. But the examinations were postponed. They were finally held in January 1966. In 1966 I started senior high school. I forget exactly when, but it was the beginning of the year. But what was really going on, people said, was a tragedy. They said that the people who had been 'scooped up' by the army were later taken in closed trucks and put into camps like in Hitler's time. The majority of the ones classified as Group B were detained on the island of Nusa Kambangan, and later moved to Buru Island. Those classified as group C were detained in local prisons.

Another group, they said, were executed by being thrown into a well in a ravine in the area of Wonosari, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta.³³ They were lined up, shot, and then thrown into the opening of the ravine. According

³³ A natural well that is linked to an underground current that leads to the sea.

to the story going around, some were not shot, but were blindfolded, their hands bound, and made to walk even though in front of them was the mouth of that deep ravine. Beneath the ravine was an underground river. So they fell into the ravine. Back then, my parents would not allow me to play very far away, because the situation was critical. So I truly did not know what was going on. I only knew from the stories going around. And it was only after it was all over, I can't remember the year exactly, that I knew because I was told.

Actually, there was no conflict or fighting. It is strange. The situation at the top [political elite] was explosive, but for school and university students there was nothing. Everything was calm, peaceful and went on as normal. There was no particularly sharp conflict.

At school, for instance, there was no conflict. The atmosphere was normal. For instance, those school students whose parents were in the Communist Party, or who joined the IPPI [Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia, League of Indonesian Youth and Students. Trs], were treated as normal by the teachers. They were merely called up and given a warning. Some stayed at school and went on to university. At that time there were even some who entered AKABRI [the armed forces academy. Trs].

Later I also remembered when the CHTH building [Chung Hua Tjung Hwee] was surrounded. It was surrounded by the masses, because there was a rumour going around saying that the Pemuda Rakyat were going to set fire to the Great Mosque [Masjid Agung] or the Kauman Mosque, or somewhere, I don't exactly know. Then the army came and there was shooting, a kind of battle. I was there but hiding in the central post office building. I slipped through the fence together with my friends, and peeped through the iron grill of the fence. The KONI building to the west of the Post Office used to be the CHTH building. The CHTH was in Chinese characters and I don't know what it meant. Because there were a lot of Chinese who joined the communists, their position was dangerous. My friend who was head of the Pemuda Rakyat was arrested and taken to Nusa Kambangan island. I forget his name, but I know him. His house was in the Langenastran area. He was a true communist. And his entire family were communist figures.

Then there was tension between students. Particularly after the Indonesian National Party [PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia] split. At that time there was a rumour that the PNI had been involved, that some of their main figures were involved. So the PNI split into 'PNI Asu' and 'PNI Osa-Usep'.³⁴

³⁴ PNI Asu was the acronym for PNI under the leadership of Ali Sastroamidjojo and Surachman, while 'PNI Osa-Usep' was the name for PNI under the leadership of Osa Maliki and Usep Ranuwidjaja.

And KAPPI emerged, [Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Peladjar Indonesia, the Indonesian Youth and Student Action Union, trs] and also KAMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia, the Indonesian Student Action Union). The place that was formerly the headquarters of Pemuda Rakyat and IPPI, in the southern square (alun-alun selatan), which is now where Pak Ahmad's saté stall is, was taken over by KAMI and KAPPI. After the 1965 tragedy, the Islam group were riding high, because the communist group was considered to be atheist.

Do not judge

After the 1965 tragedy, the economic situation was in a mess. As for the socio-political situation, because I was still young at the time, I didn't really know. After Soeharto took over the government, the economy felt even worse. The offices that had previously got quotas of rice, now got rice that was mouldy, because it had been stored too long in the storehouses. Some only got brown cracked wheat which tasted gluggy. Others got corn that had been milled but was still rough and not yet flour. It was after Soeharto had been governing for a long time, when Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX was vice president, that there was a quota of artificial rice made from cassava, corn and beans called 'Beras Tekad'.

It was Sri Sultan HB IX who officially launched that program. I myself experienced being sent by my parents to get our quota of rice. I went from Panembahan to the Tax Office in Jalan Senopati. The office was close to my school. I rode my bicycle with the milled corn on the back. These days we only use corn to feed the chickens. Back then people ate corn. That was around the time when Sukarno stepped down, around 1966–1967.

We used to eat rice mixed with cracked wheat (bulgur), then rice mixed with corn. I can still remember this, because it was my job to get our quota of corn-rice. The food supply was worst at the beginning of Pak Harto's government. During Sukarno's time, civil servants had rice as their basic foodstuff. But after the change of government, rice was replaced with bulgur and corn-rice. That milled corn really stank. That's what I found. As for school, everything went on just fine, there were no interruptions.

Once I was adult, and following the teachings I adhere to, I became convinced that no situation happens without cause. Everything that happened above did so as the consequence of the spirituality of someone who transgresses God's laws. It is because there are these transgressions that eventually suffering occurs. In the Javanese belief system, in this world

people merely '*ngunduh pekerti*' (reap the result of their actions) from previous life. Because of that now we are duty bound to '*nandur kebecikan*' or to 'plant good' so that what will be reaped in the future will be good. Whether or not in the following period people are '*tumimba lahir*' or 'born again', we don't know. That is God's business. What we know is that we are duty bound to plant kindness. About the 1965 tragedy, perhaps that was reaping the fruits of what happened before it. It could be that something happened way back in the Majapahit era or Mataram era, and in 1965 we reaped the results of it, couldn't it? So we reap what was sown in the past.

Now does this mean what happened in 1965 can be called a 'natural event' or something 'legitimate'? Well, I see it like this. Mankind can actually choose to be the go-between of good or the go-between of evil. That is an unavoidable reality. Because of this, in the present we are duty bound, with full consciousness, to sow good, to pay homage to God, to the state, to our parents and elders, and so forth. And we also need to pay homage to teachings of virtue, we must not denigrate other religions and so forth. These things should be done to bring about peace in life, so that one's national and social life is calm and peaceful. If these things are transgressed there will certainly be chaos. There are two kinds of suffering or redemption of sin, physical and spiritual. For instance, there are people who like to show devotion, whose piety is excellent, yet they are physically sick. This means that this person is reaping the result of his or her former deeds. On the other hand, when we see someone who is physically good, but whose mind is sick, that means that the karma he has got is mental karma. So here we have to see that he must have done something so that he now reaps this mental suffering. That is what the Pangestu teaching that I follow says.

According to the teachings of Javanese mysticism, people must not be involved in murder, arrest or banishing of people for any reason whatsoever. Why? Because that means judging others. That is not allowed. We must show love to everyone. This must be based on the belief that God is the All Forgiving, and therefore people must learn to forgive one another. People must not hate. Only God has the right to judge. In the case of those who are legal judges by profession, they judge, but this is done because their profession is to carry out the law of the state. But even so the judge must decide something in the name of God. That is why judges must adhere to the existing laws and they cannot do whatever they like.

In principle, it is impossible for us to judge other human beings, because we are not God. Because God is All Forgiving, we have to learn to forgive. Because God is All Compassionate, we too must learn to help others who

are sad or in misery. If people want to redeem their sins they have to learn much about forgiving, and then must cheer those who are sad. People may not judge their fellows.

Fear of being accused

The effect of political conflict that happened in the mid 1960s was sensed right to the level of family. At that time, there were splits between siblings in one family, or between uncles because of their different political choices. At that time, a political choice was made truly because of ideology, so that people tended to become ideological. These days, people join parties not because of any ideology, but just because of trends. For instance, today they join party A, then tomorrow shift to party B and so on. It used not to be like that. Back then there was the phrase 'I will follow Sukarno in life and death'. Now, who would dare say something like that? And were there people who said 'I will follow Soeharto in life and death?' ... no, there weren't. But back then the slogan was clear: I'm with Sukarno, in life and death.'

During Sukarno's time, people chose a political party because of its ideology, or ideals, and they had clear programs. For instance, the National Party (PNI) was clearly based on Pancasila, its principles were to work towards an Indonesia that was just and prosperous, and its programs supported Sukarno's political programs. It was clear that its leader was Sukarno, the party was PNI with the Marhaeanist Front, and its ideas were to attain a Glorious Indonesia based on Pancasila. But nowadays those parties are vague. When I was in junior high school I already knew about politics. I could sense that the politics and love for the motherland and nation was extremely strong. That spirit was really deep. There was fervour. We used to group together and make political organizations. Even though I was still young, still just a junior high school student, I was already fired up with patriotism and nationalism.

Someone who was really good at making speeches back then was not Megawati, but her younger sister, Rahmawati Sukarnoputri. In the 1960s, Rahmawati once took part in a meeting of the Marhaen Youth (Pemuda Marhaen) at the City Hall (Gedung Negara) in Yogyakarta, which is now called the Gedung Agung. There she explained the meaning of Pancasila, raising her left fist and shouting '*Marhaen menang*', 'Marhaen victorious!', and, 'with Pancasila, the common people will be victorious!' Back then, PNI's nationalism was still really pure. Not like the other parties. They did not give priority to nationalism. Back then, Pancasila, love of the motherland, and a

sense of nationalism were truly inspiring. It wasn't just lip service, but really sensed, from our thoughts to our hearts and actions. Basically, their ideals were a glorious Indonesia based on Pancasila. And in our minds the one who was the leader of this was called Sukarno. There was no other. Follow Sukarno in life and in death!

Now, in situations like these, often relations within a family can become estranged. If in one family there are some who become communist, then family relations can become estranged, or some get frozen out. For instance there was someone in my wider family on my grandfather's side, I can't remember his name, and many of his children joined the communists, and because of this they were ostracized. Relations became strained, I did not know why. For many years afterwards there was still a kind of trauma. Only much later did I know: oh, I see, they were communist. It is not actually necessarily true whether he was or was not, whether he was wrong or not, because there was no legal process at all, but they were immediately accused of being communist and then ostracized from society.

Back then, something was going on quietly, and that was by the Church. The Church extended a helping hand to victims of the 1965 incident. In particular to those who were ostracized. They then became Christian, along with their families. There are such examples. For instance, many people in ... [the informant mentions the name of a place, but it is unclear, ed.]. In this place, there was a family whose parents were involved, and then the Church cared for them. They ended up being given Christian ideology and this has continued right up to now. That's just some of them, not everyone of course. So at that time Christianity flourished from this. The social sense helped.

In the religious field, children of communists experienced an interesting development. They fervently embraced religion. I don't know the reason for this, but many became Christians or Buddhists. Perhaps because Islam hated them. To Islam, they were a huge disgrace. And because they were not accepted into the Islamic group, they became Protestant, Catholic or Buddhist.

For example, my grandfather's older brother later embraced Buddhism. After the situation got safe a few years later we started visiting each other again. I was shocked because he had really changed. The way he talked was different. Now he talked about religion, especially about things to do with God, based on Buddhism. Before the 1965 incident, all the relations used to pay visits to the grandparents at Idul Fitri. But after the 1965 incident we stopped making those visits. The reason was we were afraid of being accused of being linked to them.

No place allowed

According to some experts, the majority of Communist and National Party supporters were ‘Kejawen’ or ‘Abangan’, that is, followers of traditional Javanese beliefs or those who were only nominally Muslim. And for sure there was a group that did not have any formal religion, but followed traditional beliefs because they held the conviction that Javanese also had their own true belief system. According to them, this nation has its own spiritual foundations. In their eyes, even though the religions that come from outside of Indonesia are also true, they do not feel the need to embrace them, because we here have our own, original truth. My own religion is Islam, because I come from a Muslim family. But in terms of belief, I am a follower of Pangestu or Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal. Pangestu is an organization that has existed since 1949.

Because of the accusation going around that the majority of PKI and PNI members who were followers of traditional beliefs were ‘atheist’, the result was that it was as though they were not allowed any place. There was the idea that they had no religion. And this kind of idea arose because people saw that the ‘truest’ religions were those ones officially sanctioned by the state. And the mistake was right there. But in Pak Harto’s time in the Government Decree MPR No IV of 1978 it says ‘Religion/Belief’ (*Agama/Kepercayaan*).

Being an example

If I have to answer the question ‘what really happened in the 30th September Movement’, or ‘actually what was the issue in the early hours of the morning of 1 October 1965’, I would say that at that time it seemed that the urge of communist ideology to dominate was a real political problem. Even until now anything called ‘politics’ always has the element of the desire to dominate. In campaigns, this is what they do. So the desire to dominate goes on in all political groups. Political competition is normal.

According to me, what happened in 1965 is connected to the tensions between the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc at the time. At that time the Western Bloc, particularly the United States, was afraid of the communist ideology that was flourishing everywhere. Particularly with Sukarno’s politics at the time proclaiming the principle of the Jakarta-Peking-Phnom Penh axis. I think that The United States and the entire Western Block were afraid on all fronts. They were the ones who supported what happened in 1965. The proof is that after the 1965 incident, they

colonized the economy here. Their products were traded freely here. After 1965 there was the domination of the Western Bloc politics, especially the United States. That's a fact.

Now, what if Sukarno had not been deposed and his government programs had been allowed to continue? The question is, if those programs had gone on, could the nation and the people of Indonesia have been able to progress? Answering this question, this is what I think. The measurement is not one of 'more or less progress'. What is clear is that had Sukarno's government programs been allowed to operate fully, then, at the very least, Indonesian society would have a sense of national identity. This nation of Indonesia has a colour that is specific to us, and we have our own particular behaviour. Sukarno's ideals were clear. He showed that Indonesian identity is like this, our culture is like this, and our way of acting is like this. These were the values that Sukarno nationalism clung to. But it was not chauvinistic nationalism. We acknowledged the nationalism of others too, we also fraternized with other nations. It is a pity Sukarno was weak in economics. This is because his basis was not economics. It was also because he was too strong in his ambition to emphasize 'lighthouse politics'. He wanted to raise his ego to be on the same level as other nations.

I think that Sukarno acted prematurely. His programs were not supported by the economic, social and political conditions. I think they were before their time. But Sukarno was [impatient to appear] at the forefront. What he did was truly extraordinary. Taking his cue from the Olympics, he put on the 'Ganefo' or Games of the New Emerging Forces; he held the Asia Africa Conference; he made 'Conefo' or the Conference of the New Emerging Forces; he dared to speak at the United Nations; he even dared to say to America, 'Go to hell with your aid!'. He was aware that the aid given by the Western Bloc, especially the United States, would often become the tool to colonize this nation.

As far as the economy goes, the New Order was advanced, but its economic ideology was weak. Its economic ideology was weak and national identity collapsed. If you have development, it should be thorough development, not just physical development, but also the mental development of the nation. This has still not been achieved. In Sukarno's terms, this was called 'nation and character building'. This is important; physical and mental development. Unfortunately now this is still a mess.

Today this nation is still shaky, and infatuated with material bling, worldly bling. Especially money. This is because the character of the nation of Indonesian is not yet shaped. And so it vanishes. Ideally, the leaders at

the top should be exemplary. They should act nobly, be of good character. But these days, such ideals of the nobles of old are far from our hopes. So, will the ideals of ‘justice and prosperity’ ever be achieved? According to the elders, it takes 75 years for a nation to organize itself after it becomes independent. If this is the case, maybe it will only be after 100 years that we can approximate the United States in social, economic and political life.

Our own nation

According to humanitarian values, in actual fact violence and humanitarian tragedies should not happen. People should not act like that. A situation of harmony, peace, and love should be built into the life of the nation and the state. And within it there should be love of one nation towards others. As we know, one of the ideals of a nation’s foreign relations is to forward world peace. And domestically, it should be more the striving for peace.

In the ideology of Pancasila it is clear that what is aimed for is just and civilized humanity and social justice for all of the people of Indonesia. The Pancasila reflects this. We must not stray from this. If we stray from this, it means contradicting what has been agreed. So what happened to this nation is not punishment from God, but the result of its own actions, the actions of the nation of Indonesia itself. We have to take this lesson so that no such tragedy will happen again in the future. And in order for such a thing not to happen, as a nation we Indonesians must follow the ideology of Pancasila. That is definitely right. To believe in God in the right way each according to his or her own religion, to live harmoniously with those of other faiths, then there will be peace. If we taunt each other and clash with each other there will definitely be chaos.

In the interests of education about democracy and political ethics in the future, I hope that the present generation will hold to elements of Indonesian identity, and become complete Indonesians. Take the Japanese, for instance, their identity is clear. They wear kimonos and so forth with a sense of pride. And as for us? Are we proud to wear traditional Javanese dress? Probably we’d be laughed at. We prefer to wear suits. Even though this is just a style of dress, which can change. Even so, the more important thing is to strengthen morals and sense of identity. We have to feel proud to be called Indonesia.

But these days we are just the servant of other countries. In Sukarno’s time this sort of thing was really attacked. He said: we are not a nation of coolies, we are not a ‘soya bean cake nation’; here’s my chest, show me yours.

During colonial times, this kind of mental attitude was really forged. In these modern times, in this era of economic colonization, our nation has been pulled into the current of capitalist gain. Many of our fellow citizens have become capitalists. Nowadays the Neoklim [Neo-Kolonialis & Neo-Imperialis] or Neo Colonialists and Neo Imperialists are our own people.

The grand scenario

The 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a Catholic

The following account was given by Dra B. Ninik S. Rahayu, M.A. (not her real name) a former university lecturer who has been active in youth organizations since she was young. She is from a traditional Javanese church-going Catholic family. After completing primary school at SD Kanisius, she continued her studies at Stella Duce junior and senior high schools, which were both run by Catholic nuns. She later studied at Gadjah Mada University, a state university, which like the schools above, is in Yogyakarta.

This interview with Dra B. Ninik S. Rahayu began as an oral interview by the PUSdEP team. But for the sake of clarity and breadth, it was continued in written form. The result of this interesting, personal account is presented below.

I am the youngest of three. My family is Catholic, and traditional Javanese. My parents were particularly religious, and so all of us were baptized when we were only one week old. I grew up in the complex of the 'Dr Yap' eye hospital in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, because my father was an eye specialist, an assistant to Doctor Yap. Apart from getting home education from my parents – my mother came from an aristocratic palace family whereas my father came from a farming family – I completed my primary schooling at the Kanisius primary school in Kota Baru, Yogyakarta. My junior and senior high schooling was at Stella Duce. In 1962 I graduated from Stella Duce high school and started university study in the Faculty of Economy, Law, Society and Politics at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta. I took economics and sociology. I was attracted to multi-disciplinary study. I graduated in 1968.

Apart from a degree in economics and sociology, I also got a diploma from the Tarakanita Women's Academy (AKWA). I got a few diplomas from short courses about gender, feminism and social work methodology. I studied theology at the Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, United States, and got a diploma in pastoral counselling and a Master of Arts in the field of Justice and Peace in 1984. After graduating from Gadjah Mada I taught as a non-faculty appointed lecturer in the Faculties of Economy and Law at Atma Jaya University in Yogyakarta; the Economics Department at IKIP Sanata Dharma (now Sanata Dharma University); the Faculty of Society and Politics at Widyamataaram University; and at the Tarakanita

Academy of Social Welfare (AKS, Akademi Kesejahteraan Sosial), all of these in Yogyakarta. Following my vocation to further justice and liberty for women, I chose Tarakanita AKS as my permanent teaching base.

I was a lecturer at AKS Tarakanita from 1968–1999. Apart from teaching there, I was also Director for 15 years (1974–1989). After I retired from AKS Tarakanira in 1999, I taught feminist sociology in the postgraduate program of the Theology Faculty at Sanata Dharma University until 2009. Apart from teaching, as a female Catholic activist I was invited by President Habibie to become a commission member of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti-Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan, or Komnas Perempuan) after the disturbances of May 1998, together with 16 other members. I served on that Commission until 2008 (two periods of service).

Enthusiasm for organization

From primary school, I have always liked to be in a group and to carry out activities with my friends. I knew organizations from when I started junior high school and was active in the committee of the High School Students Organization (Organisasi Siswa). My love of organizations continued when I started senior high school, and even more so when I went to university. In 1963 I was invited to be active in the Catholic Youth (Pemuda Katolik), and even got to be elected head of the Catholic Youth movement for Yogyakarta, in charge of internal organization. It was my work alongside members of the Catholic Youth that turned me into a militant activist. Apart from encouraging others to be active in the organization, I got training or ‘cadre-ization’ in the social, political and economic fields.

The ‘cadre-ization’ in Catholic Youth really turned the youth into militant activists. The slogan ‘*Pro Ecclesia et Patria*’ [For Church and Country, ed.] and the call by Monsignor Alb. Suiyopranata SJ to be ‘100% Catholic and 100% Indonesian’ turned us into activists in Catholic Youth who were enthusiastic at organizing and at politics. The socio-political situation supported this spirit of Indonesian youth because President Sukarno would periodically give youth courses in politics and speechmaking. In President Sukarno’s eyes, the youth were one pillar alongside women, workers, farmers and fishermen. According to Sukarno these groups were the strong supporting pillars of the Indonesian nation. This is why Sukarno gave them such attention. I myself once attended one of Sukarno’s courses in speechmaking, and I also attended a course in politics for women together with my mother – who

was a member of the Indonesian Catholic Women's organization (Wanita Katolik Republik Indonesia, WKRI).

My enthusiasm for organizations continues today. Apart from being a lecturer, I am also active in the mass women's organization, the Perkumpulan Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) or Women's Solidarity for Human Rights. I became the head of the executive body of that organization from 1998–2002. I have always been part of people's movements, like the Movement for Consumer Justice (Gerakan Keadilan Konsumen). In the field of theology I am the Regional Asian Coordinator of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).

Caring about people

When the G-30-S tragedy happened, I was 22 years old (I was born on 21 August 1943) and still studying in the Economics Faculty of Gadjah Mada University. The situation on campus was very confused. Lectures stopped. Some students who were members of CGMI [Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia, Indonesian Student Movement Concentration] and lecturers who were members of HSI (Himpunan Sarjana Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Graduates) were arrested because they were accused of being involved in G-30S.

Between 1960–1965, people's living situation, especially in Yogyakarta where I lived, was really hard. It was difficult to get food and clothing. Our family could no longer afford to eat rice. We had to eat corn and cassava because they were cheaper than rice. People often got a share of bulgur rice, as aid from the Church. The social and economic situation was very bad. Ordinary people were truly going through a social and economic crisis. Together with some friends from the women's organization Gerwani and people from our neighbourhood, we formed a buying cooperative and a pawning cooperative. We shared out kerosene, rice and sugar so that everyone could get a share of these basics. The effect of this situation of crisis was to make people very easily swayed, for instance to provocation about the 'Kabir' or capitalist bureaucrats. In the villages and kampung, the evils of the 'kabir' was constantly being drilled into the ears of the people. The 'kabir', because of their self-interest, were said to be the cause of the sufferings of the people.

In this situation of social, economic and political crisis in the 1960s, the position of the Catholic Church was also threatened. However the Church leaders and Catholic political figures realized the situation. For instance, Mr I. J. Kasimo was absolutely opposed to Sukarno's concept of NASAKOM

(the unity of nationalism, religion and communism). He thought that these three elements could never be forced to unite politically, because there was a fundamental difference of principle between them. It seemed and it felt as though that the communist leaders, particularly in the legislative and executive, were forcing their will and marginalizing the figures from the Religion faction. The Nationalists were split because they had differing views. But the Church continued to carry out its mission responding to the social and economic crisis. Through Church organizations and the congregation, the Church continued to distribute food and clothing from foreign aid (bulgur wheat and used clothing). Catholic organizations like the Catholic teachers' organization, Catholic Youth, Indonesian Catholic Students (PMKRI) and the Indonesian Catholic Women all responded to the crisis with caution. The Catholic Party, Catholic Youth and Indonesian Catholic Students were prominent and extremely active in their response to the political situation.

Some Catholic leaders in the field of politics, community and education were actively and routinely distributing information and working closely with young Catholics. As an activist in Catholic Youth, I could sense that the social and political situation was critical, but the stand of the Church was extremely clear, namely, be careful and keep giving financial assistance to the faithful. Father A. Sumandar SJ and Father A. Jayasiswaya Pr, as moderators for Catholic Youth, always warned us to be careful and not easily drawn into the people's movement which was on the boil. In the villages, the Indonesian Peasants Front (Barisan Tani Indonesia, BTI) and in the towns the Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth) were increasing their activities. There were showing that they were the ones who were defending the people. This 'show of force' was drawing in other mass youth organizations including Catholic Youth, Marhaen Youth, Ansor Youth and so forth. The Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani) was carrying out activities in social, economic, education and cultural fields. With their activities of collective purchase of basic necessities, education for children, and extremely active cultural programs, they were showing that they cared for the common people.

Reading the situation

Towards late 1965 the political situation was heating up. Conflict was happening everywhere, between all kinds of groups, both internal conflict within a group and between groups. Conflict also afflicted the Catholic congregation in Yogya, particularly towards Catholic leaders who were

not displaying their Catholicism. The Catholic Youth in Yogyakarta, for instance, did not trust the Catholic representative who was appointed to represent Catholics in the Yogyakarta local administration. Catholic Youth published an advertisement in the daily newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* stating that it did not recognise the said official as the representative of Yogyakarta Catholics. This caused big problems for Catholic Youth, and the Yogyakarta regional committee in particular. To resolve the issue, I was sent to Jakarta to meet the two top leaders of the Catholic Party, namely Mr Kasimo and Mr Frans Seda, to explain the root of the problem.

I left for Jakarta on 1 October 1965 on the 7 a.m. train from Tugu Station. But before I left, my mother had heard the news on national radio (RRI) and told me to be careful because in Jakarta there had been a coup d'état by a Council of Generals. Without any fear I left for Jakarta together with Sulanjana, a fellow Catholic Youth member who was also in the navy.

In the train, I was sitting next to a man who had a transistor radio and was constantly listening to the news. When we stopped in Cirebon, the man disappeared, but he left his radio and bag behind. Then I began to feel that something was not right, and this was linked to the news about the coup d'état by the Council of Generals in Jakarta. I became even more nervous when we arrived at Gambir station in Jakarta, because it was already full of soldiers.

I was going to stay at my uncle's place at the Halim complex, but had to cancel this plan because the approach to that area was blocked by the army. So Sulanjana and I went to the Catholic Centre (Pusat Rohani Katolik) in Jalan Gunung Sahari, Jakarta. There we were met by Father Wijoyo S.J., the coordinator of the centre. He was angry with us for coming to Jakarta at such a critical time. We were permitted to stay for only one night and advised to return quickly to Yogyakarta. But because we had not yet gone to meet the central leadership of the Catholic Party, we moved and stayed at a relative's place in Kemayoran. But my relative was angry at me because evidently Sulanjana was carrying a gun, even though that very day there had been an inspection at my relative's housing complex. Aware that we were indeed facing a critical situation, Sulanjana went off alone. And after that I didn't know what happened to him.

At my relative's house I witnessed the news about the murder of the generals. We were all aware that this was all the work of the Communist Party, but we did not dare to speak openly. Together with my relative, I witnessed the burial of the generals together with the crowds packing the streets leading to the cemetery. After I had been in Jakarta for three days and

still not managed to meet the central leadership of the Catholic Party, my relatives told me to go home to Yogya. They could no longer be responsible for my safety when I continued to go out of the house trying to meet Mr Kasimo and Mr Frans Seda. So finally I went back to Yogya, alone.

When I got back to Yogya, I saw that the tense situation had affected friends because of the disappearance of Pak [Brigadier General] Katamso and Pak [Lieutenant Colonel] Sugiyono, the Regiment Commander and Commander of the Regional Military Command (KODIM) in Yogyakarta. The atmosphere became tenser still when the bodies of the two were discovered at the army complex in Kentungan, Yogyakarta, in a dreadful state. And from that time on, our situation as activists in Catholic Youth was no longer safe. Over and over again Pemuda Rakyat members came to my house looking for me. My mother always protected me and said that I was not at home. I and other Catholic activist friends from other Catholic organizations had to hide and hold regular meetings to monitor the situation.

Dragged by the current

The political situation became more and more unclear. The news published in the Jakarta newspapers strongly influenced the way people thought, even though it was often different to the reality outside of Jakarta. The terrifying accusations made of the Communist Party were really frightening. Reading the newspapers, listening to stories of friends' experiences and experiencing strange events for myself, made me aware that something truly extraordinary had happened. I experienced a terrifying incident when I saw with my own eyes how red-bereted soldiers murdered a group of people on the banks of the Wedi river in the Klaten area, central Java.

At the time I was going to meet my fiancé who worked in a bank in Bayat, Klaten. I was very worried because my fiancé had not returned home for two weeks, even though he usually came home every Saturday. All along the way I saw trees that had been cut to block the road. When I got to the Wedi river I witnessed mass murder. The bodies of the victims were just thrown all along the river. The Wedi River is a river of sand, and has no water. According to the people who live nearby, the water flows underneath the sand. My friend who was an economics student witnessed another terrifying incident. His mother was the village head (lurah) in a village in Pati, Central Java, and was killed in front of him, his father, and brothers and sisters, because his mother was a member of Gerwani. There were many other terrifying incidents that happened between October and December 1965.

Confronted with that tense situation, we Catholic activists kept track of socio-political issues through discussion and analysis of the facts. We got together regularly. For safety, we kept changing places. The meetings were always attended by Catholic activists from mass organizations and political organizations. Even though we made a critical analysis of the social and political situation, the mass media was so successful in shaping public opinion that we tended to believe that it was the Communist Party creating the confusion. Because of this, when the flow of the political situation came to dissolving the Communist Party, we Catholic activists were dragged into the current, and we joined in the demonstrations by KAMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia, Indonesian Student Action Union), KAPPI (Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Peladjar Indonesia, Indonesian Youth and Student Action Union) and KAWI (Kesatuan Aksi Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women's Action Union). We joined the Nationalist and Islamic organizations. The political situation led Catholics to support the banning of the Communist Party, without much clear thinking.

A grand scenario

As an activist in Catholic Youth I joined in the demonstrations demanding the banning of the Communist Party and organizations under its umbrella. At the time, I felt that there was a very strong political current pushing the people and everyone to agree to the dissolving of the Communist Party and its allies. The mass media, whether newspapers, the radio or television, all had a strong role in shaping public opinion, and they all blamed the Communist Party. But as a Catholic activist who had previously worked very closely with Gerwani activists responding to the economic crisis with social, educational and economic activities, I felt that there had been violence and injustice towards people who were members of organizations under the Communist Party umbrella. Particularly when the arrests and murder of people considered to be involved with communist organizations went into a frenzy. A friend of my father's who had replaced my father as head of the Health Workers Union for Yogyakarta was arrested. Even though he was a Protestant.

The arrest of my neighbourhood friends who had joined Gerwani really disturbed me. Two women who were active Gerwani members and had worked with me in the Kampung Cooperative were also arrested. I was extremely angry and could not accept this. So I emboldened myself to defend them, even though I then had to become the target of the officers at

the Military Police headquarters in Yogyakarta. With Father A. Jayasiswaya Pr. (the Catholic Youth chaplain) and Mr F.X. Sastraharjana (a policeman who often helped us) testifying for me, I managed to get those colleagues of mine freed.

My concern that something was not right in the way the 1965 tragedy was handled was answered when I was asked to assist Father P. Dr Blot SJ in providing support for the detainees' families housed at Wisma Realino, Yogyakarta. From the stories of their experiences, I became more convinced that there was a grand scenario behind the 1965 tragedy. Later, my conviction was confirmed when I was invited by Dr. Benedict Anderson to a discussion at Cornell University, USA, in 1982 and read documents about the political upheaval held in the Indonesia section of its library.

Being rational

As a Catholic, my views were then still shaped by Church teachings which separate the political and non-political as a dichotomy. Because of this, I am not surprised when the Church and Church leaders seem to 'distance themselves' from activities with a whiff of politics, like making statements or endorsing one particular political stand. Our political behaviour was led by the Catholic Party, which we believed received the blessing of the Church. This is why, when the Catholic Party supported the banning of the Communist Party, we went along with it. [At that time, mass organizations had to fall under the protection of political parties. The term for this was '*onderbouw*', ed.] On a personal level, many Catholics - laity, priests, brothers, nuns - were directly involved in humanitarian work, even though not many of them dared to do this openly.

The Catholic Church, both its leaders and the congregation, preferred to react to the 1965 tragedy with humanitarian services. As an activist of a youth organization, I drastically reduced my activities in practical politics. Even more so after I was arrested by the police and held for two days at the Yogyakarta regional police station because I had to explain the destruction that had taken place when we held demonstrations together with other youth organizations. My name was listed by police intelligence for surveillance. Because of this, I had to act rationally so that I would not have a stupid death.

In 1965, according to my observation, the people of Yogyakarta were on the whole consumed with worry because of the terrifying incidents that were going on in the area around. For instance, in the village of Manisrenggo, to

the east of Prambanan. That village was well known as a place where people accused of being involved with the Communist Party were murdered. People were anxious because every day they were confronted with news about people who had disappeared, were arrested, murdered. News about wells in certain villages being used as mass graves was the sort of thing served up every day. Even so, social life remained calm and there was no outstanding upheaval.

The power of the international economy

As I observed it, there was a change in the social, economic and political situation in Indonesia after the 1965 tragedy. The change began with violence and repressive politics by the military. In the social field, people who were initially confused, afraid of the communists, began to settle and put trust in the military, especially the army which appeared as the 'protector' of the people. People whose opinions had been shaped to believe that the Communist Party was the *dalang* of the 1965 tragedy, came to see the army as the 'saviour'. The bureaucracy began to be changed from civil to military leaders. Almost all the posts of governor and bupati throughout Indonesia were held by military. Activists who created movements at the grass roots level were suspect, kidnapped or openly arrested.

The political situation made people afraid to criticize, make social and political analysis, organize independently or carry out mass movements. The reason was that they were afraid of being accused communist. To organize required permits. Even to hold any kind of gathering involving lots of people required permits. Repressive government politics and abuse of power happened everywhere, particularly where land was concerned. The officials bought up the people's land. Many activists of mass organizations, both social and cultural, were abducted and disappeared. I myself no longer dared to carry out organizational activities beyond my work as a lecturer, because of the inhumane violence. The military perspective began to influence society, by viewing other groups as friends or foes.

Economically, life was beginning to improve because the government started working together with capitalist countries. Overseas debt and foreign investment started flowing. This situation sparked the 'Malari' [15th of January disaster, *tragedy*] incident in the 1970s. This incident happened because student activists began to be critical and aware that the economic improvement that had taken place was pseudo improvement. Even so, this demonstration was quashed with military violence. The New Order government had begun to get Indonesia involved in the power of the international economy.

Capitalists also profited

The 1965 tragedy enormously harmed people who were accused of being involved, even though as members of organizations they knew absolutely nothing about any plans for that incident. Identity cards of former members of the Communist Party and related organizations were given the code 'ET' meaning ex-political detainee. They were discriminated against and ostracized. Activists from social organizations were also harmed because many organizations were frozen or dissolved. People were not free to form organizations. Even women were afraid to organize because they might be accused of being Gerwani. Women, youth, farmers and workers who had previously been active and militant at organizing decreased in number or completely stopped. With the people themselves being afraid to organize, the government formed organizations like the Family Welfare Movement (PKK, Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga), and Dharma Wanita for women. The government also formed organizations for workers, farmers and youth, and even made their own government version of Cooperatives.

The party that profited from the incident was the military, and in particular the army. Complete power was in their hands. The government worked together with capitalist countries. In order to improve the economy and for development, the government opened up foreign investment. The approach was developmentalist, oriented only towards increasing the national income, without taking into account the aspect of equity. Dictatorial power made the people afraid of opposition. Repression made people so afraid they ceased being critical. In such situations, it is capitalists who benefit.

Still not daring to criticize

Indonesian politics at the time, both domestic and foreign, strengthened the structural poverty that makes many people suffer. Even though the reality showed that there was a group of people living extravagantly. The people were aware that there was injustice. The gulf between rich and poor got wider and wider, and social envy was the result. In this kind of situation the people are easily incited and manipulated by certain interests. In the 1960s, the suffering of the people spread and got worse. Soekarno's ideal of 'standing on our own two feet' was getting further from reality. The economy was in decline, taking into account that Indonesia is extremely large and its society, economy and culture extremely varied. The people's suffering seemed to be manipulated by certain political forces for agitation. Campaigns kept droning on about *who* had created this suffering, not *what*

had caused it. Emphasizing the ‘who’ opened the door to scapegoating certain elements, and these elements had to be opposed, killed and annihilated.

My experience studying Liberation Theology from Latin America has made me able to understand that the people’s situation in Third World countries, including Indonesia, was similar to that in Latin American countries. Oh yes, according to the Asia Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955, the Third World was the Alternative World.

Structural poverty cannot be solved with charitable alms aid. In Latin America there is also structural poverty, and the State and Church leaders approached it in a charitable way. But the huge difference between Indonesia and Latin America is in the people’s awareness. In Latin America, particularly Brazil, people are encouraged to think about their experience of life and to reflect upon their faith. At the grass roots level, people form Base Communities to discuss life suffering and to reflect upon this with faith. So this reflection can direct emotion and the ability to think clearly. They are encouraged to search for what causes poverty, and then encouraged to understand poverty as a communal concern in order to then be encouraged to search communally for solutions. In Indonesia, though, people were herded into looking for scapegoats who created this poverty. The result was the people’s anger that drove anarchic action, attacking groups accused of causing the people’s suffering. As we know, the problem of poverty and oppression is extremely loaded with emotional baggage that is easily ignited and which easily explodes.

In the 1960s, Catholics including myself still had a narrow view of politics. There was a dichotomy between political activities and religious ones. Church teaching that shaped this view made me have to really separate political and religious activities. Politics was seen as worldly power. Because of this, I was not surprised when in the years 1965–1966 the Church seemed to be ‘silent’, so that Catholics also were ‘quiet’. And many Catholics even threatened other Catholics who were carrying out political activity outside of political parties. For instance, the laity criticized priests who signed a statement by ‘40 prominent figures’ about their concern for the people of the province of Yogyakarta, when Cardinal J. Darmoyuwono joined the Ratu Adil [Just King trs] movement that upheld justice and peace. And there was the case of Sawito.³⁵ There are still many Catholics who make cynical

35 Sawito Kartowibowo was a mystic who claimed to be the *ratu adil* or just king. He was supported by various political and religious leaders. In 1976 he was accused of attempting to topple President Suharto, put on trial and found guilty of subversion.

comments about the prophetic works of this teacher. Church teachings like that, which the people accept, make Catholics afraid of standing up and voicing truth, of defending justice and fighting for peace.

The other extremely important lesson for me was the extraordinary role that the mass media plays in shaping opinions in society. News broadcast via newspapers, the radio and television evidently are so easily considered to be the truth, even though most of that news leads people astray without them being aware of it. This sort of thing continued throughout the New Order. As a result, society has become afraid of being critical.

World movement

Learning from my own experience in the climate of the 1965 tragedy, I became aware that the idea of there being a dichotomy between politics and religion is actually not realistic. I am aware and better understand the radical feminist concept that says ‘the personal is political’. Meaning that aspects of personal-public, domestic-public, worldly-divine and so forth have to be viewed as a whole, and not as a dichotomy. Because of this, my understanding of politics has changed. Politics is not merely the grab for power, but how we take part in determining decisions intended to make an orderly livelihood so that that humans and ecology are mutually beneficial for the creation of justice and peace. To get rid of viewing politics and religion as a dichotomy, we need awareness that politics and reflection on faith are one whole. The process of ‘Action-Reflection-Further Action’ is a process of being political in order to bring about social, political, economic and cultural change.

The work of Christ in proclaiming the Kingdom of God and in urging the people to repent is not yet over. Because of this, those of us who claim to be the disciples of Jesus are duty bound to continue this work. Continuing the work of Jesus cannot happen if we are not political. Spreading the Kingdom of God means creating a new world that is just and peaceful, because only God can be King. The way Jesus chose to carry out His work was the people’s movement with the method of non-violent action. The movement of social, economic, political and cultural change towards a new world has to be carried out with political activity.

In order to remain a loyal disciple of Jesus, I am still a member of this movement. In the world there have been a series of peoples’ movements with ideals of bringing about a ‘new world’. World movements are carried out by individuals and institutions or by organizations which participate in the World Social Forum (WSF). This world movement with its slogan ‘another

world is possible' began in Porto Allegre, Brazil, and has now spread all over the world in order to encourage people to hold ideals of a just and peaceful world. This movement, which anyone can join without discrimination, is always accompanied by theological reflection by world theologians who are part of the World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL).

I want to urge all followers of Jesus to join this world movement.

PART II

SURVIVORS' ACCOUNTS

Introduction

As we have seen, according to the official narrative, the victims who were arrested and imprisoned – or killed in mass murder – in the 1965 tragedy, were given this treatment because they were involved in the ‘treachery’ (to use the New Order term) carried out by the Thirtieth of September Movement (G30S) on 1 October 1965 in Jakarta. The female victims were arrested and captured – or also killed in mass murder – because they were involved in the ‘amoral acts’ carried out by members of Gerwani (the Indonesian Women’s Movement) at the airfield of the Indonesian army, Halim Perdanakusuma.

However, in the field – as we can see in the narratives in this section – the reality was quite different. Many of those who were arrested, imprisoned or tortured actually had no direct link to what happened in Jakarta in the early hours of 1 October 1965. One of the survivors who was arrested in Yogyakarta in 1965, for instance, was a kampung youth (the son of a market-seller) aged just 19.

It is difficult to understand how a person of such a young age would be capable of planning an act of ‘treachery’ against the state, and for this had to be arrested and imprisoned. But anyhow, he was judged, by a group of unknown officers, to be danger to the state. He was arrested and imprisoned – with no warrant, of course. After having suffered for a while as a political detainee at Nusa Kambangan island, he was exiled to Buru Island, far from the kampung of Ledhok Ratmakan in Yogyakarta where he had enjoyed his days with his kampung friends.

Another survivor who tells his story in this section is a man of Chinese descent, who was at the time a student of the Faculty of Letters at the Teacher’s College (IKIP, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) in Yogyakarta. When the 1965 political conflict happened, nothing happened to him. But then in 1969, when he was working as a journalist, he was suddenly arrested. It was not clear why, but the reason might have been because between late 1964 and early 1965 he had taken part in what was called a ‘Revolution Cadre-ization’ in Jakarta. Even though the idea for this program came from President Sukarno himself, and was intended to be a way to prevent the reoccurrence of racial tension as had happened in 1963. The ‘cadre-ization’ was actually open, involved 600 participants, and the instructors included General A.H. Nasution, General A. Yani and Ali

Sastroamidjojo. Our informant was held at the Salemba prison in Jakarta, and in 1971 exiled to Buru Island in the Maluku islands. He was detained there for nine years, made to do forced labour, and finally released in 1979. He never got any apology whatsoever.

Meanwhile, another victim was actually a case of mistaken identity. She was only 14 at the time, but still arrested. The reason turned out to be that her name was similar to that of someone else the officials were looking for. She was put into prison without any explanation as to why. The prison food was inadequate, just corn and sweet potato mash with some salted fish that had gone bad. She was held at Wirogunan prison in Yogyakarta at first, then moved temporarily to Bulu prison in Semarang before finally being exiled to Plantungan prison near Semarang, central Java, together with other female political prisoners. She was freed only in 1979, so that she lost 14 years of her life without there being any crime whatsoever, other than having the same name as someone else targeted for arrest.

Just as interesting is the story in this section of a victim who at the time of her arrest was a university student in Yogyakarta and active in a student organization called IPPI (Ikatan Pemuda Peladjar Indonesia, League of Indonesian Youth and Students), of which President Sukarno himself was an honorary member. Initially, she was arrested and held without any clear reason. Four months later she was released because it turned out there were no accusations against her. She was given a formal letter of release. However, unfortunately for her, soon after she was arrested again. This time, her official letter of release became the reason for the officials to arrest and imprison her. She was tortured, abused and accused of being a member of Gerwani. She was once stripped naked in front of all the officials (all men) with the accusation that she had a tattoo of the hammer and sickle near her genitals ... It is probably difficult even to imagine that a modern organization would make a mini tattoo on someone in such a place. Even so, quite apart from whether or not any of this made sense, or whether she had any relationship to those women who, so the story went, danced erotically at the Halim Perdanakusuma airfield in Jakarta, she had to spend well over a decade locked up in prison.

In this section we also meet a former revolutionary fighter who in his youth took up arms to protect Indonesia's independence in the environs of Jakarta. When the revolution for independence was over, full of conviction he chose to assist the most populous group in the newly independent, agrarian nation, namely the farmers. His fight to defend the farmers subsequently led him to become the leader of the farmers movement, and then become

a people's representative in the House of Representatives (MPRS, Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara). But then, on 1 October 1965, an event beyond his knowledge happened, and it turned out that one result of it was that he was hunted and arrested. He was often interrogated by officials, and after the interrogation he usually had to be dragged out because he was beaten black and blue. People might well ask, was this the way that Indonesians showed their gratitude to former freedom fighters? But this was the reality that this informant experienced. And not just this. He was then exiled to Buru island. He was exiled by the citizens he had helped defend and whose independence he had fought for.

Another informant has a slightly different story. She herself was not tortured or imprisoned like the others. However, her suffering was none the less for that.

Because her father became a political prisoner (merely because they thought he had refused the request of the head of the kampung in Yogyakarta) and because her husband actually was a former political prisoner, she and her children were constantly stigmatized, ostracized and oppressed by society around them – and even by their own family circle. Pressure came upon pressure, unceasingly. The only thing that helped keep her living was her faith in God who was always kind to her, in happiness and sadness, and watched over her in sleep.

These stories are all true and are an inseparable part of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia. Even so, as we know, stories like these are often absent from accounts about 1965 according to the official version of the authorities. In the official narrative produced by the New Order regime, for instance, the pattern of thinking is usually 'black and white' so that it seems easy to determine who is right and who is wrong, depending on who is doing the telling.

The voice of people at the grass roots has been ignored. Through the narratives in this section, you are invited to stop for a moment and listen to these ignored voices. From these accounts you might become aware that 'survivor' or even 'victor' is a more fitting noun for them than 'victim', because they managed to stay alive. Apart from managing to stay alive, they are also willing to speak to you about what they experienced, while at the same time giving meaning to that experience. Good reading.

This is our problem as a nation

The following is a narrative about the 1965 tragedy in the eyes of a former freedom fighter in Indonesia's revolution for independence, who also became a leader in the farmer's movement. We will call him Samsul Ahmad. Samsul was a fearless fighter since his youth, and in his old age he continued to defend the interests of people in the lower echelons of society, farmers in particular. He became the General Secretary of the farmer's organization called SAKTI (Serikat Kaum Tani Indonesia, Indonesian Farmer's Union) and was a member of the House of Representatives (MPRS, Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara). Ironically, it was because of his defence [of farmers] that he was arrested, imprisoned and finally exiled to Buru island in the Maluku islands, Eastern Indonesia.

The narrative that you are about to read is a reconstruction made by a member of the History Commission of PUSdEP, Tri Chandra Aprianto, from various interviews with Samsul Achmad. Integrated into this are letters that Samsul sent to Chandra, notes from lectures, writings, poetry, and interviews by other people with Samsul Ahmad. Tri Chandra Aprianto is a lecturer in history at Universitas Negeri Jember, in the town of Jember, East Java. He carried out this research when he was doing his doctoral study at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta.

It is a great pity that when the process of narrating these memories was underway – and many important issues had yet to be recorded – Samsul was suddenly called to his Creator on 26 May, 2009.

I was born in 1926 to a family of traders in Ranah Minang, West Sumatra. When I was young, I was mainly active in battle. This is because I used to be in the army. But what I mean by the army is not the army that started out as the BKR –Barisan Keamanan Rakyat [People's Security Front] which later became TRI [Tentara Republik Indonesia, Army of the Indonesian Republic] and subsequently the TNI [Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Army]. Together with my friends, I joined a people's militia or *laskar* whose ideals were to defend Indonesia's independence which had been proclaimed in 1945. This militia was better known as the Jakarta People's Militia [Laskar Rakyat Jakarta Raya] whose founders were Chaerul Saleh, Nandar, Darwis, Johar Nur, Hasnan, Wahidin, Armansyah Hasan Dayuh and others. This young group also helped with the birth of the proclamation of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945.³⁶ Their activities were inspired by the times.

³⁶ Interview 12 May 2000

Extraordinary

1926 is known as the year when the communist rebellion happened in Indonesia against the Netherlands East Indies colonial government, a rebellion which was not properly thought through in advance by those involved. The same period was also characterized by the emergence of the movement of educated youth.³⁷

Even though the emergence of these youth was the result of the colonial government's Ethical Policy which was discriminative in nature, it also brought rational thinking that held the awareness of the movement for independence.³⁸ The group included people like Ki Hajar Dewantara, Ibrahim who was known as Tan Malaka, Maroeto Nitimihardjo, Soetomo, Semaun, Musso, HOS Tjokroaminoto, Abdoel Moeis, Samsi, Sukarno, Syahrir, Hatta, Amir Syarifuddin, Achmad Kapau Gani, Mohamad Yamin and many others. In those years figures also emerged from the youth who later pushed through the 1945 proclamation of independence, like Soekarni, Chaerul Saleh, Djohar Nur, Hasnan, Samsuddin, Sidik Kertapati, Ibnu Parna, Samsu Haryaudaya, Legiman Haryono, Bahar Razak, Winaye and others. They all had colonial education. They could be called 'dissidents' in the eyes of the Dutch colonial government.³⁹

The beginning of the 20th century was the revolutionary period in Indonesian history. At the time, all the thoughts and energy of Indonesian society were driven by the flow of revolution. The young educated youth of Indonesia became increasingly revolutionary. And that then transformed other youth very quickly. In the first half of the 1940s, when I still relatively young,⁴⁰ and almost without being aware of it, I was already being carried along by a current full of turbulence.

Because of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia [1942–45] I could not go to school any more. When the proclamation [of independence] was made, I immediately immersed myself [in the fight for independence]. At the time it was not really clear where I was and who I was there for. But basically, wherever I was and whoever for, it was all because I decided this for myself. That was what I experienced. And this was also the experience

³⁷ The term 'the educated' always appears in Samsul's interviews, seminar papers and private correspondence.

³⁸ See Samsul's letter of 12 July 2006

³⁹ See Samsul's letter of 12 July 2006

⁴⁰ Most of the figures of the Indonesian nationalist movement were indeed very young at the time. Some of those who were already main figures in the movement were not yet 20 years old.

of any others. For instance, there was a young man called Kartini from Bondowoso, East Java, who, during an emergency, was told to take refuge. He refused, and preferred to join the youth and fight alongside them. Actually this process of awareness happened gradually. And because it grew gradually, people like Kartini would not retreat even though they faced many obstacles. This was a process. Steel is forged in extreme heat so that it does not become iron.⁴¹

I joined a group of youth, teenagers, and I was 20 years old. I was consumed by a youthful spirit that fired up, to be free and to fight for independence. I joined the 'Menteng 31' group in Jakarta which, during the time of Japanese fascism in 1942–43 was a kind of 'School for Politics'. Some were boarders, some not. And so it was, along with other youth I got to know senior people in the movement [for independence] like Soekarni, Adam Malik, Chaerul Saleh, Djohar Nur, Hasnan and others.⁴²

After that I was active in the Action Committee (Komite Aksi) chaired by Chaerul Saleh, which metamorphized into the Angkatan Pemuda Indonesia [Indonesian Young Generation, API]. Then API, in September 1945 transformed into the Jakarta People's Militia (Laskar Rakyat Jakarta) and developed into the West Java militia (Laskar Jawa Barat). I was more active in that. And from then on I lived in the flow of battle, as I mentioned earlier.

On 15 August 1945 I was in Jakarta. Actually I was at Sukarno's house, at Jl Pegangsaan Timur number 56. Apart from myself, others there at the time were Bung Hatta and Soebardjo. That was when I first saw Sukarno extremely angry after listening to Bug Wik's [Wikana] urgent request, conveyed by the youth.

Bug Wik pressed Sukarno, in a demanding way, to proclaim Indonesia's independence at once without worrying about the Japanese who by this time had surrendered. Sukarno point blank refused. Even so, as we know, through the pressure and force of the youth, Indonesia's independence was finally proclaimed on 17 August 1945.⁴³

⁴¹ See also Samsul Ahmad, proceedings of the workshop 'Memahami Gerakan Sosial Masa Lalu dan Masa Kini', Yogyakarta 28 September–1 October 2005, unpublished (Henceforth: Samsul Ahmad 'Memahami Gerakan Sosial').

⁴² See Samsul's letter written in the context of Independence Day celebrations, 17 August 2005. This letter was written in story form and titled 'Menjenguk Masa Lalu, 60 tahun Merdeka, 60 years Bernegara.'

⁴³ The text of the Proclamation written by Sukarno uses the Japanese date, namely 17 August 2605. But according to Samsul, Sayuti Melik changed it, acting 'boldly' without telling anyone, to '1945'.

This historical event is incredibly important, because the process of it was extraordinary. There were many figures who played a part. Ironically, thus far Indonesians commemorate the proclamation as though just having a party. Lots of activity and all kinds of competitions and hurrah-hurrah. There is no analysis of how that proclamation came about. It is never said how it happened and who was behind it. If this goes on, how and when will we know our own history in the right way?

Risks of the revolutionary situation

At that time, the dynamic of the youth movement was to keep pressing forward. As I said above, the Action Committee led by Chaerul Saleh transformed itself into API. Then API changed into the Jakarta people's militia, and finally into a division of the Indonesian army called the Divisi Bambu Runcing (bamboo stake division) the commander of which was Sutan Akbar and his deputy was Sidik Kertapati.

Rebellion to achieve sovereignty kept on raging, even though the government, as the representative of the older folks, preferred diplomatic channels. To the younger generation, diplomatic channels were more an act of compromise towards the colonial power. Even though at that time there was information going around that the temporary Dutch government in Indonesia had run out of funds to continue governing. Added to that, it hadn't managed to get any more loans from the British and American governments. As a result, whenever the colonial government carried out its acts of aggression, the areas targeted were those regions with the possibility of quick capital, namely plantation areas. The politics of diplomacy were merely to give the Dutch opportunity to 'catch their breath'.

This is why our choice was to keep the battle going without giving the colonial side any breathing space at all. It seemed that the Republican [Indonesian] government tended to agree more with the colonial side to hold negotiations. The first negotiations, known as the Linggajati Agreement,⁴⁴ after the place where they were held, [near Cirebon in West Java, ed] were held on 12 November 1946. The Republic of Indonesia was represented by Sutan Syahrir, and the Dutch colonial side was represented by Schermerhorn. The Linggajati Agreement produced the decision that *de facto* the power of the Indonesian Republic was restricted to Java, Madura and Sumatra.

⁴⁴ The name Linggajati rather than Linggarjati is used deliberately.

I said above that it was revolutionary spirit that drove me to join the people's militia. However, in 1946 I disagreed with the stand of the Republican government, which at that time was represented by Syahrir. When the Linggajati negotiations happened, we rejected the result because it contained a sentence that said that the Republic of Indonesia was *de facto* limited to Java and Sumatra. We opposed that. And because we opposed it, we were 'struck' by the government. We were dumped and hunted down. I myself went on the run.

While I was on the run, I experienced many things, including inhumane treatment. You must remember that the situation then was one of revolution. If you have been yelled at as a 'traitor', it was like your destiny was cut or slaughtered. At the time, if anyone was found wearing three colours [red, white and blue, the colours of the Dutch flag] then he would be labelled an enemy spy. And it was death for him. Even though it was not clear at all that he was an enemy spy. But those were the risks of living in the situation of revolution.

Acts of rebellion

Apart from physical rebellion, we also had a newspaper printed in magazine format called *Genderang* and a magazine titled *Godam Djelata*. The editors were Armoenanto who was nicknamed 'Kerongkongang' (Skeleton). 'Keriting' or 'Fuzzy' was the nickname for Sidik Kertapati, and we called Haroen Oemar, 'Bob', short for 'bopeng' (pockmarked) because of his spotty face.⁴⁵

Then, what we had dreaded came about. The Dutch started to breach the terms of the Linggajati Agreement. From around May 1947, the Dutch started getting prepared for an attack against Indonesia, and on 20 July 1947, they implemented this by carrying out aggressive military action against the territory that was under Indonesian sovereignty. It was exactly as we had predicted, the areas that were attacked were those with the potential for quick capital, one of them being the plantations.

Seeing this, our leaders wanted to hold discussions with the government to help with the opposition towards the colonial government. For the time being, differences of opinion were avoided, mindful that there was oneness of purpose, namely war against the colonial government. This is what made the Jakarta People's militia join with the Indonesian National Army (TNI).

⁴⁵ See Samsul's letter just before 17 August 2005.

After joining with the TNI, the militia changed its name to the Bambu Runcing (Bamboo Stake) Division, headed by Sutan Akbar and with Sidik Kertapati as his deputy.

The discussions took place in Yogyakarta. There was already the Indonesian National Army (TNI) by this stage. I myself left for Yogyakarta together with the Division Commander, Sutan Akbar. We took the train to Gombong, central Java, then got off and walked towards the territory under Indonesian control.

Later I was moved to Priangan, in West Java, to assist the Priangan Brigade with their commander, Astra Wiguna. We were located in Cidueng at the time, in Tasikmalaya, West Java. And from then on, my friends and I carried out a series of guerilla raids in the territory of the Priangan residency.

Along with continued guerilla tactics, the [Republican] government, because of foreign intervention, was also pushing for renewal of negotiations with the Dutch. In January 1948 a second round of negotiations was held on the ship the USS Renville. From Indonesia, the person carrying out the negotiations was the Prime Minister of the time, namely Amir Syarifuddin from the Communist Party. As a result of the agreement, the TNI had to withdraw from its guerilla pockets. Once again, this action gave advantage to the Dutch colonial military. The incident of withdrawing from guerilla territory was known as the 'pilgrimage' (*hijrah*) to Yogyakarta. And once again, whether because of staunch resolve or because of 'stubbornness', our militia rejected the Renville agreement and refused to surrender out territory to the colonial side. We refused to join the 'pilgrimage'. We continued our resistance.

As a result of our refusal to withdraw to Yogyakarta, we were considered rebels. And because of this we were attacked by a brigade sent by the [Indonesian Republican government] from central Java. The first assault happened in Ciwaru, West Java. This resulted in the death of some of the leaders of the Bambu Runcing Division. Those who died included Sutan Akbar, Gatot, Suharya, Abu Bakar and Maulana. Most of the force then escaped. As the force was in chaos, I, Astra and some others slowly consolidated and continued to carry out guerilla tactics. Apart from facing the Dutch in battle, in 1948 the Bambu Runcing Division also had to face the forces of Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia [DI/TII, Indonesian Islamic Army of the Islamic separatist movement].

The Dutch still felt they had been disadvantaged by the Renville agreement. So, yet again the colonial side reneged. On 18 December 1948, the colonial side began another military aggression, their second military action.

Of course, the members of the people's militia who had rejected diplomacy with the colonial side from the outset were extremely upset about this.

And at the same time, in 1948 the [Indonesian] government issued its policy about the reorganization and rationalization of the army [known as the 'Re-Ra program', ed.]. This policy was for a fully professional army as military force for the Republic. In the former guerilla days, one weapon could be held by two, three or even four members of a militia, carried in turn. But after 'Re-Ra', the army had to be professional. One weapon per soldier. So as a result of 'Re-Ra', many militia members, even though they had taken part in guerilla warfare and carried weapons for years, had to 'return to society'.

Needless to say, this act was felt keenly by various people's militia who had participated in guerilla warfare for years to defend the independence of the Republic. Even so, there was nothing they could do about it. They were gathered together and taken back to society by truck. They were given 'pocket money' of 5 rupiah per person. I myself do not really know where the government got the money for the Re-Ra from.

Those who could not accept the Re-Ra policy carried out acts of resistance by establishing the 'Barisan Sakit Hati' (BSH) or 'Offended Squad'. This was what Lieutenant Colonel Jamil and his forces did by continuing resistance in the area of Tomo, Cirebon. Actually, I and some other friends also felt offended, but we did not carry out action like Jamil's group did.

Extremely disappointing situation

A bitter reality awaited those militia members who were accepted as members of the Indonesian national army. Although they were accepted as TNI members, they had to suffer a lowering of rank. This was because they did not have a formal basis of military training. On the other hand, those from KNIL [the former Dutch colonial army]⁴⁶ got an automatic rise in rank, because they had had formal military training. Even though KNIL were the Dutch colonial government force that had previously fired at the people's militia.

When the people's resistance to the colonial Military Agression was going on, once again the government of the Republic of Indonesia 'interrupted' it with diplomacy. This time, the diplomacy was carried out in The Hague, Holland, in the form of the Round Table Conference held on 2 November,

⁴⁶ *Het Koninklijke Nederlands(ch)-Indische Leger*, or the army of the Royal Netherlands East Indies.

1949. In the agreement reached at this conference, Indonesia was in a weak position. The Republic of the United States of Indonesia [Republik Indonesia Serikat, RIS] had to take on the debts of the Netherlands Indies government, which was actually the cost of the Dutch colonial government to control Indonesia. The [Indonesian] government's actions this time negated the war to defend independence which had been carried out by people in villages all over Indonesia, and which had gained control of the centres of the plantation business which were formerly Dutch owned. With the Round Table Conference, all control over the plantation business centres had to be restored to the Dutch.

Disagreement with the result of the Round Table Conference was still shown with resistance, for instance with the resistance of groups led by Chaerul Saleh, Syamsuddin Chan, Leimena and others. However, they had to face attacks by the army of the United States of Indonesia [APRIS, Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat], which combined the Indonesian and Dutch armies. This put us in a difficult position. Chaerul, myself and other friends could not do much, because the president of the Republic of United States of Indonesia [RIS] was Sukarno. If we opposed Sukarno, the people would rip us to shreds. Sukarno was really rooted in their hearts.

As time went on, we as a resistance group fired with the enthusiasm of youth, and who wanted complete sovereignty for the Republic of Indonesia, began to chose a new form of life. Some of us went back to school as our schooling had been interrupted during the war, others wanted to go home and take up farming and so on. Chaerul himself was sent overseas for schooling by Sukarno.

I myself finally decided to stop being a member of TNI. I surrendered my position as Brigade Commander. After all, our brigade accepted by the army made up just one battalion. That one battalion was made up of four companies. As for my post and responsibilities, I surrendered them to my deputy who was called Jaya. That was really hard. But the situation was so disappointing. I felt fed up. I was haunted by all kinds of feelings. And in the middle of all that I thought, well, that's enough, I'm going to stop.

A 'synthesis'

Through the legitimization given by the Round Table Conference, foreign capital found its way back to Indonesia. Needless to say I was really disappointed with this. And my sense of disappointment just grew.

In the midst of this disappointment, some friends and I went to Jakarta to meet Mohamad Yamin. Fortunately, Mohamad Yamin was one of the people who had been part of the Indonesian delegation at the Round Table discussion. We went to his house this time not to express our ‘difference of opinion’ as before, when Yamin was on the government side and we came as ex people’s militia who were the opposition. This time we came to discuss the latest political conditions and where things were leading for the future. As it turned out, our friend Johar Nur was staying at Yamin’s house, and he was sick at the time.

I saw that Yamin had a big collection of books at his house. If you put them all in a pile it would probably be one and a half metres tall. The books were stored in big boxes. It seemed that while he was in Holland as part of the delegation, Yamin had spent his time buying lots of books. Yamin said ‘if you want any books, just open and read them here.’ We all nodded.

Most of the books that Yamin had brought were about farmers’ issues. For instance, the book *Peasant War*, and books about farmers in Germany, farmers in South Africa, and about farmers’ problems in China. During the guerilla time, we had actually read books like these, but just flipped through them. And the whereabouts of those books was anyone’s guess, for it had been wartime. After we met Yamin, what we had just flipped through back then we now read properly.

After holding long discussions with Yamin about the current social and political situation and prospects for the future, we began to read these books. Then we held discussions with Sidik Kertapati. The questions were, ‘What can we do now? We’ve been cast aside. It’s though there is no place for us in this Republic.’ But meanwhile our passion to serve the nation was not dimmed. It was this passion that pushed us to find new strategies. So I said, ‘Well, the famers are important. The majority of the Indonesian population are farmers. Why don’t we take a look at this?’ And Sidik said, ‘what about making an organization?’ And I immediately answered, ‘Let’s!’ And so then we established a farmer’s organization.⁴⁷

According to me, talking about movements means talking about struggle. And talking about struggle means talking about the people’s sovereignty, prosperity and welfare. In the case of Indonesia, the way I see it is that the meeting point of all of these is the problems faced by farmers. In this country, farmers are the largest sector [of the population]. At that time, they

⁴⁷ See Samsul Ahmad, *Memahami Gerakan Sosial*.

numbered 80%. Meaning, if you could solve the farmers' problems well, then you would also solve the problems of the whole Indonesian nation.

So, after a few discussions, we eventually reached an agreement, namely to form a farmers organization called Serikat Kaum Tani Indonesia [SAKTI, the Indonesian Farmers Union]. These were still early thoughts, responding to the need to establish a farmers organization. We were aware that all the time we fought against the Dutch army, it had been the farmers who had given our army food. The theory of cause and effect was used here. Farmers were the majority. That was the 'thesis'. But the reality was that their destiny was not good. This was the 'antithesis'. As the 'synthesis', the farmers organization was formed.

Dialectics

Back in the guerilla times of the colonial war, the group in society that was the the most vulnerable was the farmers. And that's how it was too with the land they tilled, whether it was rice fields or agricultural fields. During the war of independence, their fields turned into battlefields. And even more, the farmers became the targets in this war. Without being aware of it, lives were at stake. But don't mock this. It was part of the Indonesian farmers' awareness. Indonesian farmers at that time were aware that they had to make efforts to support the resistance to colonialism. At that time, the support the Indonesian farmers could give was simple food like drinking water and rice packages, to help keep the resistance [against the Dutch] going.

Inspired by lots of reading – thanks to Mohamad Yamin – and with our experience in the field, after decisions at a few meetings SAKTI began to formulate its basic principles and work plans for the organization. Our program was different from the Communist Party's mass organizations for farmers, namely BTI [Barisan Tani Indonesia or Indonesian Farmers' Front] and RTI [Rukun Tani Indonesia. Indonesian Farmers Cooperative]. They were clearly oriented towards the Communist Party. They had a program which at the time was the nationalization of land. This was not like us. We at the time owned land for the farmers. We learnt from China, South Africa and other places. The farmers must not be separated from land. We had a program of land for the farmers. We called on all kinds former freedom fighter friends. Apart from reconsolidation, they also then helped to extend the farmers' organization.

However, along the way, the founders of the organization began to face technical problems. For instance the need for a place to meet to formulate

ideas, the need for tools, typewriters, and other things. Keeping in mind our limitations, we thought about approaching someone senior called Tabrani Notosudirjo. Tabrani was from the Murba Party. To me, he was one of the figures from the movement who wanted to understand the ideals of the militia. Fortunately, at that time Tabrani was deputy mayor of Jakarta. As deputy mayor he had a big house and everything laid on. So, we ‘borrowed’ space for an office there.

In order to facilitate the process of founding and establishing the organization, we drew up the leadership of SAKTI. As a mark of respect, Tabrani Notosudirjo was given the position as general chairman. Sidik Kertapati was deputy chairman and I was general secretary. The other officials were Burhan, Sasongko,⁴⁸ Salam and Zainal Simbangan.

With the facilities provided by Tabrani, the organizing committee could now begin to build the organization at a regional level. Of course building the organizations in the regions could not be done quickly, mindful of the organization’s limitations. What we did was visit former revolutionary colleagues from guerilla days when we opposed the Dutch colonial government. We would discuss various problems and needs in the regions in order to find solutions. Our own skills were ‘married’ to what the people wanted.

It must be noted that what we call ‘the people’ is not something autonomous. All are linked, whether they be in opposition or relating to one another. It is all going on at the same time. That is why, when there is a problem, we have to look at it by going back to the root of the problem. Meaning that to see one problem, we have first to see how we think. Everything comes back to that, whether we like it or not. Meaning we come back to how we think. Are we, in our thinking, using rules or not. If we follow every one of our thoughts, there will be no limit to it. Therefore, thinking has to have its rules. We need to be aware of the importance of rules for our thinking, especially important thoughts that involve lots of people.

For this, we must first of all think using the pattern of cause and effect. Because for one cause there is an effect. But in turn, this effect will become cause, and so on. Secondly, we need to use logic. What we call rational is the result of using logic. Logic means thinking right and straight. If we do not use logic, it is impossible for us to get to a rational point. Thirdly, we need to use rules of thinking that are often called dialectics. Meaning that we need

⁴⁸ Sasongko was from an aristocratic family. His face was very similar to Hamengkubuwono IX’s. When Sasongko died, according to Samsul, palace soldiers came to carry his body.

to think based on our reading about process and dynamics, and how they are in dialogue. If we do not use this way of thinking, then our thoughts will go all over the place. Here is the difference between a person rich in empirical knowledge and those who only study knowledge.⁴⁹

Starting with farmers

We tried to organize the farmers through all kinds of activities. In certain situations, what happens is that socially and economically, the organizers rise to the top while the farmers stay on the bottom. We wanted to avoid that, and hoped that the movements would come from the farmers themselves and be executed together with them. This was our basic concept in establishing SAKTI.

There were some areas that later became the targets for SAKTI to develop its organization. I myself was more involved with familiarizing people with it in the Priangan area. This was an area I knew well. During the guerilla war against the colonial power, this was the area where I had been most active. Some other friends went to East Java, Central Java, Lampung and North Sumatra. The development of the organization at that time went on with a high level of awareness. Uniquely, there was no special discussion about funds for those who had to travel to the regions. Yet strangely, it all worked out. Tom Anwar and Sakti Alamsyah even managed to travel by KPM, the Dutch ship, to Medan. It turned out that the ship toured to Singapore first, and then continued its journey to Jakarta.

After discussing various problems with farming in various areas in Indonesia, and having read what farmers do in various countries, we came to the conclusion that farmers cannot be separated from land. Someone cannot be called a farmer if he or she does not work a plot of land. Whereas, since the feudal era, the farmers' land in Indonesia had been concentrated in the hands of a few, namely the aristocracy. Added to that, in the colonial era, via the laws known as the *agrarische wet* and *agrarian besluit* of 1870 which became the basis of the *domeinverklaring*, the state had the absolute right to turn the land in its colonized areas into the object of various state transactions with capitalists who needed land for their agribusiness investment, whether that be with the rationale of it being for the welfare of the people, or for the state coffers.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See Samsul Ahmad, *Memahami Gerakan Sosial*.

⁵⁰ According to Samsul, after Diponegoro and his followers lost the Java War (1825–1830, from 1830–1870 the colonial government prepared two things for their colonized

This is why from the outset, SAKTI's program was land for farmers. Many people had special rights in the colonial system, namely the *erfpacht* right in the name of Dutch-owned plantations. Those lands had been deserted by their owners since the fascist [Japanese] era, and were ruined as a result of war. This is why efforts were needed to convert those lands into property owned and worked by Indonesian farmers. And further, you must remember that Indonesia was independent, so that its citizens had the right to own and manage their own land. Formerly, via all kinds of manipulation in the name of 'existing regulations' the people's land had been taken by the colonial government.⁵¹ Now this had to stop.

This is what distinguished SAKTI's program from other farmers' organizations like BTI [Barisan Tani Indonesia] which indeed was from the beginning an organization affiliated with the Communist Party. SAKTI was also different to RTI which was also oriented towards the Communist Party. At that time, the political program of those two organizations was more oriented towards the nationalization of land. The purpose of nationalization was to give the land ownership rights to organizational hands, or to the state, with a centralized system of land management. This was of course different to the system of agrarian structure that came from the farmers themselves.

Changes at the top

Slowly but surely, SAKTI began to flourish, as far as North Sumatra, Lampung, and parts of Sulawesi. The implementation of the land program for farmers gathered in enthusiasm until the eruption of the Tanjung Morawa incident in North Sumatra in 1953. This incident was extremely complex. The government was dragging resolution of the Senembah Plantation land. The farmers' unions there were pushing for a quick resolution. This conflict was about seizure of power over the agrarian resources produced through colonialism. As a result, people died, both on the side of the farmers and the police. Initially, one of the farmers who died, Soedomo, was said to have been a member of BTI, but afterwards the Communist Party admitted that he was a member of SAKTI. As the General Secretary of SAKTI, I was given the mandate to settle this issue.

lands: (i) the structure of bureaucracy, including the organization of colonized land and (ii) agrarian land policy. That is why when the *Agrarische wet* appeared it could implemented immediately. Interview, 26 April 2005

⁵¹ See Samsul Ahmad, *Memahami Gerakan Sosial*

The program ‘land for those who work it’ pushed SAKTI into various areas in Indonesia. Then in 1953, SAKTI held a national farmers’ conference. In this conference, Tabrani, as head of the organization, was presented with a question which went more or less like this: ‘Our organization has developed. Now the farmers themselves have begun their actions, so, what about you? Do you want to stay on as head of SAKTI? If so, then it is better that you do not stay in the position of deputy mayor. It would be better that you did not hold these two positions at once. If you want to stay on as deputy mayor, then you should give your other position to somebody else.’

Tabrani responded by saying that he chose to remain deputy mayor of Jakarta. He also felt he was getting old, and there should be regeneration at SAKTI. So in the end Sidik Kertapati was elected as head of SAKTI. Seeing this take place, Soekarni joked that this group, from the start, could never be put right.

President Sukarno taking notice

Meanwhile, people’s organizations were becoming more established in the process of Indonesia’s national life. In the 1955 general elections, together with Armoenanto, Astra and some other people not affiliated with political parties, I was nominated as a candidate for people’s representative, because at that time SAKTI was not yet affiliated with the Communist Party, unlike the BTI. Not long after this, the Communist Party accepted us as non-party candidates as part of the Communist Party. So we entered the electoral race. As we were elected, we then became people’s representatives from the Communist Party.

From this point on, my political activities in the national arena kept moving forward. I felt called for more of a role in government, so I ended up becoming one of the members of MUPENAS [the General Assembly for the Development of the National Economy]. When I was being inaugurated as a member of MUPENAS, all those people who had never had good relations with me, were suddenly all over me with congratulations and saying: ‘well, that’s enough now of all that extremist stuff. Now is the time to build.’ Apart from that, I became member of the MPRS (House of Representatives). I was recommended by Chaerul Saleh. At the MUPENAS inauguration, Sukarno congratulated all the participants, including me. He did not say anything directly to me – he was the President, after all. I just said ‘yes’. Subandrio congratulated me too. ‘Congratulations, Mas Samsul’. ‘Thank you’, I replied. Then Leimena also

congratulated me. ‘Congratulations, Mas Samsul’. I answered, ‘thank you’. Finally, Chaerul Saleh came up. He didn’t congratulate me, but he said: ‘Thank you for joining.’ Of course, I answered this warm greeting from a close friend with a friendly jibe: ‘bullshit’! This shocked people who heard it, and even President Sukarno looked around.

Becoming General Secretary

At that time, farmers’ unions were growing fast. Especially as the 1955 elections had produced representatives from the farmers. Actually, there were already attempts to unite the various national farmers forces, but these efforts always went nowhere. It was not an easy thing to unite large farmers organizations each of which had strong support. The BTI itself, after fusing with the RTI in 1953, was more intensive in its approaches to the executive leadership of SAKTI. BTI wanted SAKTI to fuse with it. However, the majority of SAKTI members rejected this, making it difficult to achieve. The primary reason was the difference in views about control of rights over land and how land use would later operate.

But it seemed that BTI would not give up and kept on pushing for a fusion between the national farmers’ forces. Some said that BTI was infiltrating SAKTI. There was a series of talks held between Sidik Kertapati as Head of SAKTI and BTI organizers. Eventually, Sidik Kertapati as head of SAKTI began to waver towards the invitation to fuse with BTI. Added to this was the head of the Communist Party, Aidit’s political speech about the future of Indonesian farmers. That’s how it was. So, the vision was the same. This was the beginning of the fusion. In terms of programs, BTI and SAKTI were the same, there was no difference between them. And Sidik Kertapati as head of SAKTI began to familiarize members with the idea of fusion. Then he invited the other central organizational members of SAKTI to discuss the matter more seriously.

The core organization of SAKTI gathered. Sidik Kertapati, Burhan, Sasongko and myself acted as hosts. Together, we four discussed BTI’s offer of fusion. Burhan rejected it. Probably Burhan could not forget the guerilla warfare time, when Amir Syarifuddin [a Communist Party member] signed the Renville Agreement. To Burhan, the Communist Party action at that time was painful. This is why he did not want to stay with SAKTI if it fused with BTI.

So Burhan left the farmers’ circle. Sasongko did the same. He also rejected the offer. But the way he did it was more polite than Burhan. ‘That’s enough

for me, I want to go back to teaching,' he said. Sasangko was an art teacher at the Taman Dewasa school in Yogyakarta. Actually, I also rejected the offer of fusion, but because Sidik Kertapati was pushing for it, in the end I went along with it. And after the fusion, the name chosen for the organization remained 'BTI'.

Even though the fusion had taken place, this did not mean there were no internal dynamics afterwards. There were many differences of opinion and political views internally. Even so, the fusion did make the farmer's organization much bigger. However, the ideals of freeing the farmers from vestiges of feudal and colonial systems as the primary target helped make us focus on the ideals we shared.

After the fusion, my own position was now merely a staff member of the information section of the organization, whereas in SAKTI I had been General Secretary. Now I felt like I was just carrying out technical duties like typing letters or preparing administrative requirements for the head of BTI at that time, Sardjono. I had to accept this as part of the logical consequence of the process of fusion, and assist my dear friend from guerilla days, Sidik Kertapati. I did once complain to Sidik about what had happened, and he just said: 'It's just for the time being. Wait for the Congress.'

And it was not until the BTI Congress of 1962 that I was elected as General Secretary of BTI. I was no longer just the guy on the typewriter, ha ... ha ... The Head of BTI was Asmu Jati Wirosubroto.

Sacrifices

As for the agrarian situation, there were many things going on that I found questionable. According to me, we did not have to sacrifice the interests of the farmers and workers in the name of national unity. The problems of farmers and workers should rather be problems handled together as a nation. But in reality it was not like that. One example of this took place in Subang, in West Java, when the Plantation Workers' Union SARBUPRI and BTI took over a plantation. Chaerul Saleh ordered the local government, via radiogram, to arrest farmers who according to him were anarchist. Because of this incident, some BTI members were even arrested by local police.

As part of the BTI leadership, together with some others from the BTI organization, I approached Chaerul Saleh who was at that time Deputy Prime Minister. 'What do you think you are doing? You issued an order to arrest farmers,' I barked at him. 'Come on, I did nothing of the kind,' he

answered. After a long debate, Chaerul Saleh withdrew that radiogram, and ordered the release of the farmers.

Although the farmers were freed, I still went back to see Chaerul. 'What's it this time, Sul?' he asked. 'You have to recompense those farmers who were arrested', I argued. 'Do you know how long they were they held? How could their wives and kids eat without running up debts here, there and everywhere?' Chaerul answered, 'Oh come on, you can't just do this kind of thing in our Republic.' I did not want to give in and interrupted. 'You are Deputy Prime Minister. So there has to be a way, and now is the moment.' As a former comrade in arms, Chaerul Saleh could only swear: 'Damn you!'. Even so, he did fork out some money to recompense those farmers who had been arrested. I think this was an extremely rare event in Indonesia's history, ha ... ha ...

Apart from this, there was another incident in the village of Jengkol, Kediri, East Java. It began at a farmers' conference at Puncak, West Java, where plans were being drawn up for the 'unilateral actions' (*aksi sepihak*). Unilateral actions were not anarchic actions. They were intended to implement the agrarian reform law (UUPA, Undang-undang Pokok Agraria) and the produce distribution law (UUBH, Undang-undang Bagi Hasil) of 1960. These laws had long been ratified, but it was as though the government bureaucracy was loath to implement them. Our bureaucrats at that time were still basically the former feudal class. They preferred to conspire with the land owners than defend the farmers' interests. Seeing this attitude, we carried out unilateral actions in order to push for the implementation of the Agrarian Reform and the UUBH as quickly as possible.

President Sukarno tolerated the actions and created the Land Reform courts. Those involved with these courts came from various existing farmers organizations. There were some from BTI, PETANI (an organization under the National Party, PNI), and others. They were recruited to become members of the Assembly of Judges for Land Reform. This was done to fulfil the implementation of land reform. As it turned out, I myself was part of the committee that drew up the plans for the land reform act.

As a result, the unilateral actions spread. Almost every village that was a Communist base carried out these actions. The landlords were very 'busy' confronting this movement. There were clashes in a few areas, between those who supported the unilateral action movement and the landlords. The most 'active' clash was in the village of Jengkol in Kediri, East Java. There were some casualties on the police side in the clash.

On the run

The incident of the early hours of 1 October 1965 really astonished many people. As for me, I found out about it when I was in Bandung. At the time I was visiting my in-law who was sick.

I heard about the 1 October incident on national radio (RRI). I also heard the announcement about there being a Revolutionary Council. The names were mentioned one-by-one in the news and I listened very carefully. There were some I knew, some I didn't. I found it all confusing. Hardojo, for instance, who had just finished as Head of CGMI (Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia, Indonesian Student Movement Concentration), his name was there as a member of the Revolutionary Council.⁵² But then my own name was not mentioned. Even though, in terms of the hierarchy of power, my political position was more strategic. I was General Secretary of BTI, both a member of MPRS (Parliament) and also a member of its Leadership Body, and also a member of MUPENAS. So how come my name was not there on the list of members of the Revolutionary Council? If the Revolutionary Council really existed, of course. And it was that way too with other political elite whose names should have been there, but were not. Then there was Amir Machmud who was there as a member of the Revolutionary Council and so on. At the very least, I sensed that there was some extraordinary political process going on. This had the potential to bring about incredible political confusion. So I just didn't get it.

The incredible political confusion fueled my desire to know what was going on so I quickly went back to Jakarta. To find out what was happening, I immediately went to the MPRS offices. But there was absolutely no one there. The MPRS offices were suddenly empty, quiet, ominous. I was hoping to get some explanation as soon as possible about the events going on, but there was not a single member of the Communist Party elite for me to meet. Suddenly I lost contact with the Communist Party elite like Aidit, Njoto, Lukman and others. I felt I had lost touch with all groups. The atmosphere was chaotic and confusing. Out of my confusion I even forgot to park the jeep from Chaerul Saleh which I usually drove.

So if there was news about the murder of communists or graduates of the left, well, I knew nothing about it. Basically, from 1965, after the Gestok incident [Gerakan Satu Oktober, 1st October Incident], all my relations were cut. My communication with friends from MPRS was cut. And so too

⁵² In a separate interview, Hardojo said that he felt he knew nothing at all about the Revolutionary Council. His name appeared on that list out of the blue.

communication with Party people. The atmosphere was indeed made like that, amongst other things by Soeharto's lies. Meanwhile the students were being dragged in by the army. In this situation, yes, of course we had no other choice than for each person to save him or herself.

As for the issue of the Council of Generals, there really was one. This political issue was no secret. Almost everyone had heard about this Council of Generals. Do you think we didn't know? According to information, the Council of Generals probably emerged from dissatisfaction with Sukarno. But they did not have any clear solution to answer this dissatisfaction. And this lack of clarity only added to the confusion in the 1965 incident.

So what to do? We were all dragged along without knowing things clearly. Why had things suddenly turned to this? Even we did not understand the background to it. Now, if you ask me about this, I find it difficult. And that's just me – probably the party members themselves did not know. And they were scattered all over the place. No one knew where Aidit was, where Njoto was, where Lukman was.

At that time, they ran helter skelter who knows where. But strangely enough, at the grass roots level there was nothing. And from this, actually you can already say that there were some involved, but others who were not involved; some who agreed, and others who did not agree – or whatever, as for me I don't know how to formulate it. But this is the reality I have to relate. The reality showed that we [people from the Communist Party] were not monolithic, you see? There was no unified attitude about the incident itself. Isn't that strange? Even though the Communist Party is said to be centralistic. But the reality was different.

Suddenly there had also emerged this new figure called Lieutenant Colonel Untung. Who was this Untung? This was the first time I had heard his name. At that time I often visited the presidential palace, I was a member of the MPRS then, but I never heard that name of Untung. Even though I knew President Sukarno's adjutants well, like Si Guritno, Jatmiko and others.

In the midst of all these confused political games, suddenly the Communist Party and its '*onderbouw*' were accused of being the mastermind of the current political process. Automatically, as one of its high officials, I was also accused. I lost all my contacts in Jakarta, while hiding, I returned to Bandung. Then I went on the run. Once again I was on the run in my own country, ha ha ... While in Bandung I could only go around in circles moving from one friend's house to the next. Until finally I was arrested. I

forget exactly when, but it was around the end of December 1965 – or maybe it was already January 1966.

Humans have human hearts

There is an interesting story from the time I was on the run. I met Rustamadji. It seemed that he was on the run too. Now he had started out as a member of the Dutch Communist Party. But he had gone against the party line. When the Dutch parliament sanctioned the Police Actions [military aggression of 1947 and 1948], all the factions agreed. But he did not. As a consequence, he had to give up his position as a member of the Dutch parliament. He returned to Indonesia. Once he got there, he was under suspicion. He was arrested, but later released. Then, after the Gestok incident he was on the run again. When we met, I asked him: ‘Rustam. Shouldn’t you be in Holland? Isn’t this hard here?’ He answered, lightly: ‘Ah, even Hitler’s Gestapo couldn’t catch me, so I’m not worried about these idiot Malay intelligence.’ And as it turned out he was never arrested.

Actually, the hardest thing for me was family. When my mother-in-law heard of the incident and while I was on the run, she died. She had a heart attack. I was her favourite in-law, more or less. I was able to go to her house, and then she died. When I was arrested, my wife was working at the Soviet Union news office in Jakarta. I married her in 1958 after a courtship of 7 years, because her parents did not agree to the marriage. They thought that my way of life lacked direction.

While I was on the run, I was actually waiting to be called in, at least as a witness. But during the trials I was considered to have no connection with them. So I was not called. Asmu Jati Wirosubroto was called in as Head of BTI, then Sidik Kertapati as Deputy Head, but I was not. Even though I was General Secretary. In terms of the organizational structure, I should have been called. But strangely there was no warrant for me.

Looking at various publications, I read that it indeed seems as though Aidit had his own agenda. It seems that he had his own different support within the Communist Party. He was extremely close to Sjam Kamaruzaman. I never knew what was going on. Once, after a meeting at Jl Kramat Raya in Jakarta [the office of the Communist Party’s Central Committee], Aidit invited me to join him to go to Bandung. As we were going over the Puncak Pass in West Java, the car stopped and we had something to eat. When we were done, Aidit stood up and said ‘let’s go on to Bandung’. So I asked him about paying. Aidit gestured with his thumb behind him and said that there

was ‘The Boss’. I kept quiet. Eh ... only later did I know that ‘The Boss’ was Sjam Kamaruzaman. And then, later on it was also mentioned that there was what was called the ‘Special Bureau’. I found out about that from reading the papers. And it was in the paper that I saw the face of that person who had paid the bill at Puncak Pass.

When I was arrested, I was immediately taken to the Regional Police Headquarters for interrogation. They asked me for information about the various political activities I was involved with. Needless to say the process of interrogation was extraordinary. I was slapped, scolded, abused and so on. The lot, basically. The police had come to get me on a tip off from a PKI cadre. ‘Sweet’, huh? Ha ha ...

At the time, the head of the Communist Party for West Java came to meet me at a certain place. He came together with another cadre. He warned me that X had been arrested, Y had been arrested. I was a bit suspicious and worried that someone would ‘sing’ and report this meeting place to the police. And sure enough. Suddenly the police came in. I was immediately arrested. I was handcuffed, while that cadre just stood at the door watching everything going on. And I was taken off to police headquarters. Now, there at headquarters that same cadre was doing the interrogation alongside the police, calling us names. He was even crueller than the police! There were quite a few PKI cadres who did this kind of thing. This was because they could not stand the terror and violence inflicted on them. There was a lot of putting yourself first and saving your skin at that time. Anyone could act like that, including party cadres who just could not bear the terror and violence that struck them.⁵³

While under detention at the local police headquarters, we kept being moved from one place to another. From one isolation chamber to another. One thing happened which I thought was a bit strange. When I was going to be moved from police detention to army supervision, there was a policeman called Beni. He was one of the investigative team that detained me. He said, ‘hey, you can go out for a bit. We are going to separate soon. Let’s go out and eat together first’. So he asked the police chief for permission, it was Bondan Guntowaru at the time. He said okay. So we went to a restaurant where I knew the owner.

⁵³ Even so, as a leader Samsul could not just ignore the confrontation with cadres like this. ‘As leaders, we also had to take responsibility for cadres who were bad. We could not take the credit for good cadres if we shrugged responsibility for the bad ones’, Samsul said. Interview 26 April 2005.

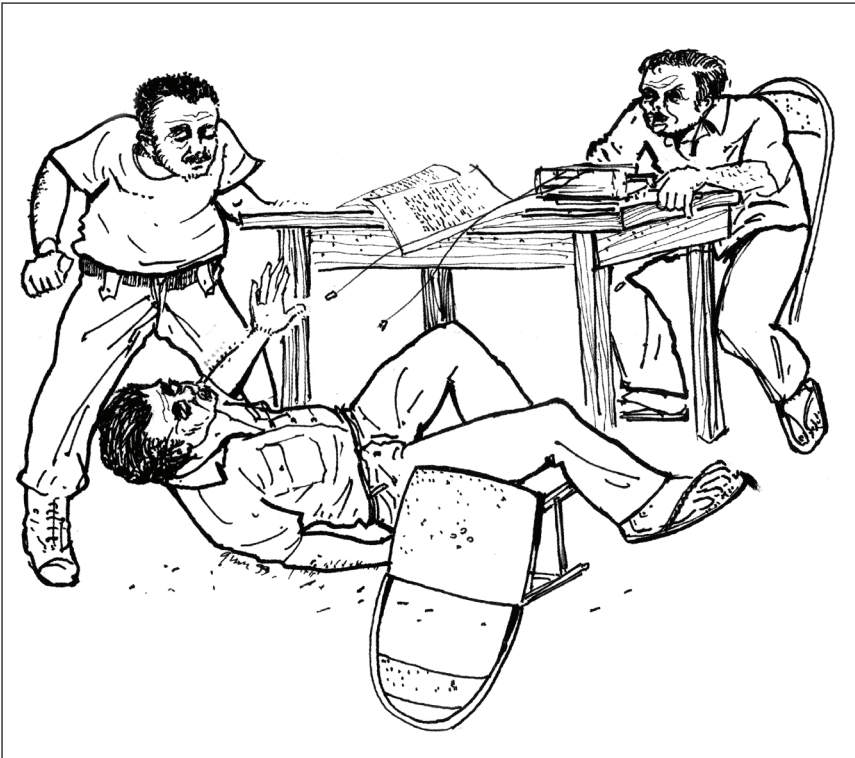


Figure 1. Detainees were often interrogated with extreme violence.

Sketch by Gumelar Demokrasno

While we were eating, they said: 'Forgive us. We are just just doing our duty.' I immediately replied: 'You don't have to ask for forgiveness now. Because at this moment what you just said is insubordination. All of us are insubordinates. I really believe that you are human, and that humans have human hearts.' And they cried. So I asked: 'After you capture me are you going to get promoted?' They said 'Yes'. Some raised two ranks, some three from their former rank. 'Well that's good', I said. 'I don't harbour revenge against you, because you are carrying out your duty. I know that you are forced to do all this. Forced, even though you like it because you get the chance to bash people up.' And we all laughed.

Every time they finished interrogating me I had to be dragged away. This was because I just couldn't bear torture. As for torture, it feels as though it will never end. I always asked myself, 'when will I die?' To me, it was over. We don't hope to live just another day. That's suffering.

Buru Island

After police headquarters, I was moved to Kebon Waru prison. Something happened there that was extremely moving in my life. While I was at Kebon Waru prison, family could still visit, including my father-in-law. One time my father-in-law came together with my wife. My father-in-law gave me excellent support. He even told my wife to remain faithful and wait for me. 'You must wait for your husband until he comes out', he said. Even though when we were courting I had to wait 7 or 8 years because it was really hard to get his blessing [for our wedding].

After they were 'satisfied' with me at Kebon Waru, I was taken to Nusa Kambangan. Then I was taken to the place of exile, Buru Island. I was under New Order detention for about 15 years. You know all about Buru Island. Any information that came in was of course news that fitted the interests of the New Order government. Hearing the news was just to know what the New Order government was doing at the time, including when there were visitors from outside. Of course, whenever there were visitors the detainees were given preparation on how to greet them well, how to talk to them and other rules of 'courtesy'.

Towards reconciliation

To me, this is all past now. This is not my personal problem. This is our problem as a nation. We do not live now for other days. What is bad from yesterday has to be left behind. Because what is most important to me is the truth that must be brought forth. But this is all just my way of seeing things, okay?

The truth that I imagine is objective truth. We must be able read reality as that reality. We must not keep adding other stories. Nor must we take away from it. Basically, leave it alone. Leave it as that reality. And that is 'truth'. For sure there are many versions of the truth. Every person has a different head. Many philosophers have formulated this matter of truth. But the way I see it, truth is events that do not need to be reduced, added to, or whatever.

From objective truth we can formulate what justice is. And what do we mean by justice? Being just to victims, just to perpetrators. The justice I speak of is all that everyone possesses. It is the same as what I said about truth. We must be just also to the perpetrators. If the wrong is 10 kilos, then judge no more than that. That action must be avoided. From these two things we can move towards reconciliation.

At ‘Australia bridge’

The following narrative, full of interesting information, was conveyed by an ex political prisoner from Buru Island, Maluku, Indonesia, who has the pseudonym Al Capone. This is a name he chose for himself, because during his time on Buru Island, his friends – he doesn't know why – liked to call him that. We have already made brief mention of this account in the introduction to the book.

It is an amazing feat for Al Capone to have remembered so many things in such detail about Buru island. He even recalled the names of the 123 political prisoners who were his fellow inmates in the special camp (Kampus Jiko Kecil) together with the places they came from, their aliases, professions before they were arrested, and other details about them. He recalls and describes clearly the last days before his release from Buru, and then the ceremony of release in Semarang. All this he recalls and calmly describes more than 40 years after the event.

The original of this text was handwritten in various stages, based on requests and clarification from researchers. Everything was written entirely based on memory. To respect and avoid offending some of the parties discussed, some names have been deliberately changed.

My parents gave me the name ‘S’. I was one of nine children. My father worked as a guard at Beringharjo market in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a job he had since former Dutch times. Among his friends, my father was often called ‘Market Tondho’. My mother worked as a housewife. However, after the death of my father in 1961, my mother also worked as a seller in the market, because she had to support three children who still lived at home, including me.

In Yogyakarta, my house was on the banks of the Code River, in the kampung (neighbourhood) of Ledhok Ratmakan in the Gondomanan district. This kampung was formerly called ‘Mantri Pamong Projo’. When the G30S incident of 1965 happened, I was just 19 years old.

Beginning of a long journey

I was ‘scooped’ or arrested on 21 December 1965 at my house by government officials, together with a group of other people. I was then taken, or dragged, to KMK [Keamanan Militer Kota, Municipal Military Security], or what is now called KODIM (Military District Command)

just to the north of Tugu railway station. I was interrogated there. During interrogation I was beaten in the face and all over my body. Then, with other friends, about 25 of us in all, I was taken to the Vredeburch Fort in Yogyakarta which was formerly the headquarters of the army battalion 438. In this group of 25 there were two women, namely:

1. Suhartinah from Prawirodirjan, who is now the mother-in-law of Mr Agus Gudadi from Gondomanan, Yogyakarta.
2. Walbi Rahayu from Kadipaten Wetan, Kraton kecamatan, Yogyakarta

The Camp Commander at the Fort at the time was Infantry Major Durdjani. The system of command in operation there was military. For example, the head was known as the Dan Ton, which was short for Komandan Peleton (Battalion Commander).

At the time, the Vredeburch Fort (called Benteng Camp) where the 1965 tragedy victims were housed, was home to 41 male inmates. There were 40 soldiers. The male inmates were housed to the west of the female ones. All that divided us was a barbed wire fence with woven bamboo. We were given food only once a day. It was sent from the guards at Wirogunan prison, and it was just boiled corn (*grontol*) in tiny portions – there were only around 80 grains of corn per serving.

On 25 December 1965 we were told that we were going to be screened by RPKAD (Army Para Command Regiment) which was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sarwo Edhi Wibowo at the time. However, we actually were not ‘screened’ at all, but given cruel and inhumane torture.

In that short time while at Vredeburch, all of us lost weight drastically. Many among us even got malnutrition. This happened because the commander forbade any visits from family, or for families to send any food. In February 1966 the first summons came from outside the Fort. But strangely, it came at night. And what really made us worried was that those who were summoned were had a kind of identity sign put around their necks. Our intuition told us that those who had been given this sign were about to be killed, but we had no idea where. Fortunately, God was still protecting me so that I did not get the call.

In mid April 1966 I was moved to Wirogunan prison, still in Yogyakarta. There, the camp commander was Serma Sudarman, who came from Prawirodirjan in Gondomanan. The prison director was Romli. While I was at Wirogunan prison I gradually adapted to my new surroundings. At

the same time, between the inmates there developed a strong solidarity, both with friends from outside Yogya and friends from Yogya. There developed a deep sense of true friendship even with friends from other regions [i.e. not Javanese, *trs*].

In the prison, there was something called 'collective punishment', meaning 'if one person does something wrong, then all inmates will be punished'. This made us look out for each other because we felt we were sharing the same fate, the same suffering and the same fight. We political prisoners knew only three things: exile, prison and murder. A few of the inmates were put to work at the Wirogunan prison, mending shoes, doing leather work, working as barbers as so on. The ones who worked got an extra rice ration or got to eat twice a day. But all the rest of us without work could do was just sit waiting to eat once a day. There was a ruling from the camp commander that every prisoner's family had to send 10 kilograms of rice, or, if they preferred, Rp 25. This was in 1967. Families who could not send rice or money were not allowed to visit the prison or to send food.

So every month, the victims' families had to find 10 kilograms of rice or Rp 25. We used to ask ourselves, where is there a country that detains political prisoners and does not give them any food? I don't think there are any. There is only this one, my beloved country, the country said to be based on Pancasila – the country that is so 'Pancasila'ist that its rulers at the time, the New Order that is, were extremely cruel.

Towards August 1966 my friends had the idea of celebrating Indonesia's 21st anniversary of its independence with a program of poetry reading and singing. And there was also a drama performance and *ketoprak*.⁵⁴ The officials thought this was a good idea so we requested official permission. And the event took place, and the results were pretty good. Many of the wardens really liked it, and were fans of *ketoprak*. Among the detainees there were many who were formerly *ketoprak* players in the 'Kridomardi' group. These included Mr Sasmito, Mr Siswadi, Mr Tjokro Djadi, Mr Sasto Siwi, Mr Rachmad and many others. It seemed that slowly but surely we were getting some concessions, which meant a lot to us. And although every day all we had to eat was *grontol* and cabbage, we were happy. For entertainment, one of us, Mr Saptopriyo who was formerly a lecturer at the Music College (ASMI, Akademi Seni Musik Indonesia) tried composing songs. Here is one of them:

⁵⁴ A form of traditional theatre extremely popular in central Java.

Food

Tempo: cha cha

*Be happy friends
The whistle has blown
It's food time
Yep, corn again*

*Everyone out
Line up nicely
No hitting now
Hands to yourself*

*Chorus: Yes it's corn again, friends
And cabbage, yippee
Let's attack it now friends
until nothing is left*

*No deep thoughts now
No melancholy
'Cause it's food time
Yep, corn again*

He came from Brontokusuman in the area of Mergangsan, Yogyakarta, where the road meets the road to Imogiri, Jalan Sisingamangaraja. Here are songs he composed:

1. Mawar Merah (Red Rose) (in langgam kroncong style)
2. Lusi (in langgam kroncong style)
3. Susi (in langgam kroncong style)
4. Romantika (in langgam kroncong style)
5. Di Kala Sinar Bulan Purnama (At the full moon) (langgam kroncong style)
6. Suratku (My letter) (popular style)
7. Cadong (Portion) (cha-cha, the song above)
8. Bertamasya (Going on an excursion) (cha cha)
9. Cipayung (waltz)
10. Berat Jalan (Sad to go) (popular style)

At the time, the Jefferson Library in Jalan Pangeran Diponegoro, opposite the Kranggan market in Yogyakarta, was a place where we victims of the 1965 tragedy were interrogated. It was also a headquarters for the interrogators, who were from the legal fraternity, the police, as well as the military (regional command, Kodim) assisted by local kecamatan mass organizations and political organizations. Back then, in 1965, everybody felt afraid. They were afraid they might be 'scooped', arrested or accused of being a communist. Back then a dog had more worth than a communist. It is not surprising then, that suspicion arose between people. And from this suspicion arose what was called '*fitnah*' or slander. People were slandering one another. The result was that the victims of the 1965 tragedy were not necessarily communist party people. Some became victims just because of some long harboured revenge, or just bad feeling. This was proven from the fact that in the camp there were also people from the Indonesian National Party (PNI) and others.

And that is exactly what Soeharto's New Order government wanted. The government deliberately made the people uneasy and anxious. Everywhere, in cities and in the regions, there emerged what we called 'Petruk' or 'Pointers' (*tukang petunjuk*), alias spies.

Becoming 'exiles'

In July 1969 at the Wirogunan prison there was a largescale movement of detainees. But we didn't know exactly where we were being sent to.

It turned out that we were being moved to Nusa Kambangan island in Cilacap, central Java. With that, all my hopes of meeting my parents and my family were dashed. We were taken from Wirogunan just before dawn, by bus. We got to the 'Wijaya Kusuma' harbour in Cilacap at 8 in the morning, were immediately loaded onto the dock and ordered to crouch with our two hands clasped behind our neck beneath the barrels of the guns of the 'Polsus' or special police (*polisi khusus*) from Nusa Kambangan. We were taken from the harbour on the ship *Anjing* (dog), the ship for taking detainees to Nusa Kambangan. On Nusa Kambangan island there was a harbour. It was called Sodong. From Sodong, we were led into prison. I was put in 'Gligier' prison. On Nusa Kambangan there were nine prisons. They were:

1. Besi (iron)
2. Batu (stone)
3. Gligier
4. Permisan

5. Limus Buntu
6. Nirbaya (without fear)
7. Karang Tengah (central residence)
8. Karang Anyar (new residence)
9. Kembang Kuning (yellow flower)

According to information from an ex-warden called N.K, the island of Nusakambangan was about 27 kilometers long and about 7 kilometers wide. Our activity there was to receive ‘counselling’ (*penyuluhan*), and training or ‘Santiaji’ in spiritual affairs, agriculture, horticulture and fisheries. According to the officials in charge of these courses, this was only temporary. We were going to be sent to some land which would become our own property, a kind of transmigration program. Even so, the officials would not say where this land was located.

And it turned out that what the official said, happened. On 15 August 1969 the first batch of political prisoners in period I, a group of about 2000, was dispatched on the Motor Boat ADRI IV.⁵⁵ But none of us had any idea where the ship was going to, or where our friends were being taken. All we knew was that the Nusa Kambangan prison was actually just a kind of transit place.

And during this time of waiting, a friend of mine called Suyanto alias ‘Thole’ from the kampung of Tukangan in the kecamatan of Danurejan, Yogyakarta, wrote a song called ‘Kampung Laut Tanggo’. This is how it went:

Kampung Laut Tanggo

*Come on friends, towards Kampung Laut
Through what was once mangrove swamps
Rowing the raft all together now
Make the water ripple*

*Chorus: The kampung houses of bamboo
Floating in water so pretty now
The fishermen’s boats calm too
Shrimp and fish their work to show*

*Kampung laut, the fishermen’s kampung
It’s just kampung laut*

⁵⁵ The army motor boat XV weighed 3500 tons, and was an old ex WWII craft. In August 1969 this vessel was used to take the New Order’s political prisoners of the 1965 tragedy into exile on Buru island, Maluku. See Hersi Setiawan, *Kamus Gestok* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2003)

Apart from this he also composed a dance called the 'Kite dance'. His dances and songs were very popular with the victims. They were often performed in arts events. But now I have no idea where my friend is. When his older sibling died in 2008, I did not see him at the funeral. Anyway, I was at Nusa Kambangan for about 3 years. Then I was sent to Buru Island as part of the second wave. On 26 September 1969, I arrived on the island of Buru, Ambon, Maluku.

The birth of 'BAPRERU'

The island of Buru was the last place the New Order regime chose for us. It was the New Order's 'Rubbish Dump' for us. The mandate and the execution of it were the responsibility of the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General at the time was Ali Said SH. The Attorney General's office co-ordinated with the Commander for the Restoration of Security and Order Operations (Panglima Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, Pangkopkamtib) which was General Sudomo at the time, together with other related organizations like the Ministry of Transmigration and Cooperation and the Ministry of Agriculture. So in 1969 a new body was established with they called 'BAPRERU' or the Body for the Administration of Buru Resettlement and Rehabilitation).

The security officials and guards were from the territorial forces of the Pattimura Regional Military Command with battalions 731, 732 and 733. The island of Buru with its capital Namlea are part of North Maluku. In 1969 the 'Tefaat' (Tempat Pemanfaatan, Place Utilization) Commander was Mayor CPM [Military Police Corps] Rusno. He was in this post from 1969 to 1971.

After the formation was all in order and Buru island was declared to be ready, the political prisoners were sent there in batches. And in this way Buru was complete as a 'rubbish dump' for the 1965 tragedy victims. And in this way, too, the island of Buru became famous all over the world.

Stepping on the 'unpromised land'

We were constantly being moved, like rotten, stinking, disgusting filth. We were kicked and driven out. To keep us uneasy. That's pretty much the way the authorities thought of us victims of the 1965 tragedy.

In mid September 1969 I finally really left the island of Nusa Kambangan, as part of the second batch of prisoners. There were about 2500 of us in that second batch. We left at about 4 pm on the boat ADRI XI which I

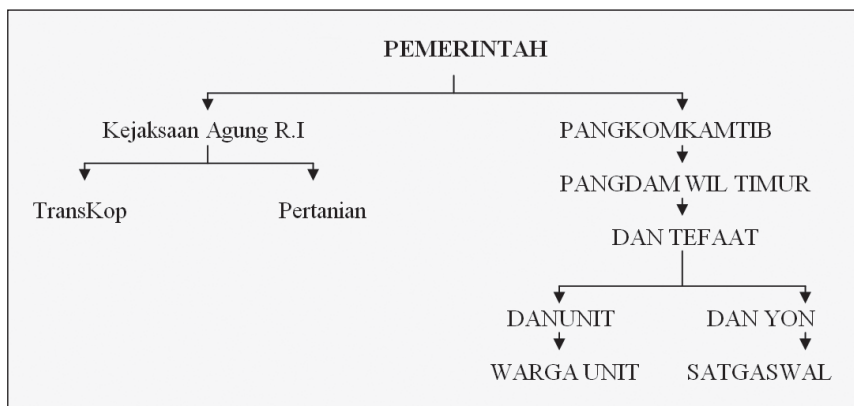


Figure 2. A diagram of the emergence of 'BAPRERU'

mentioned above. Those guarding us were led by Captain Yoes Padaga from National Strategic Command (KOSTRAD), RPKAD. Our journey started out well enough. But around the fourth day, we felt that there was something not quite right with the boat. None of us knew what had happened, because we were inside the hold which was locked. Not long after, we found out what was going on because there some some news from above deck. The news was more or less like this:

There had been a small fire on the ship, but thanks to the preparedness of the crew, they had got it under control. We could only look at each other, thinking about what had just happened. Towards evening, the boat docked at Makassar harbour to refuel. We had to wait until the next day to continue our journey. After ten days and nights, we finally arrived at our destination. However, the boat could not berth at the dock. The reason was probably security. So we were taken off with small boats like landing craft.

It was only when we got on land that we knew we were on Buru island. This was 26 September 1969. The harbour was called Namlea, in north Buru, north Maluku, Ambon. From the wharf, we were immediately loaded onto trucks and went to a location called 'Transito Jiko Kecil'

Figure 3 shows a diagram of Transito Juko Kecil, as I remember it:

In this transit camp we were told that in our new place we would have to work the land, as farming and plantation, and the produce would be for us, the residents. For this we were given instruction about correct agriculture and horticulture. It turned out that after just on 3 weeks we were sent off to units, taken by those same landing craft. There was no

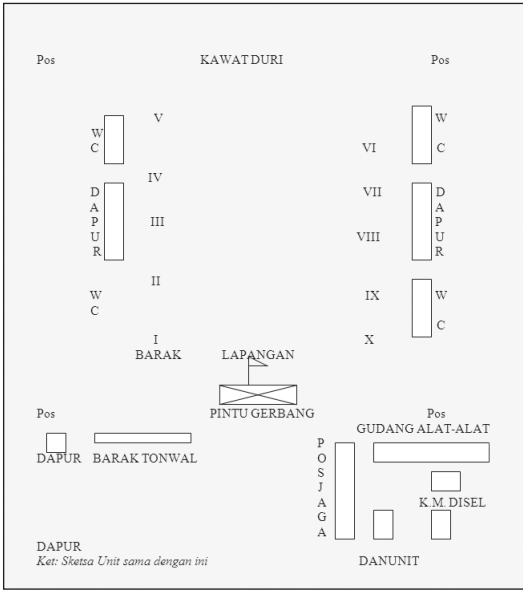


Figure 3. Diagram of 'Transito Jiko Kecil'

land transportation at the time, so we had to travel to the units by water. The Wayapo river was the one and only river for this. The river was deep, but also pretty wide. When we arrived at the river mouth we saw a Bugis fishing kampung, called 'Kaki Air', and we then started going upstream. The journey was fascinating because the Wayapo river has lots of bends, like a dragon stretching itself. After travelling for about 2 hours we arrived at our destination, our unit.

An official member of Unit I

After arriving at the unit, I was assigned a barrack, and every barrack had about 100 inmates. My unit was made up of 10 barracks, and every barracks had been assigned a Barracks Head and a deputy by the Unit Commander. The Unit Commander had also assigned two other people to lead the barracks heads and their deputies. These two people were the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator or the Chief Assistants of the Unit Commander. On the first day we were given time to rest.

The next morning was roll call. We were given duties according to our groups or barracks. In this roll call the Unit Commander gave us instructions. The instructions included:

1. *Whether you all go hungry or not is in your own hands. So you are all urged to work hard and seriously because your fate is in your own hands. And the Central Authorities do not want to take responsibility again if you fail.*
2. *However, if your efforts here are not productive, or have not yet borne fruit, the Centre will take responsibility and allow time for consolidation for a period of 9 months, by sending goods and tools, also medicine, fertilizer and so on.*
3. *Your harvest belongs to you.*
4. *As Unit Commander I hereby forbid you to have any contact with the local people of this island, or the Bugis people, or anyone else.*

And that was more or less the instruction from the Unit Commander, as I can remember it. And then we all worked according to the duties assigned to us.

In the first years, we in the various units planted non-irrigated rice in the yard around the barracks around 500 metres from the Unit, and also root crops and vegetables. To supplement the food supply, we pounded sago. In the second year we had (irrigated) rice fields. We also made a road out of the unit. This was important for going to the fields, for instance. And we built dams and housing.

Towards 1971, the Unit Commander permitted the inhabitants to sleep outside the barracks or the unit. But at the beginning the only ones who got this permission were those who worked in the fields (they were permitted to sleep in the sheds). Even this dispensation was given with the proviso that every morning they came for roll call. For those of us sleeping in the barracks, we had to attend roll call every morning and every evening before we went to sleep.

The unit was like this: each unit was made up of 10 barracks, every barracks had 60 inmates (this was the small units). Large units (like units I and II) had 100 inmates per barracks. Every unit had one battalion to guard it, plus one PHB squad and a force of combat engineers (*zipur*). Added to all this there were still another 10 officials from the Attorney's office.

At one stage I asked myself, could all this be the will of God? Because while I was with the unit, and had not yet adapted to the surroundings, suddenly I was moved to another unit. The Unit Commander's reason was that this was to average out the number of detainees per unit. Together with 50 others I was moved to Unit III Wanayasa. Note: we were told this period

of consolidation would go on for about 9 months, but in actual fact it was stopped after 4 months.

Unit names

In the period 1969–1970 the political prisoners on the island of Buru lived in units. These included:

Unit I Wanapura, with unit commander First Lieutenant CPM Eddy Tuswara from West Java.

Unit II Wanareja with unit commander First Lieutenant CPM Suparno from Yogyakarta

Unit III Wanayasa, with unit commander Captain CPM Daeng Masiga from Jakarta

Unit IV Sanleko (Savana Jaya) with unit commander Second Lieutenant CPM Superman from central Java.

As of late 1970, there were new units, namely:

Unit V Wanakarta

Unit VI Wana Wangi

Unit VII Wana Surya

Unit VIII Wana Kencana

Unit IX Wana Mulya

Unit X Wana Dharma

Unit XI Wana Asri

Unit XII Birawa Wanajaya

Unit XIII Giri Pura

Unit XIV Bantala Reja

Unit XV Indra Pura or Unit Ronggolawe

Unit XVI Indra Karya

Unit XVII Arga Bhakti

Unit XVIII Adhi Pura

Additional units in 1971:

Unit Sawunggalling

Unit Trunojoyo

Unit “R”

Unit “S”

Unit “T”

Naming the units began with Unit II, whose Unit Commander at the time was Captain CPM Daeng Masiga. He called Unit III Wana Yasa or Wanayasa. Then Unit I and Unit II were also given names. The Unit I Commander was First Lieutenant CPM Eddy Tuswara, Kujang, Siliwangi who named it Wana Pura. Unit II was named Wana Reja by its Unit Commander, First Lieutenant CPM Sumardi, from Diponegoro. But actually the idea to give Unit III the name Wana Yasa came from Pramoedya Ananta Toer from Blora, Central Java, who was exiled to Buru island along with other victims of the 1965 tragedy.

There were only 500 inmates in Unit III Wana Yasa at the time. But later Unit I Wana Pura and Unit II Wana Rejo sent another 50 inmates. And after that there were more additions. So Unit III Wana Yasa then had 604 in total. I stayed in Unit I Wana Pura for just on three months. In Unit III I stayed in Barrack I, the head of which was Chris Hutabarat from Jakarta. He was a former journalist from *Harian Rakyat*, or HR for short. In my barracks I met older people like Mr Anwar Kadir, Mr Karel Supit, Mr Drs Bismo, Mr Rivai Apin, Mr Hasjim Rachman from the newspaper *Bintang Timur*, Mr Drs. Suniadi, Mr Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Mr Prof. Dr. Suprpto S.H., Mr Oey Hay Djoen, Mr Eddy Martalogawa and Mr Situmeang, and many others besides.

While at Unit II I was happy because I was able to learn from my elders, especially from Mr Rivai Apin and Mr Samandjaya or Oey Hay Djoen who mentored me in literature. It was as though I had been reborn. I wrote about my happiness like this:

My birth

Every person surely knows
 Gall is bitter
 But, to me it is something else
 It is sweeter than sugar
 Wonderfully coloured
 Playing in torture and suffering
 I am forged and born anew

Unit IV was given the name Unit IV Sanleko or Savana Jaya, because this unit was near the place where the Buton people lived. In 1969–1970 Buru had only four units, namely units I–IV. But in late 1970 we heard information that new units were going to be built in Buru. The labour for this would be found from the existing units. People said that when units I–IV had been built, victims of category 'C' in the city of Ambon had provided the labour.

We got this information from those who finished their duty and were about to leave Buru. And indeed it was true about the new units. Jakarta, or the central government sent its survey team to Buru in early 1971. When the survey team was about to begin its work, they took some inmates from Unit III Wana Yasa. I was one of those who joined, and had to carry their equipment and tools. The survey team was made up of geologists, agricultural experts, and combat engineers. There were only two guards for the group, namely two security guards from Battalion 732 Pattimura.

Local inhabitants of Buru Island

Even though this was really hard work, I was happy because I was able to explore places and get to know the situation outside the unit. For instance:

1. The kampungs of the local inhabitants of Buru
2. The existence of other rivers apart from Wayapo river
3. The local customs and language of communication
4. Methods of measuring land contours using a theodolite and other equipment

The local inhabitants of Buru were still nomadic, meaning they constantly moved their place of residence. Once the place where they were staying was no longer productive, they found a new place and fields. Usually they chose to stay near swamps because they needed to find fish to eat. They also hunted crocodiles to barter or to sell the skins to the Bugis people and others.

Their staple food was sago and banana, also *kasbi* or a kind of cassava, and sweet potato. Their main occupation was looking for sago to sell or to barter for things they needed. Apart from that, they liked to hunt wild deer, go fishing and hunt for crocodiles. And they were still animists. They believed in spirits and in spirits of their ancestors. The language they spoke was 'Furu'. Some of the more progressive ones spoke Indonesian. Here are some examples of the Furu language:

Local Language	Indonesian	English
Mistina	Hantu	Ghost
Yako	Saya	I/me
Mai	Mari	Please
Ka	Makan	Eat
Hala	Nasi atau beras	Rice
Tiput	Ayam	Chicken
Niwe	Kelapa	Coconut
Way	Air	Water
Wamo	Mengerti atau tahu	Understand, know
Inu	Minum	Drink
Te	Tidak	No/not
Fuat	Pisang	Banana
Ngama	Bapak	Mr, sir
Ngana atau Ina	Ibu	Mrs, madam

The weapons they most used were knives called *todo* and lances called *hero*. They carried their *todo* and *hero* with them wherever they went – they never left them behind. They still acknowledge a ‘king’ among them. There are two meanings of king to them. The first is the ‘Mountain King’. This king rules the people who live in the hills and the interior. The second is the ‘Land King’, the ruler of the people along the flatlands of the Wayapo river. This Land King lives in the town of Namlea. So among the people of Buru island there is a clear division. One can say that the level of culture of the original inhabitants living in the hills is still very backward, while that of the people living along the Wayapo river is more advanced.

Figure 4 depicts the structure of governance of the local people of Buru island.

Information:

1. The king is everything to the local people; so they always obey him and follow his orders.
2. The ‘kepala adat’ or ‘head of customs’ is the Elder of the *soa*, or the head of the group. His position is beneath the king, and he is extremely influential in the people’s traditions. The Kepala Adat determines everything concerning custom, like marriage, burials, hunting and other rituals. These days on Buru island there are rarely fights between *soa* or groups. However, when the first batch of victims of the 1965 tragedy arrived in 1969 there were still fights between the *soa* heads. Some people wounded by swords or spears

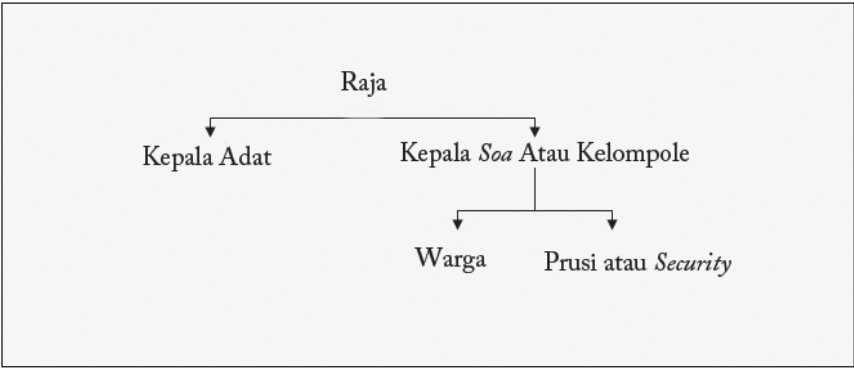


Figure 4.

asked for medical assistance at Unit III Wana Yasa whose Camp Commander was Captain CPM Daeng Masiga. To the local people, the issue that sparked outbreaks of fighting was women, because on the island of Buru, women were in short supply and very expensive. They had a very large bride price. It was though women had to be bought.

3. *Prusi*, or police in charge of security. In their society, there are also police or *prusi*. A policeman is someone whose prowess is proven. He has to prove his courage, his skill in organizing war strategy, and also his dexterity in using both the sword and spear. In other words, he had to be good in warfare. This is why even today there are still war dances called *cakalele*. This dance is usually performed for important guests. The musical accompaniment is on a drum, called *tifa*.

This is some of what I got when I joined the survey team. After that we returned to Unit III Wana Yasa with the results of the survey.

Forming new units

In about April 1971, the building of new units began. The Commander of Location Utilization (*Tefaaf*), Major Rusno, ordered the Commanders of Units I, II and III to prepare the labour from their units for this purpose. The building project was entrusted to the combat engineer battalion. There were 14 new units planned, including units V to XVIII for the first period to 1971. In the second period, 1972, units 'R' through to 'T' or Unit Trunojoyo were built. In 1972, I was already in the 'Special Camp'

(Kampsus, or Kamp Khusus). So the total number of units in Buru was 21. Here are the details:

1969: Units I to IV

1971: Units V to XVIII

1972: Units R, S and T

The total number of unit inhabitants (called 'tohpól', short for 'tokoh politik' or 'political figures') on Buru island was about 12,000. However, the government said there were only 10,000. The government was always like that.

Mid-February 1970 was the happiest time for me. Why? Because this was when I was baptized by Father Matatulla, the priest from Namlea. The baptism took place at the Maranatha church in Unit III Wanayasa. And from then on, my name was Joseph S.

Transito becomes 'Kampus'

In mid 1971 there was a change of Location Utilization Commander, along with all the Unit Commanders and their staff. The Location Utilization Commander, CPM Rusno was replaced by Infantry Colonel Syamsu from the Kujang military unit, Siliwangi Division. The Location Utilization Commander for Unit III Wanayasa, Captain CPM Daeng Masiga was replaced by First Lieutenant CPM Sujoso from Brawijaya Regional Military Command, East Java. The intelligence section, or OPS Kasi I, was headed by Captain CPM Imam Suwarso, also from Brawijaya.

Now this man was cold-blooded. He would even boast, bragging about how he had 'wiped out' the South Malang and South Blitar movement in 1967. He also claimed that he had captured Suwandi, who was at the time head of the larger Malang region in East Java, and had killed him. With people like this, the calm atmosphere in the units vanished. And with these officers, like Captain Suwarso, who was extremely ambitious, there were re-arrests of detainees who were thrown into the 'Jiko Kecil Special Camp' (Kampsus Jiko Kecil). These re-arrests went on in mid-November 1971. It was because of this man that Transito Jiko Kecil was changed into 'Jiko Kecil Special Camp'.

Notes

Actually, from the start of our departure to Buru island, the Jakarta central government had already infiltrated our group of detainees with three 'informants'. The three informants mixed with us. Even so, there was a clear difference between them and us 1965 victims. We all had photographs with

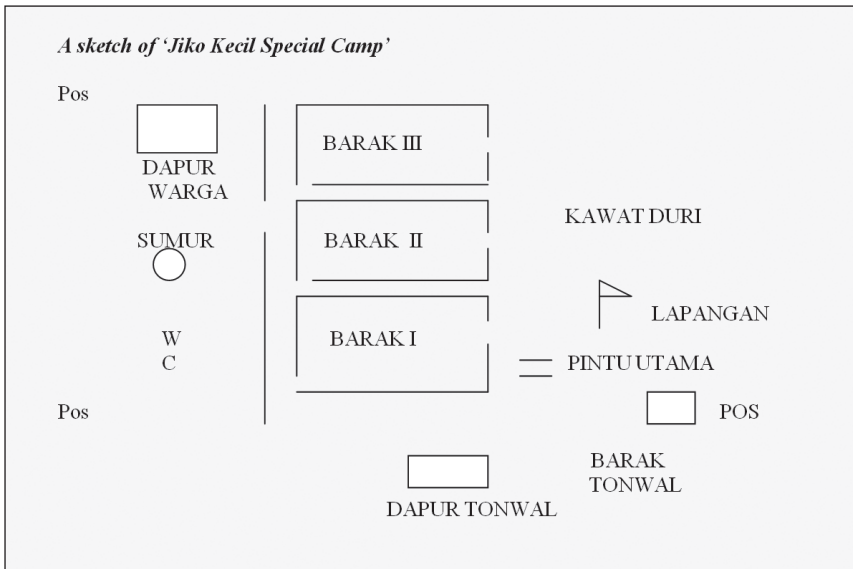


Figure 5.

numbers and numbered shirts. They did not. The three informants were Dedy, Tedy and Tarfi Nasution. Tarfi Nasution was placed in Unit III Wanayasa. Dedy and Tedy were placed in Unit I Wanapura. These three were included in the second 'shipment' of detainees on the ADRI XI in 1969.

The first victims of arrest and imprisonment in the Special Camp were inmates of Units I and II, in November 1971. Together with four other friends, I was put into the Special Camp. The five of us were:

1. Kudori
2. Sukardi Maryadi
3. Prof. Dr. Suprpto S.H.
4. Pramoedya Ananta Toer
5. Myself

When we got to Namlea we were interrogated at Wisma Anggrek which was the base of the Commander of Location Utilization and his staff. While Sukardi Maryadi and I were taken to the Special Camp, the others were returned to Unit III Wanayasa. In the Special Camp there were only three barracks. But when Sukardi Maryadi and I were put there, only two barracks had inmates. Each barracks was behind barbed wire, and there was still another barbed wire fence around the camp as a barrier.

First Lieutenant CPM Munawar from Brawijaya [Regiment] in East Java was the camp commander. His deputy was Infantry First Lieutenant Sjamsudin from Siliwangi Division. As time went on, other inmates joined the Special Camp. At the beginning, we were not sent out to work, but the Camp Commander was able to talk the Commander of Location Utilization into putting us to work.

Inmates of Jiko Kecil Special Camp

Here are the names of the inmates of 'Jiko Kecil Special Camp' with their units and place of origin, as far as I recall:

From Wana Pura unit:

1. L. Supriyanto from Yogyakarta
2. Markum Sukarno from Yogyakarta
3. Sudiarto from Yogyakarta
4. Rubianto B.A. from Yogyakarta. His family followed in 1972.
5. Sugiarto from Yogyakarta
6. Sukardi alias Semplo from Semarang
7. Harafanto from Semarang
8. Nasoka from Semarang
9. Dulmuri Sanyoto from Semarang
10. Arnold Boyoh from Magelang
11. Usman Djafar from Central Java
12. Sugeng Pardan from Central Java
13. Tan Hun Swie from Klaten
14. Suwarno from Yogyakarta, shot dead on 3 Oktober 1972 by a security guard
15. Suhardjono Kijang from Yogyakarta, shot dead on 17 Oktober 1973
16. Alex Themo from Semarang, shot dead on 17 November 1973 by a security guard
17. Kusnadi Hadi from Central Java
18. Gombig

From Unit II Wana Reja:

1. Djuhendi from West Java, survived being shot.

2. Djuhandi from West Java
3. Piin Sudiatna from West Java
4. Oyok Sunaryo from West Java
5. Suganda from West Java
6. Machfud from West Java
7. Inan Salyan from West Java
8. Usman Salyan from West Java
9. Amsyah Romly from West Java
10. Suwarta from West Java, died from a poisonous fish sting
11. Machruf Yoes from West Java
12. M. Hamid from Jakarta
13. M. Hadil from Jakarta
14. Supardi from Jakarta
15. Anang Suwarno from Jakarta
16. J.J. Juwono from Jakarta
17. Usman Naan from Jakarta
18. Usman Aswadi from Jakarta
19. Kusnadi S.A. from Jakarta
20. Asman Leman from Jakarta
21. Sugimin "Geblek" from Jakarta
22. Jadjid Hadi Sutanto from Jakarta
23. Rachmad Siregar from Jakarta
24. Sutrisno from Yogyakarta, whose wife followed in 1972
25. Suroso from Yogyakarta
26. Djonediono from Yogyakarta
27. Sumaryono "Bogel" from Yogyakarta
28. M.Suhud from Yogyakarta
29. Reo Sunardi from Yogyakarta
30. Sumardiono Glatik from Yogyakarta
31. Bambang Indiadi from Klaten, Jateng
32. Bedjo alias "Bejat" from Jakarta
33. Subita dari Brebes, Central Java
34. AB Sunarto from Pemalang, Central Java

35. Sarman Mamons from Banten
36. Sutrisno B from Purwokerto
37. Siswo Rahardjo from Malang, East Java
38. Somad Sukoprayitno from Semarang
39. Abdul Gani from West Java, shot dead on 17 November 1973 in front of his barracks
40. Awang Dharmawan from West Java, shot dead on 17 November 1973 in front of his barracks
41. Nono Sudiono from Yogyakarta, shot dead on 17 November 1973 in front of his barracks
42. Gatot Widodo from Yogyakarta, shot dead on 16 November 1973 in the coconut plantation on the beach
43. Gatot Sugoto from Yogyakarta
44. Heru Sutrisno

From Unit III Wana Yasa:⁵⁶

1. Karel Supit from Jakarta
2. Drs. Yacob Pirry from Jakarta
3. Drs. Slamet Mulyono from Jakarta
4. Rudy Iskandar from Jakarta
5. Pramodya Ananta Toer from Jakarta, originally from Blora, Central Java
6. Prof. Dr. Suprpto SH from Jakarta
7. Kudori from Kediri
8. Eko Sutikno BA from Semarang, for only about 3 months
9. Maryadi Sukardi from Malang
10. Myself (Al Capone) from Yogyakarta
11. Rivai Apin from Jakarta

From Unit IV Sanleko (Savana Jaya):

1. Harry Winardi from Yogyakarta
2. Kabul from Magelang

⁵⁶ The writer sometimes writes the name as 'Wana Yasa' and sometimes 'Wanayasa'. So too with the other units. Sometimes the words are separated, sometimes combined, so 'Wana Reja' or 'Wanareja'.

3. Supriyadi from Yogyakarta, attempted to escape in 1972

From Unit V Wana Kerta:

1. Y. Suparno from Pemalang, Central Java
2. Paryusi from Pati, Central Java
3. Saphiran from Rembang, Central Java
4. Suparing from Rembang
5. Basri from Rembang
6. Hasan Basri from Lasem
7. Leo Paidjan from Yogyakarta
8. Sukadi from Yogyakarta, shot and the bullet lodged in his shoulder, but survived.

From Unit VII Wana Surya:

1. Sukamto from Yogyakarta
2. Kandam Sutardjo from Kebumen, Central Java

From Unit VIII Wana Kencana:

1. Siman from Purworejo, Central Java
2. Kemiso from Purworejo

From Unit IX Wana Mulya:

1. Sulfi Rachman from Malang
2. Suwono from Malang
3. Pamuji from Malang
4. Sarmo from Solo
5. Sjawal Bagong from Purwokerto
6. Mukidi from Brebes, committed suicide by drinking insecticide in Ancol Unit.

From Unit X Wana Dharma:

1. Benny Chung alias Swie Chan from Jakarta, Writer
2. Supratiknyo from Jakarta
3. Petrus Pajian from Jakarta, only two months
4. Udjang Umar from West Java
5. M. Danafia S.H. from Surabaya

From Unit XI Wana Asri:

1. Karnapi, a comic actor from Jombang, East Java

From Unit XII Birawa Wanajaya:

1. Machmud Chairun from Jakarta
2. Machmud from Jakarta
3. Sri Dharmadjo from Jakarta
4. J. Sukarno from Jakarta
5. Masdur from Jakarta
6. Zaenal Arifin from Jakarta
7. Sasmon Pardede from Jakarta
8. Thio Bhiechan from Jakarta
9. Sumargono from Jakarta
10. Salikun from West Java

From Unit XIV Bantalareja:

1. Heru Santoso
2. Bonar Siregar
3. Note: These two came from Jakarta and once tried to escape Heru Santoso died of hepatitis

From Unit XV Indra Pura:

1. Suwardiono from Jakarta

From Unit XVI Indra Karya:

1. Abas Usman from West Java
2. Dirdjo Panular from Jakarta

From Unit XVII Arga Bhakti:

1. Drs. Mustadji Sangit from Surabaya, hanged himself in Special Camp barracks III because he could not bear the torture he was undergoing
2. Supratikno from Surabaya
3. Ibnu Haryanto from Surabaya
4. Sukarman from Surabaya

5. Paidjan from Surabaya
6. Eddy Suroto from Surabaya
7. Hartono from Surabaya
8. Supaat Rachmad B.A from Surabaya
9. Wiyono B.A. from Surabaya
10. Sumardiono B.A. from Surabaya
11. Rusdi from Pemalang
12. Totok Andang Taruna, writer, from Surabaya

Note: Some of the inmates of the Jiko Kecil Special Camp later became (or, more precisely were made to become) 'cockroaches', alias informants, for those in power.

The total number of inmates in the Jiko Kecil Special Camp was around 123 people. I say 'around' because there were some who were just interrogated and then returned to their units. Some others stayed for only about 2 months.

Work Experience in the town of Namlea

Our first experience of working outside the Special Camp was to clean around the Wisma Anggrek or the quarters of the Commander of Location Utilization and his staff. Then we had to do road repairs on the road from Namlea wharf to the market which was about 600 meters. The material for this was stones we found on the beach which were brought by truck. After seeing how seriously we worked, the Commander began to trust us.

At one time there was a request from the Catholic presbytery, they were going to build a residence. Labour was needed, and stones for the foundations. At that time, the head of the Presbytery was Father Roovink SJ from Germany who had replaced Father De Blot from Holland. The building progressed smoothly. Our relations with Father Roovink were also good, and familiar. The residence was named 'Wisma Kartini'. The reason for this was that there were more women than men living there.

Those who lived in 'Wisma Kartni' were children of the 1965 victims who had followed their parents. Others living there included children from around Namlea, namely free people who went to school in Namlea. There were about 70 of these children. As extracurricular activities at the presbytery, the children were taught various skills like sewing, weaving and so on for the girls. For the boys, other skills were taught, like trades and so forth.

We were once ordered to unload a ship with a cargo of about 600 tons. The cargo was sent from Jakarta and was made up of fertilizer, medicine, corrugated iron, nails, sugar, cement, rice and other things. We had to unload the cargo to fit in with the scheduled departure of the ship. And this was despite the fact that there were only about 60 of us from Special Camp. As a result we had to work extra hard, push ourselves to the absolute limit. Luckily, it seemed that God was still protecting us. Always, in whatever difficulty, He was always with us.

Once we were ordered to clean the road from Namlea to the airport, which was about 6 kilometres long. It was the hot season at the time. As you know, the hot season in eastern Indonesia is incredibly harsh. Even so, working with gladness in our hearts, everything went smoothly.

The villages we visited included Ubung, Sawah, Jiko Morasa, Jiko Besar and the 'Jembatan Australia' or 'Australia Bridge' beach. This was a wharf secretly built by the Japanese army in 1942. At that time, the island of Buru was the last defence post for the Japanese in Eastern Indonesia. There we found many bunkers built by the Japanese in 1942. The wharf was used for the dispatch of Japanese troops to attack Australia. This is why the people nearby called it the 'Australia Bridge'.

And that was my experience while at Jiko Kecil Camp, Namlea, Buru island.

Executions

- On 3 November 1972, Mr Suwarno from Prambanan, Yogyakarta, was shot dead in front of the guard post by the security guard. He was buried in Namlea.

Orders given by: Second Lieutenant Mlw as Battalion Commander, and as Guard Commander, First Corporal Nlh

Execution Squad

- First Corporal YK
- Second Corporal Ply
- Private Sml
- First Corporal Tjg

Suwarno had been accused of attempting to take an officer's gun.

- On 16 November 1973, Gatot Widodo was shot in the coconut plantation beside the beach while looking for firewood. His four friends were shot in front of their barracks together with the head of

their barracks on 17 November 1973. This incident occurred under the guard from Hsn unit, An Battalion with Battalion Commander Major JM. The Company Commander was Captain Hky and the Platoon Commander was Sergeant Major HK.

The execution squad included:

- Battalion Commander Serma HK
- Second Sergeant DB
- First Sergeant Sb
- Second Corporal AR
- Second Corporal Shb
- Mr Djuhendy from West Java was shot but survived. He was shot, but the bullet went through his left breast and came out the other side. The bullet then hit the left shoulder of Sukadi and lodged there. Until the time of his release and return, the bullet had not been dislodged. Actually, he had it until his death in 2001. He came from Yogyakarta.
- The first friend to commit suicide at Special Camp was Drs. Mustadji Sangit from East Java, in March 1972. He hanged himself in his barracks towards dawn.
- Those who died from illness included:
 - Suwarta from East Java. As mentioned earlier, he was poisoned by a poisonous fish when looking for stones on the beach.
 - Heru Santoso. He died from hepatitis at Mako Hospital, as mentioned above. He came from East Java.
 - Pak Mukidi committed suicide by drinking insecticide when spraying plants at 'Ancol' unit. He came from Solo, Central Java, and was buried at Unit IV Savana Jaya or Sanleko.⁵⁷

Changes

While I was on Buru island, there were a few changes of personnel and official terminology for Buru itself.

⁵⁷ At Unit X Wana Dharma there was a beheading of inmates by a local native of Buru, for their sacred custom of requesting rain. This incident took two victims from Unit X Wana Dharma. (But I do not recall the date and year. The person who did the beheading was called Giling Tama). In unit V there was another ghastly incident. But I was in Special Camp at the time, so I am loathe to write about it.

1. Commander of Location Utilization (*DanTefaat*)

Period I, 1969–1971: Major Rusno

Periode II, 1971–1973: Colonel Sjamsi

Periode III, 1973–1975: Lieutenant Colonel A.S. Rangkuti

Periode IV, 1975 – release in 1979: Colonel Lewerissa

In 1969 we got a visit from General Sumitro and the Attorney General. A group from W.H.O. and journalists led by Bur Rasuanto visited in 1973. In these visits, the person acting as ‘host’ was Pangkopkamtib (Commander for the Command of the Restoration of Security and Order) General Sudomo.

2. Guards (*Satgaswal*)

The change of guards happened only once. The guards from Pattimura Regional Military Command who had been on duty from 1969 were replaced by guards from Hassanudin Regional Military Command Anoa Battalion in late December 1972.

3. Terms for Buru Island

As I mentioned above, at the beginning (from 1969 until 1970) the place of banishment on Buru island was called BAPRERU. In 1970, the name became ‘Buru Tefaat’. The term ‘*tefaat*’ was short for ‘Tempat Pemanfaatan’ or ‘Location Utilization. Towards 1972, the name was changed to ‘Buru Inrehab’ or ‘Instalasi dan Rehabilitasi (Installation and Rehabilitation)’. At that time, the Inrehab Commander was Lieutenant Colonel CPM A.S. Rangkuti. He was once an actor in the film *Sungai Ular* (Snake River) in the 1950s.

Complications of the journey home

In 1974, we were moved from Special Camp to Ancol unit which used to be the salt-making unit with the official name unit XIV Bantala Reja. When we were at Ancol Unit, the Unit Commander was First Lieutenant CPM Sumantha from Siliwangi Division. The Platoon guard was First Lieutenant Giyanti from Hassanudin Military Command, Anoa Battalion. After we had our own ricefields, the Commander of Location Utilization at Ancol declared that we were a separate unit and had our own unit commander. The unit command of Ancol was held by Sergeant Major CPM Sumadi from Diponegoro regional military command. In mid 1976 there were mass releases from Buru. This was the first wave of releases.

A few months later, in 1977, we were moved once again, to Unit XIII Giri Pura. The Ancol unit was declared dissolved. Unit XIII was the furthest away and it was at the highest altitude, in the hills. We were moved to Unit XIII because the inmates had all been released. However, the ricefields were full of rice nearly ready to harvest. And there were still piles of husked rice in the storehouses.

So while in Unit XIII you could say that we ate and slept while awaiting our turn to be called to return to Java. Our coordinator used this time for workshops. For instance, workshops in distilling eucalyptus oil, sawing planks and many other things. And we could save the proceeds from sales for our return. Even so, we were still under guard, but it was as though the guard had no meaning any more. We could go anywhere without a permit. And apart from that, we were not guarded at all. It was enough for us just to report to the barracks head, or the head of the group would report to the unit commander and the guard commander. When the political prisoners were released or sent back home, the guard unit was returned to Pattimura Battalions 731, 732 and 733 in Ambon, Maluku.

And then, at last the day we had waited for arrived. On 11 October 1978 there was an announcement about the third batch release. I was so very happy. On that day my name was there on the list. But my friends whose names were not there were very sad. You can imagine the cries that could be heard, echoing everywhere.

Before we parted, to meet again who knew when, we butchered a calf for us to eat together. We did not forget to offer prayers, in our own way, that God would always bless us and protect us all. The Unit Coordinator at Unit XIII then gave out pocket money to those whose names were called. This money was the result of our workshops and from the sale of the rice in the storehouse at the Command Headquarters. Our coordinator also gave batik shorts and shoes to those whose names were called. On 13 October 1979, we were in Mako to check our names, addresses, our parents' names, health check-ups and so on.

After all the checks were over, the next day we arrived in Namlea. We were then taken by landing craft to the ships Gunung Jati or PT Arafat. These were formerly German ships, bought by Indonesia. They were about 80 metres long by about 20 metres wide. Their capacity was about 3000 passengers. The ships had 7 holds, from A to G. Apart from that, on deck there was recreation space, a kind of cinema and a bar.

The Gunung Jati left Buru island on 14 October 1979 at about 17:00 Eastern Indonesia time. I was so happy to hear the ship's shrill whistle

blast, the sign that the long journey was about to start. At the same time, deep inside I felt very confused, as to how I would go back to being in the midst of free society. Would this past of mine have a place? Or would I have to remember it and feel it alone? Even though this past could become a beautiful and moving story. That was what I was thinking at the time. What is clear is that I had to be able to deal with the 'reality' of daily life.

It turned out that in only four days and nights our group arrived at Tanjung Perak harbour in Surabaya, East Java. We got off the ship at around 16:00 western Indonesia time. We were then taken by truck to Turi station in Surabaya, and I was utterly surprised that there were our friends who had been released before us, waiting for us. When they saw our group, they shouted and waved with happiness. But they were not allowed to approach us, because we were under strict guard. We were then ordered to get on a train that had been standing by since early afternoon. At around 19:00 the train began to move slowly out of Turi Station.

At around 23:00 we arrived at Semarang Station in Central Java. We were again taken by truck to a building of the regional government to stay the night there. Sadly I can't remember that place.

On 20 October 1970, after breakfast, we were once again loaded onto a truck and taken to the Sports Hall (GOR) in Semarang. There were many family members waiting there, including my family. Not surprisingly, the Sports Hall looked like an ocean of people. And then the official 'Ceremony of Release' began.

It was then around 7 a.m. First of all we had to sing the national anthem 'Indonesia Raya'. Then we had to utter an 'Oath and Promise', which was said by three victims of the 1965 tragedy who represented all of us. After that climax of the ceremony was over, we were all given a 'Letter of Release'. The ceremony finished with us being told to sing the song 'Padamu Negeri' (To you, my country). After that, the ceremony was over and we could meet our respective families. The atmosphere in the Sports Hall immediately changed with the noise of sobs of sadness and joy, and profound longing that had been stored up for so long it had thickened and had even gone solid. This was the moment when it all became fluid once more. This was the moment to meet each other again. It seems that all this was just His will. Amen ...

Then my family and I quickly left the Sports Hall. We sped towards our house, where mother and my relatives had waited for so long. Yes, they had waited since I was just 19 years old.

Learn wisely from history

The following is an account by Swie Liem (not his real name), of Chinese ethnic background from Magelang, Central Java. In 1969, because he had once been a participant in a 'revolution cadre-ization' training course devised by Sukarno, he was suddenly arrested. He was detained at first in Jakarta, where he had been working as a journalist, but in 1971 was exiled to Buru island in Maluku. He remained there until 1979.

This interview with Swie Liem was carried out by Chandra Halim, a member of the History Commission of PUSdEP, a graduate of the history department at Sanata Dharma University and the masters program in history at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

My name is Swie Liem, and I now live in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia. I was formerly a journalist on the *Sin Min* newspaper in Semarang, and I come from the area of Blabak, which is not far from Magelang.

Keeping to themselves

I was born in 1940 into the Tan clan. When I was in class 5 of primary school, I moved to the city of Magelang. I attended school in Magelang from primary school through to upper high school. In 1960, when I was 20, I moved to Yogyakarta to go to university. While there were race riots in 1963 in Cirebon and in many other parts of West Java, in Yogyakarta nothing happened. I married a Chinese with Yogyakarta palace connections, and our extended family held a large gathering once a month. The Chinese aristocrat, TDS, from whom our common ancestry was claimed, was actually not originally Chinese. He was the son of a Javanese who was brought up by a Chinese.

My wife was the same generation as Werdoyo, who wrote the book *TDS: Dari Kapiten China sampai Bupati Yogyakarta* (TDS: From Chinese Captain to Yogyakarta Regent). Whenever there was one of the large family gatherings, my wife and Werdoyo would always meet, and often chat. This is Werdoyo here [Swie Liem shows a photo of the large family gathering –ed.] This is proof that at that time relations between Chinese and Javanese were just fine.

It is true that there were some Chinese who felt an 'allergy' towards Javanese. But this was probably because of their own experiences when

mixing with Javanese. But not all Javanese are bad, and not all Chinese are good. My students who come here for Mandarin lessons are also not all of Chinese descent. It all depends on how we act in society.

At that time many of the Chinese in the city of Magelang were what is called *Singkek* so they preferred to keep to themselves than mix with Javanese. However, those who were Christian, or many of the 'Peranakan' (those whose families have lived in Indonesia for many generations), usually tended to choose 'assimilation', as long as that was with other Christians.

Recurring violence

In 1963, President Sukarno asked Oei Tjoe Tjat to be Minister, and created a training course to anticipate racial problems. At the time, I already had my B.A. From around August 1964 until early 1965 I was invited to join the 'revolution cadre-ization' that Sukarno formed at the suggestion of some of his staff, and in Jakarta I met Prof. Dr. Tjan Tjoe Som (lecturer at UI) who was charged with preventing racial tensions like those of 1963. So, in the end I joined. I was studying in the Faculty of Letters at the Teacher's College (IKIP) Yogyakarta, and luckily I got the offer to join this cadre-ization and was able to meet Mr Tjan Tjoe Som. So off I went. Tjan Tjoe Som was the older brother of Prof. Dr. Tjan Tjoe Siem, a Javanologist. In the same group as me were Tan Lip Nio SH and Lay Oen Kwie from PSMTI.⁵⁸ Lay Oen Kwie was an important figure. He was the one of the founders of PSMTI.

The name of this training course was 'Revolution cadre-ization'. Those who passed the course got the title 'Manggala MANIPOL USDEK'.⁵⁹ In the course I attended in Jakarta there were 600 other young Chinese. The course had no connection with the organization Baperki [Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegeraan Indonesia, Council for Deliberations on Indonesian Citizenship]. The participants came from all regions of Indonesia. Sukarno hoped that these 600 people could create a good atmosphere and familiarize people with his ideologies. By 'good atmosphere', what was meant was avoiding the sort of things that had happened in 1963. The training course was only 5–6 months. Now, at this course I got to know Pak Nas [General A.H. Nasution], Pak Yani [General Ahmad Yani] and Pak Ali Sastro [Ali Sastroamidjojo]. They happened to be teachers on the course. After I graduated from the course, my fellow colleagues and I taught in mass

⁵⁸ One of the founders of PSMTI (Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia)

⁵⁹ MANIPOL, The Political Manifesto; USDEK, 1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Identity.

organizations all over Indonesia. We were sent off, back to our respective regions. It was the same sort of thing done in the Soeharto era with the P-4 upgrading course on the Directives for the Realization of Pancasila.

I returned to Yogyakarta at that time, and to Magelang. When the October 1965 event happened and there was the cleansing of Communist Party members and sympathizers, I was actually not affected. I went to work in Jakarta as a journalist. This was 1967. But then, one evening in 1969 – I do not know who gave information about me being in Jakarta – I was forcibly arrested by the police. I had just returned home from work at the time. I was put in Salemba prison. My detention was marked by violence. Then in 1971 I was moved to Buru island as part of the second group. There I got both valuable experience and spiritual torture. I and other political prisoners were ordered to do forced labour. Some had to repair chairs, tables, cupboards, and others worked in the gardens and so forth. In 1979 I was finally released from Buru. I was also confused: so suddenly arrested, without examination or court appearance, and then just as suddenly released.

Position of the Chinese

Oh yes, I remember another thing. It was in 1968. All schools teaching in Mandarin in Yogyakarta were closed. In Jakarta, Ureca [Universitas Res Publica] which was owned by Baperki, was closed. People like Harry Tjan Silalahi, the Wanandi Brothers and Junus Yahya, the majority of whom were supporters of LPKB ([Lembaga Pembinaan Kesatuan Bangsa, Institute for the Development of National Unity], they were the ones who urged the government at the time to close Ureca. Ureca was nationalized and its name changed to Trisakti University. Many of my friends from Yogyakarta were students at Ureca. Ureca's branch in Yogyakarta, housed in the National Sports Hall (Gedung KONI), was closed too. Back in Dutch times, the KONI building used to be the Chinese social centre (Socetiet Tionghua), then later it was used by Chung Hua Tjung Hui (CHTH) together with Baperki, and Ureca used the space at the back. The person who managed the building was called The Hong Oe. Ureca also opened a Faculty of Pharmacy in Surabaya.

Soeharto harboured grudges. He was offended when he was stepped down from the Diponegoro Division in Semarang and moved to SESKOAD (Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat, Army Staff and Command Training) in Bandung. By chance, at SESKOAD he was mentored by the lecturer Colonel Soewarto [reputed to be a CIA agent, ed.]. While at

SESKOAD, Soeharto was a classmate of D.I. Panjaitan⁶⁰ and Abdul Latief. A fellow who was senior to him was Lieutenant Colonel Untung.⁶¹ When Colonel Soewarto asked Soeharto to be class leader, Panjaitan objected. But Soewarto forced it. And Soeharto was chosen as class leader. It was Panjaitan's objection then which later made him a victim of the G30S (30th September Movement, 1965). The CIA Mission to overturn Sukarno appeared to be successful, and the one used to do the overturning was Soeharto.

About Soeharto coercing and putting pressure on the Chinese, this was not his own initiative. Behind him, there were many Chinese who supported putting pressure on other Chinese. And at that time, amongst Chinese there were two political groups, namely the pro-Baperki group and the pro-LPKB group.⁶² Soeharto himself was actually very close to the Chinese. Don't forget that when he was in Semarang, he had many good friends among the Chinese. For instance, Liem Sioe Liong, Bob Hasan, and Oei Tik Kiong. Soeharto really respected Oei Tik Kiong. He always listened to him. Oei was the one who connected Soeharto to rich Chinese, and vice versa. If the Chinese conglomerates had a problem related to government policy, it was Oei who played an important role in helping them. Soeharto was very afraid of Oei Tik Kiong. I never knew why. Perhaps Oei was head of the 'Macao Mafia' or maybe there were certain secrets between the two of them.⁶³

If I have to reflect upon the 1965 tragedy, I would say that there's nothing wrong with politics. But being in politics has consequences, namely the '3B's' – *Buron, Buang, Bunuh* – hunt down, banish, kill. That is why one should study history wisely.

⁶⁰ One of the Indonesian military officers kidnapped and murdered on 1 October 1965.

⁶¹ Colonel Abdul Latief and Lieutenant Colonel Untung were two leaders of the '30th September Movement' who kidnapped high ranking military officers on 1 October 1965.

⁶² LPKB was a Chinese organization that was pro-assimilation, urging and supporting name changes for all Chinese to Indonesian names. Its position was the opposite of Baperki which the New Order considered to be under the Communist Party.

⁶³ On the relationship between Soeharto and Oei Tik Kiong, see Baskara T. Wardaya, *Mencari Supriyadi: Kesaksian Pembantu Utama Sukarno* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2008) pp. 131–136.

A valuable lesson

Our informant in this section is not a direct victim of the relevant authorities in the 1965 tragedy. Even so, he suffered deeply because of it. Ongko Widjaja, which is his pseudonym, comes from Solo, Central Java, Indonesia. He is of mixed Chinese and Javanese blood, even though he feels strong attachment to his 'male Chinese' ancestry. His father was a salt and produce trader in Karanganyar, near Solo. When the 1965 tragedy happened, Ongko Widjaja had only recently graduated from high school.

In November 1965, with no reason that Ongko Widjaja could understand, his father was arrested and taken to a military camp in Karanganyar.

The interview with Ongko Widjaja was carried out by Chandra Halim, a member of the History Commission of PUSdEP, an alumnus of the Department of History at Sanata Dharma University and the masters program in history at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

My name is Ongko Widjaja, and I live in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia. I am head of the neighbourhood [Ketua RT, Rukun Tetangga]. When I was a child, I attended primary school to class 6. I spent my childhood as the son of a salt and produce seller from Karanganyar, not far from Solo. Then I moved into the city of Solo for my junior high school at SMP Negeri I, and went on to senior high school at SMAN Negeri 5. In 1963 I graduated from senior high school.

Fighting for the people

I am an Indonesian-born Chinese, what is called *Baba* or *Peranakan*.⁶⁴ My father was a Chinese born in China, what is called *Totok*, and my mother was Javanese. My father liked to wear Chinese style shirts, whereas my mother liked to wear traditional Javanese dress, wrapped batik and *kebaya*. I was the first of five children. I am dark skinned because I take after my Javanese mother. That is why when I went to junior and senior high school, where the students were mainly Javanese, I did not feel uneasy. My father, as a salt and produce seller from Karanganyar, did not take much notice of his children's schooling needs.

⁶⁴ In Indonesia, Chinese are divided into *Totok* (born in China) and *Peranakan* or *Baba* (this latter term usually for males) meaning Chinese born in Indonesia, and those who are intermarried with local people.

My relations with friends at school or around my home were perfectly normal. There was nothing to worry about. I often played with them, and we chatted very familiarly. I didn't mix much with children from 'pure Chinese' families. My father's only younger brother also married a Javanese, so I hardly ever mixed with 'pure Chinese'.

I spoke in a mixture of Javanese and Indonesian. From my father's side, I only knew how to observe Chinese rituals like Chinese New Year (*Sincia*), *Cap Go Meh*, prayers to the ancestors, or 'Sembahyang wedang ronde'.⁶⁵ Sometimes Papa would teach me his native tongue, namely Hokkien, but because I was basically stubborn, I never wanted to learn from my Papa. In 1970 I married a Javanese.

In Karanganyar, Baperki [Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia, the Council for Deliberations on Indonesian Citizenship] attracted a large number of Chinese members or sympathizers. This organization was rather leftist in its orientation. It was very close to the Communist Party. At that time, the Communist Party was also very big in Karanganyar. It had a lot of influence. At that time there were lots of Chinese families living in Karanganyar. Jalan Lawu in the town of Karanganyar was lined with Chinese families, including my father's family. My father's name was LST. The only thing he could do was trade. He followed Baperki, but this was not his own idea. A friend of his from Solo invited him to go along to their meetings.

Back then, my father was merely a Baperki sympathizer, not a member. After all, Papa was so busy with his work as a salt and produce that he had no time to become a member, let alone work on the organizational side. Of course he had no time for that. The other reason Papa was a Baperki follower was because he thought Baperki would fight for the cause of the Chinese in Karanganyar and Solo. Usually, if there was any Baperki event, Papa was always invited. Papa was close to a number of people in the organization but I can't remember their names.

Arrested with no cause

As I said, my father was not a Baperki member, just a sympathizer. But he was often invited to Baperki events and he went. The reason was because he thought Baperki could help give the Chinese what they wanted. In my father's eyes, Baperki was an organization that could fight for the cause or

⁶⁵ *Cap Go Meh*: 15 days after New Year (*Cap Go* means 15); *Sembahyang Wedang Ronde* (ronde drink prayers) is usually held on 22 December.

the voice of the Chinese, so that they would be more easily accepted by society in general.

In 1963 I finished senior high school in Solo and returned to Karanganyar. I was working helping my Papa, selling salt, cooking spices and other produce. Back then there was a horse cart that came once a day from Solo to Karanganyar to bring things bought wholesale. Papa always used a horse cart to bring the things he bought in Solo to sell in Karanganyar. So we kept in touch with people in Solo. In early September 1965, I got dysentery. I was in the hospital near Kandang Sapi [Dr. Oen hospital, ed] for about three and a half months. I had lots of things wrong with me, including typhoid. So I had to stay in hospital. Usually it was my mother who stayed with me in hospital, but if not, it was my uncle.

Around late November 1965 my uncle told me that Papa had been arrested by people from the Regional Military Command (Kodim) in Karanganyar. He was being held at the Kodim detention centre. This used to be behind what is now the Bank BNI-46 building in Karanganyar, in front of the Fuji photo shop 'Nirwana'. My uncle said that Papa had been arrested with no clear cause. Suddenly he was detained at Kodim. After 3 months had gone by, and I was still at Kandang Sapi [in hospital in Solo], Papa was moved to a base camp detention centre near the Tasikmadu sugar factory. That is now the office of the Tasikmadu Police. Papa was tortured there and not given any food along with dozens of other detainees from Karanganyar. Early in his detention he was not allowed family visits, not even by my mother.

Around early December, I got out of hospital. On the way home to Karanganyar from Solo, when we went over the Bengawan river, I saw lots of people who were bound, and then lined up on the banks of the Bengawan Solo river. I thought to myself, what's going on here ... I was confused. Then, after some discussion between prisoners and the army there – KOSTRAD if I'm not wrong, because they were wearing army camouflage fatigues – suddenly those prisoners were shot. As they were shot, their bodies fell directly – plonk – into the Bengawan Solo. The location was just under the railway bridge. When I got home, I talked about what I had seen with Mama and other members of the family.

After I got out of hospital, I was taken along on visits to my father. This was not allowed every day. It depended on how much we bribed. Papa was held at Tasikmadu camp for about one year plus one and a half months. Papa was listed as 'C' category. Actually, Papa wanted to be sent to Buru island. At that time I didn't know why he was released. Only later did I find out

that there was some ‘backing’ from a high ranking army person, a distant relative of my mother’s.

Refusing to budge

According to me, the 1965 incident was a salutary lesson for the Chinese. Even if sometimes we – Chinese – never take part in political affairs either domestically or internationally, we are often victims of policies of the regime in power. We can take part in politics, we can have a high spirit of nationalism, and we can build up great wealth, but we have to constantly remember that in this life we must be part of society, we have to be humble and always prepared to help one another, whoever that is, whatever group they come from.

What is done is done. Now we must try to have a better attitude from that of the past. Of course that incident was a dreadful blow to us, but it should not become a source of our resentment towards those in power or anyone who hates us.

Even though I am sometimes sad when remembering those events, I remain resolute, and am always careful in what I say and do. I do not want those events to recur, because the effect is huge. To this day, my family and I are stamped as children of former political prisoners, and ostracized where we live. Even though we were merely victims of the high level political games going on back then. In Solo, back then, there were many teachers, technicians and people in private business from the Chinese community who were arrested and accused of being communists. What is that, if not high-level political manoeuvring that sacrifices the weak?

Suddenly, I was ‘scooped’

The informant who contributed the following account we will call Ch. Mujilah. She comes from the area of Prambanan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As she says, she comes from a poor family whose livelihood was selling meat curry and snacks. As we mentioned in the introduction to this book, Mujilah was only 14 when the 1965 tragedy happened. Even so, she was arrested and imprisoned. This happened because someone with the same name as her was being hunted, but was not at home. So unfortunately for Mujilah, having done absolutely nothing at all, she had to undergo forced suffering and be confined in prison for fourteen years. When she was released, there was no formal apology of any sort from the powers that had mistakenly arrested and imprisoned her.

As far as the injustice she experienced goes, she is merely grateful that she was eventually reunited with her family. To her, life after release from prison turned out not to be easy. She married another former political prisoner, who is also one of our informants in this book.

A more complete account of this informant can be found in the book Menembus Tirai Asap: Kesaksian Tahanan Politik 1965 collected by HD Saryo Sasongko, edited by Dr. Melani Budianta. It was published by Amanah-Lontar (Jakarta) in 2003.

I was born in Prambanan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. My 3 siblings and I were brought up by our parents, who were poor. To make ends meet, we had to face great difficulties. The one and only thing my parents could do was sell meat curry on a small scale. They also used to provide food to sell on other people's food stalls in return for a small percentage.

With no prior warning at all, in 1965 a terrible fate befell me. I was just 14 at the time. I was suddenly ‘scooped’ up and put in Wirogunan prison, Yogyakarta. The food in the prison was disgusting. We were given corn and rotten salted fish. Later, dried cassava replaced the corn, but the only side dish was rotten dried fish. And there was only a tiny amount of that.

Six months later, I was moved to Bulu prison in Semarang, Central Java. I stayed there for quite some time. In 1971 I was moved to Plantungan, near Semarang. There I felt freer. I could go in and out, as long as there was an officer with me. Every day there was planting to do, like planting cassava, vegetables and so forth. We did this just to get a bit extra to eat.

In October 1979 I was released from Plantungan prison. I could reunite with my family, and breathe free air at last. Thinking of my own future, in 1982 I married and was blessed with two children. A girl and a boy.

For our livelihood, I sell meat curry, and my husband works as a building labourer. But then our family suffered another catastrophe. On 27 May 2006, a large earthquake struck Yogyakarta and its environs. Our house was completely destroyed, utterly levelled. We slept in a tent in the yard for months while waiting for assistance from the government. After waiting for ages, finally we got some assistance from the P2KP program [Program Penanggulangan Kemiskinan di Perkotaan; Program for Allieviating Urban Poverty]. With this assistance we could build a 4 x 6 meter house.

That's our fate, living in poverty. Never enough. Right now we have no work and our children help us for our daily needs. If there is anyone or anything that can help us, we would be most grateful.

My bad luck

F.X. Abdul Rochim, the pseudonym of our following informant, is the husband of Ch. Mujilah, whose short narrative we just read. Abdul Rochim comes from a poor family of eight children in Magelang, Central Java Indonesia.

With no clear cause, in 1965 he was arrested and imprisoned. After detention in Yogyakarta, he was moved to Nusa Kambangan island, Central Java and confined there for fourteen years until his release in 1979.

I was born in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia and lived with my eight brothers and sisters. We were raised by our father and mother in a very poor household. The eldest in the family died a year ago. I can still remember, when I was small, my father's rice field was narrow, not big. And at the instruction of the government back then, we were not allowed to plant rice, but had to plant cotton. Because of this, we could not meet our daily needs, and every day it got worse.

Because of this financial pressure, my parents could not send their children to school. Only my two younger siblings and I finished primary school. I then went to work on a building site, and I was assigned to the timber section.

But then I had bad luck. In 1965 I was sent to prison in Yogyakarta. Three months later I was moved to Nusa Kambangan island. The food portions there were inhumane. Sometimes we got corn three times a day, one serving being just 150 grains of corn. When the corn ran out we were given dried cassava (*gaplek*) and when that ran out, we were given cracked corn (*bulgur*). And that's how it went, year after year. In order to keep healthy, I tried to go out of prison every day to work and look for extra food, working as a carpenter. In 1971 the food changed to reasonable portions.

I was in prison for fourteen years. On 8 December 1979 I was released. At that time, there were 220 people released along with me from Nusa Kambangan, and in addition there were those who were released from Pekalongan prison and Plantungan prison for women in Central Java. The ceremony for our release took place at the Kridosono [Sports Hall], Yogyakarta.

After my release, thinking of my future, I married in 1982. We were blessed with two children, a daughter and a son. For our daily needs, I work on construction projects. Then bad luck struck again. On 27 May 2006 there

was a big earthquake in Yogyakarta. Our house was destroyed, razed to the ground. We had to sleep outside in the square for a few months, in a tent. Then we were given some assistance from the PsKP program, and with this could build a 4 x 6 metre house.

That's the fate of a poor household. We keep getting older and our physical condition gets weaker. And meanwhile I have no activity that brings in any money. Added to this, these days I am always sick.

Our children help my wife and I with our daily necessities. The promised help from the government [for earthquake victims, trs] has still not come. Because of this, if there is any person our there, or from anywhere, that can help our family, we will be extremely grateful. We only want our life to be a bit more decent and prosperous. I thank you for your attention.

Never-ending suffering

The fourth of six children, Rahardjo (a pseudonym) is our next informant. He was born in the village of Gatak, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He spent his childhood as a village boy minding the family's buffalo, although he managed to get some education up to high school [a high school that trained primary teachers].

In November 1965, Rahardjo was arrested and imprisoned, accused of being a member of Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth), a youth group affiliated with the Communist Party. He was finally exiled to Buru island in Maluku. Like other political prisoners, he suffered greatly there, including having to do forced labour. In 1979 he was released.

I was born into the Kartorejo family in Gatak, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as the fourth of six children. When I was small I helped my parents who worked as farm labourers. I helped my parents from when I was just a kid until I was 20, minding the buffalo.

In 1952, I started primary school. In 1958 I went on to junior high school. In 1962 I began the high school for teachers, in the 'C' section.

In 1965 I got a summons from the office of the village head (kelurahan). It said I was to get a certificate from a military unit on 19 November 1965. It turned out that when I got there I was told to get on to a truck under army guard. I ended up being thrown into prison as a prisoner of the G30S war [*sic*]. I was put into prison, but I had no idea why.

In prison we had to line up to eat, and were served by criminals with food that was not fit for human consumption. In order to stay alive, I had to give up and eat it. At night, I was called for interrogation, and ordered to admit that I was a member of Pemuda Rakyat. If not, I would be tortured in an inhumane way.

Late one night I was summoned. I was asked to gather in a place that had been prepared. Then I was sent off to Nusa Kambangan on a train with locked windows.

This was in February 1966. When I got to Nusa Kambangan we were served our rations of corn by really cruel criminals. The way they treated my friends was truly vicious. There in Nusa Kambangan my friends and I had to do forced labour on corn food rations that were absolutely miniscule. Many friends at Nusa Kambangan died of hunger. Many were also tortured by other criminal inmates.

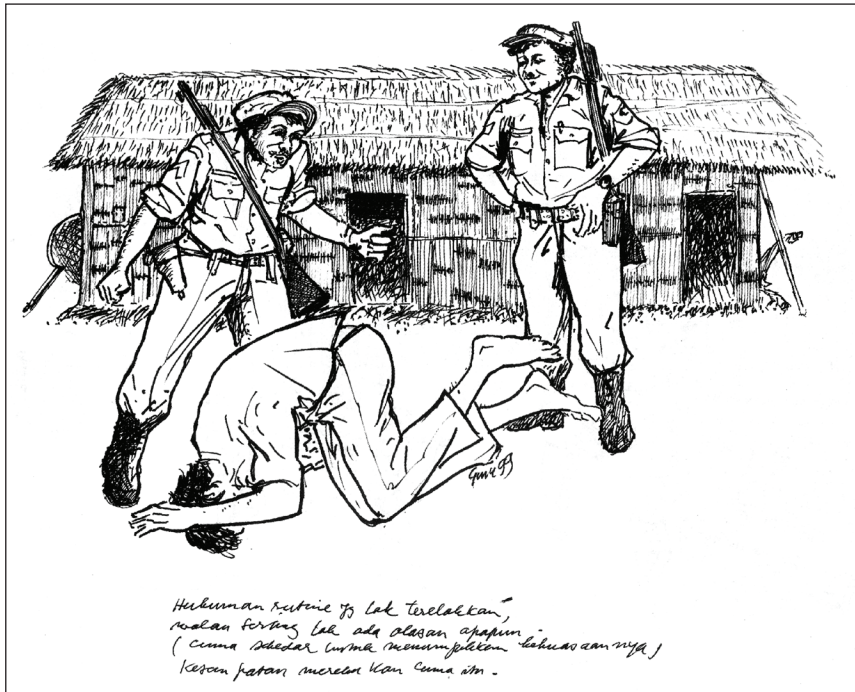


Figure 6. Because of some unproven accusation, detainees were often beaten.

Sketch by Gumelar Demokrasno

In mid 1966 I was moved again, to Ambarawa prison in Central Java. The food ration was still the same old prison ration. Luckily, my family was able to visit and brought extra food. From them I got extra food and some clothes.

In 1969 I was sent to Nusa Kambangan again, and then on to Buru island in Maluku. On Buru there were no criminal prisoners, but we were under army guard. There we were put to work to clear the jungle so we could plant dry rice, vegetables, cassava and other staples. We were also ordered to make dams, irrigated rice fields, roads and houses. And in the midst of all this, our rations remained miniscule.

In 1979 I was released and could return to society. When I was released my parents were not there to get me. They had already both died. I was deeply shaken with longing for them. At the time, only my siblings were there together with other family and neighbours. After I was released, I was given my identity card which had 'ET' stamped on it, for 'Ex-Tapol' or 'former political prisoner'.

In 1982 I married and formed a new family. We were blessed with two children. Step by step I nurtured the family. I managed to make a very simple house. In 2006 our house was destroyed in the earthquake. So then we were given a house built through the P2KP program (Program for the Alleviation of Urban Poverty), the same kind of thing, basically just good enough for shelter. I am living there while earning what I can, because I am old now. Sometimes, someone in the family gets sick. When this happens I am often very confused because I don't know how to get them checked or how to get medicine.

I used to be eligible for government assistance programs – ‘Raskin’, or rice for the poor, and the ‘Jamkesmas’ and ‘Jamkesos’ health assistance programs, but all of these were suddenly withdrawn by the local cadres.

I wondered, did they do this because I am an ex-political prisoner? Or what? I just don't know. I just had to accept it. But as a result, if someone in my family is sick, I have to accept it. Medicine is just so expensive, and we don't even have enough for our daily food needs.

So that is my story about facing life day after day. The suffering I have experienced from when I was born until today has been never-ending. I hope that God will bless those people or humanitarian organizations kind enough to help me.

I am writing just a small part of my story here. Because if I wrote everything, I would not finish for a very long time.

Daughter and wife of political prisoners

Unlike most of the other informants, our following narrator was not a direct victim of those in power in the 1965 tragedy. Like Ongko Widjaja earlier, she was never imprisoned, interrogated or tortured because she had been accused of involvement with what happened in 1965. Even so, she suffered greatly as a result of the incident.

There is a footnote to Sutini's narrative. First, some names are deliberately changed to safeguard the privacy of those referred to. Secondly, Sutini and her family are informants in the documentary 40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy directed by Dr. Robert Lemelson from the University of California-Los Angeles (2009). This film has been shown in Los Angeles, Sarajevo, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, New York, and some other cities world wide.

It was August 1966. In my kampung (neighbourhood) there were celebrations planned for Indonesian Independence Day [17 August, trs]. That night, the local kampung head, Pak RK – we called them ‘Rukun Kampung’ at the time, now they are called ‘Rukun Warga’ – came to the house to order my father to play in the gamelan to accompany a ketoprak performance. Ketoprak was a traditional performance that was really popular then. My father refused because on that date he had something else to do out of town. Then Pak RK got really mad and stormed out of the house. Two hours later he came back, this time together with the policeman who lived in the next kampung.

The policeman's name was Mr Hilman and actually he was also a friend of my father's. But strangely, he forced my father to obey Pak RK's order and challenged him, saying, ‘if you don't want to, it means that you are a communist. You just wait and see!’ About two weeks after that, my father was ‘scooped’ at his office. He was put into Wirogunan prison in Yogyakarta for four years, before being sent to Nusa Kambangan island in Central Java. He was held there for nine years, so in total he was in prison for thirteen years.

Because I was poor

Before he went to prison, my father had been a wise neighbourhood leader. Every time there was an election, my father was re-elected as ‘Pak Rukun Tetangga’. When they were building the local junior high school (SMP

Negeri 7), my father sacrificed a lot. Every month, my father's office salary was donated to pay the workmen building the school. They also dug up father's yard to make bricks, 10,000 of them. My father also helped the process of firing the bricks. He contributed all this with the understanding that in the future when his children went to that school they would not have to pay. But, what can you do, after my father was put in prison, even my older sister who had just gone into second class there, was expelled. She was not permitted to go to school because she was 'the daughter of a communist'.

After my father went to prison, my family suffered dreadfully. Mother had a baby just six months old and she could not work. Everything of value was sold for food and to send food to our father in prison. And on top of that, mother had to give 10 kilograms of rice to the officials. If she didn't, she was not allowed to send food to father. If mother sent a basket with 10 eggs, all that ever got to my father was three spoonfuls of rice, with not a single egg because they had all been taken by other inmates.

When my mother had nothing left, the oldest, my oldest sister, went to live with a relative in Tanjung Pinang, Riau, near Sumatra. My second sister went to stay with a relative of my father's in Jakarta. As for me, as number three, I stayed with mother and became the oldest child in the house. I was just 12 years old. I had to look for food with my mother. My younger sister, number four, had to mind the baby at home. Every day I would go with my mother looking for bamboo leaves to sell to people who make soya bean cakes (*tempe gembus*). Every day I had to walk a very long way. We would walk as far as Bantul market in the south. When I was thirsty, I had to drink water from the well. I had no moment to feel the exhaustion. When we had sold the bamboo leaves, the money was not much. Not even enough to buy half a kilo of rice. All we could buy was half a kilo of dried sweet potato (*gaplek*) which we pounded to make porridge.

Life went on like this year after year until the youngest, number 6, got sick. She was thin, and her legs all bent. Maybe this is what is called malnutrition. Seeing my family like this, my mother's relatives did not want to help. Even though, when my family was still well off, my mother and father had always helped them. Now they just insulted my family. Luckily, one day when my mother and I were leaving to go looking for bamboo leaves we met Bu Daryo whose husband was also in prison. Bu Daryo told my mother to pay a visit to the priest at the Catholic church in Kemetiran, Yogyakarta, and tell him about our situation.

At the church, all of us – mother and the children – were met by Father Lim. Then we were all taken to the clinic to be checked. We were given

medicine once a week without having to pay. We were also given milk, so that my younger sister who had malnutrition got better. Romo Lim gave us an address and told us to go and see Father De Blot at the Catholic high school in Jl Trenggono, Yogyakarta, and give him a letter from Father Lim. When my mother and I went to find Father De Blot, my mother's relatives said that we were shaming our family because this was begging.

But after my mother and I met Father De Blot and got help from Panti Rapih hospital, namely two kilograms of milk powder a month, and once a week some cracked wheat, flour and clothing from the brothers at the Pangudi Luhur school, our relatives changed their tune. Now, every time we came back from getting our quota, they rushed over to ask for their share of it.

I worked as a house servant from the age of 14. Every payday, my mother would come to the house of the family where I worked to ask for money for food for my younger sisters, and for their school costs. As soon as I was adult, my mother married me off to someone I did not know. After we were married, I found out that my husband was also an ex political prisoner. So both my father and my husband were former political prisoners. My heart, which had already suffered enough, was hurt even more when I found this out. And that was not all. It turned out that my husband had committed incest with his younger sister and had a son by her. I felt totally shattered! What's more, whenever my husband had problems with his relatives, it was always me and the children who became the targets of his anger. He was a cruel man. If he tortured me and the children, it was as though he was torturing an animal. He used whatever he had in his hand to hit me. Many of my friends told me to leave him, but I knew I could not do this because I had married in the Catholic Church. So because of that no matter how bitter it was, I had to put up with it.

When my younger sisters who I had supported through school saw all this, they didn't take pity on me – instead they hated me. Their reason was because I was poor. My youngest sister, who was only 6 months old when father went to prison and was now well off, did not want to know much about my life. My other sisters were not friendly either. And their children shunned my children.

Nowhere to live

In 1988 I began living in Kalasan, to the east of Yogyakarta. My son was just five years old and I was four months pregnant with my second child.

When my second child was just three months old, there was a neighbour who deliberately put a broody hen and the nest against the wall of our house. It was full of lice. She put that nest there deliberately so that the lice would enter our bamboo house, exactly where we slept.

So we all got bitten by lice. The worst affected was the baby, who was covered with bites from top to toe. This was not for just a few weeks. It went on from when the baby was 3 months until he was one and a half. It was only then that he got better. Every single day the older boy was teased by neighbours. When he was in the third class of primary school, some adults tried to drown him in the village spring. They started off pretending to help him learn to swim. Then someone held on to him while someone else held his head under until he went unconscious because his stomach was full of water. Luckily, when this happened someone good to me found out about it, even though this person in public pretended not to know me and never greeted me. But whenever there was someone plotting to do something bad to my family he always let me know via my friend in the next kampung.

Almost every single day someone was tormenting my children. One day, after my youngest son came home from kindergarten, he went off to play with four other children. When he got there, the other kids started kicking him. When he fell, they stomped on him. When the teacher walked by and saw what was happening, the teacher told my son to go home. When my older son was in second class of junior high school and waiting at six in the morning for the school bus, crouched by the roadside, suddenly the son of the village head went by on a motor bike on his way to school. Out of the blue, he stopped near my son and started kicking his head. A few days later he did the same thing.

On Sunday morning I went to the market. When I got home I saw that my eldest had been tortured by people in the village. They had accused him of stealing a bicycle and forced him to admit that he was the one who had stolen things that had gone missing in the village like bicycles, chickens, neon lights and other stuff. My son was stripped naked and ordered to walk on his hands, while they whipped and beat him. He had to do this all the way from the guard post (*pos ronda*) to the next village – about 200 metres. Whenever he fell, they stomped on him with army boots. Then he had to walk again while being beaten and stomped on until he got to the next village. It was neighbours doing the torturing, but actually those neighbours were two army guys, a policeman, and an airforce guy. And there was someone called Gombloh. It was Gombloh who was the real thief.

When I got home from the market I saw my son's back and face full of cuts and bruises. I felt totally crushed. Even with all this, I tried to accept it patiently. When my son recovered, there was a young man who pretended to be nice to him. He invited my son to look for sand in the river. He said that if they got sand, they could sell it and divide the money between them. My son had to do all the work while he just slept on the river bank. After they got two hauls of sand, it was sold. One haul was worth Rp 13,000. But oddly, my son was given only Rp 2,000. When I found out, I forbade my son to get sand from that river. He could find it in another river close to home, and could get two hauls all by himself.

One day at around eight in the morning, the son of Mr Mkr, a neighbour, arrived in a Kijang car. He told me he wanted to pick up sand that he had already paid for. I allowed him to do that, because I thought my son had sold the sand to him. It turned out he hadn't. So I had to go to Mr Mkr's house to sort this out. Mr Mkr's son made up a story that the person who sold sand to him was that young man who had pretended to be nice to my son, and the money had been paid. My son cried. I could only try to cheer him up by saying, 'that's how it is, son. Let it be. Probably that sand will be taken to the grave.'

Now I don't know whether it was a coincidence or not, but that day at around 1 in the afternoon when I was about to take my youngest to Sunday school, I saw people from the village had gathered in front of that young man's house. Many were crying. I asked what was going on, why all those people were there. The people I asked said that the young man who had taken my son's sand had climbed a mimosa tree to get leaves to feed his cows. While up the tree, he had been electrocuted, fallen and died. At about 8 in the morning I said those words, and around 1 in the afternoon they came true.

I have never forgotten this, and it was a lesson to me. My family was always bullied, but I was patient and accepting. And it turned out that my utterances often came true. I am convinced that God is All Knowing and All Just. God will not ignore His servants. God ordered me to bear a small 'cross', but because I am strong, I was ordered to bear a larger cross, then a larger one still, and so on, and it turned out I was strong enough. But all my strength came from God. All the problems and suffering in my family I offered to God, and God always gave me strength. Insults, slander, torture and abuse, I could take it all patiently and with forbearance.

I should explain that the young man that died from electrocution was called Msd. His death should have been a lesson to others. But it turned out that no one was aware of it. And my son was still tormented. They used

slingshots to fire marbles at his head. As a result, my son's head bled in three places. After he stopped going to school because he often suffered from headaches with all the bullying, my son looked for sand for making bricks. Once, when he had collected a lot of sand and it was beginning to pile up, Old Man Kaum came to the river to wash his cow. Before he washed the cow, he led it around and around on the pile of sand so that it flattened totally. My son piled it up again. But Old Man Kaum led the cow around again. My son got mad, and threw stones at the cow. Old Man Kaum got mad in turn, but that time at least the argument was settled. You should know that Old Man Kaum was the grandfather of the Air Force guy I mentioned earlier.

One week after the argument with Old Man Kaum, when my son was playing at a friend's house in another village, that air force guy came looking for him. He came with an army man. They invited my son out. As he did not think there was any problem, my son was not suspicious. But it turned out that they took him to the middle of the rice fields, where there were no people around. They tortured my son. They stamped on him. They smashed his head with a big stone. When my son passed out they left. Luckily someone going past helped him.

My son came home. When he got home he told me what had happened. I asked him whether he felt he had done anything wrong. I told him that if he had, I would not defend him, but if not, I would defend him anywhere and sort it out. He said, 'If you don't believe me, Mum, you might as well just kill me'. Hearing those words I knew for sure he had done nothing wrong. So I went to the Air Force office. I went to the first guardpost, then was led to the second guardpost, and then accompanied to the third guard post. There they wanted to fob me off with some payment, but I refused. I took the problem further to the Military Police Detachment, and had three lawyers with me. In the court room I was mobbed by people from my village, all of them men. They had come there. But the joke was on them because they were all ordered out. The only one allowed to stay was Mr Air Force guy himself.

The next day I left that village and went back to my parents' house at the instruction of the Military Police. After I got on the bus, the village head and all the villagers were angry. They wanted revenge. So they destroyed my house. Every single thing in the house was looted. The bricks were all removed. The wood, the pillars, the tiles – everything gone. Now, if something like this happens, who is really the thief: my son or the villagers? Now I had nowhere to live. My son was stressed, and my youngest suffered trauma because his older brother was often tortured before his eyes, and he himself was often their powerless target.

In God's protection

Once, the village head ordered my son to mill rice, but my son was falsely accused. There was a neighbour called Arjo Mblonot who told the wife of the village head that while doing the milling, my son had put some rice aside to sell himself. She believed him and told me what she thought my son had done. I asked her how many kilos of rice my son had taken, who had he sold them to, and whether the person who bought the rice owned the mill or was a trader. If the person who bought the rice was a trader, then what was the trader's name, where did he or she live, and how much had they paid for it. She said that she did not know, and that she had only been told about the theft. Then I asked her who had told her. She said, well, it was just someone. I said: 'Everyone has a name. If you do not want to say the name this means that you yourself are making the accusation.' In the end, she said that the person who had told her was Arjo Mblonot. So I went to look for him. He was harvesting chilli peppers in the ricefield. He didn't admit it at first, but after I asked whether he wanted to come along with me to see the wife of the village head, he confessed.

Actually, my son had agreed to help with the milling for nothing when the village head's wife had asked him, but then he just ended up being wrongly accused. Because he had done nothing wrong, I went to see the village head about it. He told me to point out who it was who had accused my son, and when I said it was his own wife, he was furious and said that I was a bad person. So I told him that when his wife had made the accusation, there were witnesses. He snapped at me and asked who that witness was. I pointed to the person beside me, called Minten. I told Minten to repeat the village head's wife's words. When she had finished, the village head went red with anger. He stormed out.

After that, I left the village of Kalasan and went back to my home kampung where I rented my uncle's house where my mother lived. My mother had got the electricity connected. I was the one who paid the electricity bill every month. But for some reason, after my mother died, I was ordered to leave that house even though there was still six months left on the contract. Nor was I reimbursed for the money spent on getting the electricity connected.

So then I rented my aunt's house. Then one of my uncles sold land to my older sister who was living in Jakarta. Now I am living on that land with my younger sister. So now I am borrowing my sister's land, but I can stay here as long as I live. When I die, I don't know if my children will want to live here or not. I have no idea of their future.

My older son has become a street kid, because he could not stand living at home. He just could not bear to see the way my younger sisters treat me. He gets money by busking and manages to live okay. I am not ashamed of having a son who busks on the street. What is important is that he does not get into criminal activity. Even if he is a street kid, he is loyal to his friends. His friends have become his family in good times and bad. I can only pray that they will always be in God's protection.

No more sense of inferiority

When I think about all this, sometimes I get upset and depressed. But after I joined the Friends of Mother Teresa group (KKIT, Kerabat Kerja Ibu Teresa) my spirit was renewed. I was able to share everything I had experienced in my family with the priests, brothers, and other members of the group. They made me feel that I am still seen like other people. I can even feel useful to others. Because my oldest is still traumatized, the priests let me take my younger child to the Ganjuran orphanage so that I can work and keep an eye on the older one.

After my younger son went to the Ganjuran orphanage, the sisters there put me in contact with a psychologist at the Sardjito hospital in Yogyakarta called Dr. Mahar. After examining my older son and asking him about his parents and where they lived, he and his wife came to see me and put me in touch with Dr. Robert Lemelson and his crew.⁶⁶ I also ended up meeting Dr Diah Larasati.⁶⁷ I was introduced to Father Baskara T. Wardaya SJ⁶⁸ and other friends from the NGO Syarikat Indonesia. Now I feel that I have a place to pour out my troubles. My children also are beginning to feel safe and no longer inferior.

Reaping what you sow

To repeat, I am both the daughter and wife of political prisoners. My father was a 'graduate' of Nusa Kambangan island prison in central Java. I

⁶⁶ Dr Robert Lemelson is a professor of anthropology at the University of California in Los Angeles, United States. He has done a lot of research about Indonesia. In 2009, he released his documentary film titled *40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy*. The film tells of four Indonesian families who, so many years later, are still deeply affected by the 1965 tragedy.

⁶⁷ A lecturer in anthropology at the University of Minnesota, USA.

⁶⁸ Lecturer in history at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

was married off to a man I did not know, and only a few months after we married did I find out that he was an ex political prisoner and ‘graduate’ of Buru island prison in Maluku. Even though my children and I lived outside prison, the physical and mental torture, the torture of body and soul that we went through, felt the same as those who were in prison.

As I have said, my older son was traumatised as a result of the physical torture he went through. My youngest has had trauma all his life. Wherever he goes, he is treated like some disgusting animal. The people who treat them like this feel that they are pure and without sin. Even though I believe in the saying that you reap what you sow.

In other words, what we do will at some stage later return to us. As I said, many of those who slandered me and tortured my children have reaped the ‘rewards’ of all those deeds of theirs.

Those who spread lies and said that I was a prostitute, now have daughters who are prostitutes or sons who are pimps. One has gone blind. Someone who tortured my son was caught in the act of theft, and beaten up by the crowd. One died, and one broke his leg and is maimed for life. The person who said that when I gave birth to my youngest I had nothing at all and he was the one who paid for it ended up being hit by a car, got brain damage and now he’s only half there. And his son went blind and ended up half crazy like his dad. There are many others who got their ‘just deserts’ for their evil deeds to my family.

Sign from God

Not long ago I had a dream. I was crossing a river while carrying my youngest. The water was brown and it was up to my chest, but strangely enough I was not carried away by the current. My son and I made it safely to the other side. Two weeks after that dream, my son had an accident. He was walking along the side of the road by himself when he fell and broke his left leg. He had to have an operation and they used pins to join the bones. The operation cost tens of millions of rupiah. I was at a loss, how on earth could I pay? My younger sisters that I had cared for when they were small didn’t want to know about it. For the whole 12 days my son was in hospital, not one of them went to visit. But God is just. I got help from friends and people who cared for me, so that my burden was lessened.

Before this, I had another dream. In this dream, wherever I went the road I went along always came to a vast, scary cemetery. There was no one around. Then I turned and went a different road. But this also went to a cemetery,

and so it went on, until I woke up. When I thought about what this dream could mean, I decided I had to fortify myself to face all problems. So I have to face all problems and not avoid them. If I face problems patiently and placing trust in God, I believe God will surely give me strength. And it turned out that this belief was right: I was able to get through it all with patience.

In yet another dream, my two children and I were going to the ricefields to plant peanuts. We were walking alongside a little stream in the middle of the ricefields, and the water was crystal clear. To the left and right of the path we were walking along, the rice was green and fertile. Suddenly, my children and I were in the middle of a huge cemetery with no way out. And then I woke up.

Another night I had another dream. I was walking towards the north. Suddenly, the path I was going along was flooded up to my knees. But the flood was mud, and the mud was cow and buffalo dung mixed with water. Strangely, to the left and right of the path everything was dry. Whenever I tried to get up to that dry place, the mud just flowed there with me. I woke up and looked for the meaning of my dream. My late mother said that if I dream of getting something bad, it means I will get something good. And she was right. From that moment, I began to be in the light. My family started to get help, and support came from various places. Even though I still had to face bigger and bigger problems, I had built up an immunity from suffering and was able to face it with a smile.

There was a time when I dreamt that a neighbour's child asked my older son to plunge into the Opak river near Prambanan temple in Yogyakarta. The river was wide, deep and the water was brown and overflowing. The neighbour's boy got to the side, but my son was carried away. His body popped up and submerged again before he disappeared.

A few days later something sad happened. Somebody ordered the son of my neighbour, who was a quiet type (and a newcomer, like me) to get my son to steal a bicycle that had been left in the middle of the ricefields. That boy had been threatened – they said they could kill him if he didn't do it. So he took my son along to get the bicycle. And then they beat my son up until he was half dead – he wasn't yet 18 at the time – but they left the other boy, who was already over 18 and an adult, alone. After that happened I remembered my dream and I realized that actually it was a sign that something was going to happen to my family. The dream prepared me mentally for what was ahead.

As far as I remember, whenever something happened to my family, I always had a dream before it, in the early morning. Not long after I moved to Kalasan, I dreamt that I was in a very deep ravine. There was no grass at all. Everywhere there were just worms and disgusting creatures like leeches and those stinging caterpillars. The earth was moist and slimy. I wanted to climb out but there was nothing to hold on to. On top of the ravine there was shady bamboo. It had many branches and because it was still young, the branches still had hairs that make you itch. Even though my body ended up itching and wounded all over, I managed to get to the top, and at that moment I woke up.

A few days later, sure enough I was again slandered in a really disgusting and hurtful way. Amongst other things, people said I was a prostitute and would sleep with anyone. This happened because I had a neighbour who tried being rude to me, but I wasn't affected by it. And then there were other lies. Like him saying that after I moved into the village his chickens suddenly started going missing. Even though his wife told me that her husband often sold their chickens to pay for his gambling. And as I've already said, my children were targets of slander too. After experiencing a lot of this kind of thing, that's when I realized that my dreams were warnings that something was going to happen to my family, and I had to prepare myself mentally.

As for these dreams, I see them as messages from God. I trained myself to go to sleep after midnight. In that way, the dreams I had were real, and not the type of dream you get when you sleep too much.

Let's leave the gloomy picture of our nation at that

Agatha Sumarni (not her real name) comes from Yogyakarta, Indonesia. After she graduated from the high school for teacher training (SPG, Sekolah Pendidikan Guru) she went on to the state tertiary teacher's training college (IKIP, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) in Yogyakarta. Off campus she was active in various youth activities like IPPI (League of Indonesian Youth and Students) and PMKRI (Indonesian Catholic Students Association).

Sumarni is one of the figures in the documentary 'Perempuan Yang Tertuduh' (Accused Women) by Putu Oka Sukanta. In this film she speaks plainly about many things she experienced. She then analyses and interprets her experiences, in order to present some hope from her bitter experience as a victim of the injustice of her nation.

Before the 1965 tragedy happened, I was a member of IPPI (Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia, the League of Indonesian Youth and Students) a youth organization in Indonesia in President Sukarno's time. After I finished high school (a high school for future teachers), I continued my studies at the Teachers' College (IKIP) in Yogyakarta. As an extracurricular activity I joined PMKRI (Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia, the Indonesian Catholic Students' Association). In December 1965 I was forcibly arrested and taken to the Cebongan military camp in Yogyakarta. I was detained there for about four months, accused of being a member of Gerwani, the Indonesian Women's Movement. They said that every Gerwani member had a tattoo on their thighs. But it turned out that their accusation against me was without proof. I was released. I was even given an official certificate of release.

You can only dream

After I was released, I returned to my studies and looked for work. Thanks to God, I was accepted as a primary school teacher. At the time I felt happy because no matter how exhausted I was I still managed to divide my time between study and work. This was possible, among other things, because of the understanding and mutual help of my teaching colleagues and fellow students. They generously helped me. If there was a conflict in my teaching and lecture schedules, they helped me find a way around it.

But, there you go, after just on two years, suddenly all this changed. In 1968 I was yet again forcibly taken away. I was picked up at around 2 in the morning at the place where I boarded. I felt shocked and confused of course.

They asked me about someone I did not know. Because I said I did not know, and I truly did not know, they tortured me. Strangely, the reason they gave for arresting me this time was precisely because of that official certificate of release when I had been wrongly arrested the first time.

I was beaten and stripped naked. My pubic hair and the hair on my head were burnt. All I could do was scream and call upon the name of God. Then I was taken to the Military Police Corps. There I was put in a cell. I was handcuffed. I was together with male detainees who were there before me. Every time they interrogated me they always had some new people for me to see. They always asked me whether I knew those people or not. Of course I said I didn't because indeed I did not know them.

How could I have known them, when I knew nothing at all about political movements, let alone what they called 'political guerillas'. Back then, just teaching, studying and caring for my younger brothers and sisters was difficult enough. How could I have been involved in political activities? Particularly when back then I had to send food to my father, because my father had been detained. All these activities truly utterly exhausted me.

I was often interrogated and often stripped naked. I was once made to sit in the lap of a male political prisoner. While naked, I was held and ordered to kiss the penises of all the officers interrogating me. Then I was stripped naked to be trampled on and my head shaved. I often passed out. Suddenly I would find myself back in the cell. For eight months I was traumatized. Even so, because of the advice and healing of the other female political prisoners, I survived.

I learned that this was the fate of a political prisoner. It was only by the grace of God that I got the strength to go through this incredibly cruel and inhumane life. Even though the people acting with this inhumane cruelty were the same ones bragging about being 'Pancasila'ist, or religious, or moral people. But truly, were they really upholding moral and religious values? If so, then why were these officials so morally perverted? Why did they hunger and thirst so for the blood of innocent people? I find it difficult to understand why my own people can be like this.

I used to feel proud of the nation of Indonesia and my fellow countrymen as harmonious, peaceful, and loving liberty. Because I was born during the time of our revolutionary fight for independence, planted deep within me was the sense of defending the nation. I was a strong admirer of Sukarno who always urged the youth; 'Become cadres of the nation!' 'Don't be soya-bean cake youth!' Hold up your ideals as high as the sky!' or 'In your hands

lies the glory of your country that is *gemah ripah loh jinawi subur kang sarwo tinandur, murah kang sarwo tinukul*!⁶⁹

Back then our nation never went cap-in-hand. We were a nation that stood on our own two feet, we were against colonialism and against all forms of exploitation, whether that be exploitation by capitalists, imperialists, or neocolonialists and their cronies.

It is such a shame that those ideals are now just historical mementoes. And a history that has been misdirected, at that. Meanwhile my nation has gone backwards in so many respects. Independence has become so distant from the life of ordinary people. Probably the authorities can still talk about what independence is. But ordinary people like me can only dream. And probably dreams of independence will be realized in this land of ours only if I live another hundred years.

Want to laugh

When I was a political prisoner, I was moved five times. In 1971 I was moved to Semarang, Central Java. Not long after that I was moved to Plantungan prison, not far from Semarang.⁷⁰ I was detained there for a year. From Plantungan I was moved once more, to Bulu prison in Semarang. Like Plantungan, this was a prison specially for women. There were 44 others who were moved with me from Plantungan to Bulu prison. According to the authorities, the reason for the move was because all 45 of us 'were beyond hope of improvement'.

Speaking of 'improvement', actually who was it who needed to improve others and who needed to be improved, when the military officers there had illicit sex so there were many fatherless babies born in Plantungan. It's true that at Plantungan there weren't any forced examinations using violence or physical torture, but that does not mean that there were not offences in the form of psychological ones. For instance, we had to admit to something we had never done. Or for their sake we would testify about things we had never actually seen. So it is fitting for Plantungan to be called the 'Buru island' of female political prisoners. Is there any prison that makes prisoners feel calm, comfortable, and peaceful? Maybe only in soap operas on TV.

Bulu prison in Semarang was a women's prison and most of the guards were women. This had its positive side, of course. There was no more rape by

⁶⁹ A well-known phrase from Javanese wayang kulit depicting an ideal kingdom, meaning 'fertile and prosperous, where anything planted grows, and everything is inexpensive.'

⁷⁰ On the women's prison in Plantungan in Central Java see dr. Hj. Sumiyarsi Siwirini, *Plantungan: Pembuangan Tapol Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: PUSdEP dan IHJR, 2010).

male military personnel, and we heaved a sigh of relief. We were free of the fear of getting pregnant. But there was one thing that was still obligatory in Bulu prison, and that was ‘Santiaji’. This was the name for the indoctrination sessions. We had to listen to lectures that were varied and creative, but the basic message was a kind of exhortation to ‘repent our lives as rebels, prostitutes, atheists and home destroyers.’ When we listened to this kind of message we thought it funny, and really wanted to laugh out loud. But how could we possibly laugh? The most we could do was inwardly laugh. That’s the authorities for you! All they could do was talk. And they didn’t even have to pay to talk about this stuff. They actually got paid for it!

Stirrings of freedom

Fortunately, at one time there was a team from Amnesty International. Most members of the team asked questions in foreign languages. And the women who spoke foreign languages were allowed to answer in those languages. Some spoke German, some Dutch, English, French and so forth. Among the political prisoners there were some who spoke Japanese and Russian. But not a single prison officer spoke a foreign language. So they didn’t know that we were telling that Amnesty International team all the secrets about how the officers had treated us in Plantungan prison. We said that all the prisoners, from the old to the young, had received their share of suffering.

As a result of our talks with the team, it became known that we had suffered inhumane treatment. In the eyes of the authorities it was as though we were worse than rubbish that can be recycled or turned into fertiliser once it has gone bad. We were seen as a sickness that kills, that spreads like a virus which is extremely dangerous to the nation. The reason we were treated like this is that these women were accused of being ‘communist’. Even though we had no idea how we could be declared communist, considering the majority of us had no idea at all of the ‘A-B-C’ of politics.

We were accused of being communist, but none of us, at least certainly not me, had ever read Karl Marx. But [President] Soeharto had succeeded brilliantly in sticking in his tiger claws and brainwashing Indonesia, so that Indonesia became a fearful nation, a begging nation, cowardly, hypocritical and without dignity. Basically, do anything you want as long as Bapak is happy. Soeharto was afraid that the people would become clever, intelligent and critical. Why – because if the people became clever, intelligent and critical, not to mention brave, well that would be dangerous for the power he was building. Not long after the visit by the Amnesty International

team, the female political prisoners started to be released. I was released on 27 September 1978.

Admitting a mistake

After I was released, I married and had two children. The eldest is a girl and the youngest a boy. I lived my life as befits a former political prisoner with challenging social conditions. How else could it be? I had to bear that stigma that is so dark, so tightly ingrained in people's thinking, namely the stigma as an ex-political prisoner.

That is my life. I have to live in social conditions that structurally give no space to former political prisoners. Even so, I have to remain optimistic. God is all loving to every one of His creatures. That is why I will be given solutions in whatever situation.

Now there is no need in crying over my life. Now is not the time to sit twiddling my thumbs, but to work and work. I began by opening a stall using as capital money from all the jewellery my younger sisters had given me. I even used my wedding ring. And through God's grace my business was successful and my husband's too. Whatever I do, it is in order to retrieve life.

I have been preparing my children from early on. I have taught them how to face life. I sell cakes and fried food. Once I got enough capital, I began to take orders for traditional medicine. Besides selling basic necessities at my stall, I tried out selling kerosene. I do various things at once while also teaching my children, who are still relatively young, not to be afraid of hard work. I teach them that hard work is what pays for their education. I pay them, and with that payment I make them take English lessons so that they will not end up stupid like their parents.

There are various comments from the neighbours. I am said to be pushy, not caring enough of my children, and so on. But who gives a damn.

Luckily, my children are aware of their position as coming from a family of ex political prisoners. They have to fight for their future. To them, all work is noble before God. They are not ashamed to be little delivery-boys carrying kerosene, sugar and so on, to help their parents.

Of course I have had to keep my nose to the grindstone night and day to get this far. It might be rain, lightning or whatever, but the kerosene deliveries still have to be made. Through the grace of God everything has gone smoothly. I remember the saying; after rain comes the sunshine. Everything used to be so hard, but now it all goes well.

So, now that my children are beginning to have their own lives, I have begun to think, why should I remain silent. I have begun to think about those people whose fate was like mine, those people who were cast aside as I was. I decided to start talking about the lies that have led this country down the wrong path. I want to do this so that the evil done by my people to their own people will not happen again in times to come.

That's enough of the dark picture of Indonesians and beloved Indonesia in times past. I want to see this beloved earth peaceful and prosperous, where law is upheld and justice is real. I want to see all the children of this nation become clever and dignified. I am aware that this is not easy to bring about, but I see it as a necessity.

The screams of the ensnaked are always shrill to the ear. The stand I take and my wishes inspire both pro and contra responses, but I see this as something normal. Difference is necessary. Everything needs time, and doesn't have to be forced. Let the water keep flowing.

Now, realistically and honestly, my nation does not want to admit that it once made a mistake. And even less think about apologizing and restoring to the victims their rights that were seized for decades. The authorities will never renounce their arrogance. Particularly voluntarily. Only Jesus can humble and sacrifice Himself for sinners. But that was Jesus, God. The nation's leaders and government officials are people who are weak and easily enslaved by devils who declare their presence with greed and rapaciousness.

Keep on hoping

I hope the international community can lessen the burden of the victims of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia both financially and spiritually. Those of us now over 60 need financial help. So what if people see me as someone out there begging. I am not ashamed on behalf of my brothers and sisters whose lives have been made a misery by the leaders of this country.

And so, with their children and grandchildren they need help in finding work and education. If later on the conditions and situation of this nation improve, and we experience humane treatment, then everyone will know that we have been made human once more. We all search for nothing other than good deeds and devotion as provisions for the eternal life to come. This is advice of the ulama and spiritual leaders, so lofty to the ear but so hard to be put into practice. In our old age, we survivors of the 1965 tragedy never cease hoping and relying on God's generosity. So please, be the extension of God's merciful hands.

PART III

THE YOUNG GENERATION AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

As can be seen in the accounts of witnesses and victims in the two previous sections, one important aspect of the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia is religion. Apart from the fact that many witnesses and victims view what they witnessed or experienced from a religious perspective, it is also evident that there is a connection between the crisis of 1965 and existing religious organizations. As we know, one of the elements that drove the murders and mass arrests at the time was the accusation that the members of the Communist Party and sympathizers were 'atheists'. In Central Java, East Java, Bali and Eastern Indonesia, this element was very strong.

In connection with the events of 1965–1966, religious organizations took varied stands and held varied points of view. Some fully supported the military and social actions of the time, some opposed them, and some responded with a mixture of both support and opposition. In many cases, there was diversity in the official stand and concrete action in the field in facing the massive wave of violence at that time.

In the following section, you are invited to read the research findings about the attitude of one religious institution, the Catholic church, towards this humanitarian tragedy. The research attempts to show the official attitude of the Catholic leadership in Indonesia, in Yogyakarta in particular, towards the political dynamics and all the violence that was going on, and also the attitude and actions of Catholics beyond the official Church hierarchy.

The research and reports were carried out by two researchers from the generation that grew up after the 1965 tragedy. Neither of them were witnesses or victims. It is hoped that this position of theirs will add a different perspective and understanding of the 1965 tragedy to that which has been conveyed by witnesses and victims.

Tension between religious institutions and social practice

A study of the Catholic hierarchy and laity in Yogyakarta

When, in the second half of 1965, the mass violence towards members of the Communist Party began, many religious leaders experienced a moral dilemma. On the one hand, they were aware that those who were victims were people said to be opposed to religious conviction and principles. On the other hand, these victims (and their families) were ordinary people, who like us need to be treated as ordinary people. They cannot be made targets of arbitrary mass violence, as happened at the time.

At very least, this was a dilemma which, according to the following research report, surfaced in the Catholic Church in Indonesia as an example of one religious institution, specifically in Yogyakarta and its environs. This research finds that the Catholic Church (at least in the archdiocese of Semarang, Central Java) already had a stand of anti-violence. Even so, there have not been many studies examining how that policy was implemented at a social level, both while the tragedy was going on as well as over subsequent years. As the two researchers say, 'This study sets out to explore the stages of social process, from the experience, attitudes and actions of Catholics, both Church officials and lay people, when they went through this tragedy.

The research and writing was undertaken by two members of the History Commission at PUSdEP, namely Y. Tri Subagya MA and Dr. G. Budi Subanar SJ. Apart from his membership on the History Commission, Y. Tri Subagya is also on the staff at PUSdEP and a doctoral student at Radbod University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. G. Budi Subanar is the Head of the Masters Program in Religion and Culture at Sanata Dharma University, and is also on the staff of PUSdEP.

As we know, discourse about the 1965 tragedy is debated, and in Indonesian society it always brings controversy. Attempts to open up paths for dialogue or to resolve various problems concerning the tragedy often clash with the suspicions and prejudice of groups who believe in the official version put out by the New Order authorities.⁷¹ Even so, this does not mean that this

⁷¹ The New Order version of the 1965 tragedy can be found in various history textbooks as well as the film produced by the New Order titled *Pengkhianatan G30S* (The G30S Treachery). Books include the so-called 'white book' or official document published by the Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia titled *Gerakan 30 September: Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia: Latar Belakang, Aksi dan Penumpasannya*. 1994 (The 30th

discourse is locked from within, and cannot be reviewed to obtain deeper and more complete clarification. New evidence, both in the form of documents as well as the experience of the victims, provide an important take-off point for expressions of truth and for the re-writing of history about the tragedy.⁷²

The history of relations between religious organizations in the midst of this chaotic time needs to be re-examined without exception, because the stigma and hatred bequeathed by the past towards victims accused of being members of the Communist Party or sympathizers continues to shackle wider society. On the one hand, religious institutions were in opposition with the Communist Party and its mass organizations which were associated with atheism.

Threats and violent acts by followers of religious institutions were often not prevented, and many of them surely actively participated in the slaughter at the time. However, on the other hand, religious institutions also became places of shelter for those tortured and searching for political asylum as a result of the state policy that demanded all citizens to chose one of the five official religions. One indicator of this is the increase in conversions at the time.⁷³

Further, the 1965 tragedy also became the turning point for relations between religious institutions in Indonesia. Today there are still religious institutions and organizations that are mutually suspicious and distant with one another in the way they run their congregations as well as the way they position themselves in national life. The Protestants, for instance are suspicious of the Muslims who want syariah law as the foundation of the state, and have created marginalization and implemented discriminative practices. On the other hand, the radical Islamic group always sees 'Christianization' as an ongoing threat, including the accusation that many of the ex 1965 political prisoners and those claiming to be followers of traditional beliefs allegedly converted to Protestantism and Catholicism.⁷⁴

September Movement: The Indonesian Communist Party Rebellion: Background, Actions and their Annihilation). 1994.

⁷² After the fall of the authoritarian New Order in 1998, various memoirs and accounts by victims of the tragedy appeared along with some studies that showed new documents and perspectives on the incidents of violence and cruelty. Some of these include *Tabanan Politik Pulau Buru 1969–1979* (I.G. Krisnadi, 2001); *Menembus Tirai Asap, Kesaksian Tabanan Politik 1965* (Sasongko dan Budianta, 2003); *Aku Eks Tapol* (Setiawan, 2003); *Dalih Pembunuhan Massal* (Roosa, 2008).

⁷³ Subanar, 2005; Nugroho, 2008.

⁷⁴ See Mujiburrahman, 2006; Hasan, 2007.

Qualitative approach

Studies focusing on the role and place of religious groups and institutions in the 1965 crisis are relatively limited. One such study is that carried out by young Nahdlatul Ulama members associated with the organization 'Syarikat Indonesia' which is based in Yogyakarta. They have been intensively involved with, and attempting reconciliation with victims, even though many of their own parents or the older generation were perpetrators or even murderers in the mass slaughter. Even so, to date they have had no official or serious institutional support from their religious organization for their activities. Because there has never been any organizational official statement from any religious organization in relation to the 1965 tragedy apart from Nahdlatul Ulama, there is the general perception that religious organizations other than NU have no interest in pursuing reconciliation from their own involvement in the 1965 violence.⁷⁵ In Catholic circles, similar efforts have failed to attract attention. Where there is attention, it is usually limited to discourse or to charitable activities in connection with assistance and relief to victims.

Taking these problems and studies mentioned above as a starting point, in writing the findings of our research we want to highlight the role of the (institution) of the Church and Catholics in the 1965 tragedy. There has already been a general study about the policies of the Church in the archdiocese of Semarang in coping with the tragedy, but there has not been an explanation of the actual practices in society. This study examines and scrutinizes the position and activities of the Church and Catholics in the midst of that turbulent time.

In particular, it sets out to describe various incidents that affected them when faced with traumatic and painful situations in the history of Indonesian social life. To get a more complete picture, this study examines the stages in this social process from the experiences, attitudes and actions

⁷⁵ The scholar Benedict R. O'G Anderson declared that NU is more honest than other religious institutions like the Protestant, Catholic and Muhammadiyah groups, which he sees were involved in the slaughter but covered it up. He made this statement in an interview on Radio Nederland. The transcript of the interview can be downloaded on <http://analisa kebudayaan.blogspot.com>. Most likely this opinion springs from the statement of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid as a respected NU ulama who called for reconciliation with the former 1965 political prisoners and the end to discriminative practices towards them. His call was answered by activities carried out by some youth organizations who endeavoured to open the path to reconciliation in various places. However, Abdurrahman Wahid's stand and that of the young NU groups also met with opposition from some ulama and members of Nahdlatul Ulama who did not agree with them.

of Catholics, both Church officials and lay people. We examine the role of the Church in Indonesia in the 1965 crisis, through the role of the Church hierarchy in decision making at the height of the tension and killing of those accused of being members of the Communist Party. This study is an attempt to investigate the position of the Catholic Church both collectively and individually. We hope the findings will serve as a basis for reconciliation or resolution of the bitter experience of this national tragedy.

The parameters are limited to the Semarang archdiocese of the Catholic Church, and specifically, the area of Yogyakarta. However, this does not mean that this study touches only upon sources in this area. It also covers different areas where these can sharpen the analysis or serve as points of comparison. The researchers employed a qualitative approach. Data was gathered using oral history methods with in-depth interviews. Some key informants were asked to retell their past experiences and to reflect upon these within the situation and context of that time.

The data the researchers gathered was cross-checked with other documents and archives accessible to us. The informants for the research were obtained using a snowball technique, with the criteria that they themselves had both experienced and had sufficient understanding of the problems faced by the Catholic church at that time; for instance whether they were representatives of the institution of the Church or were individuals when making decisions. Priority was given to informants from Yogyakarta and Central Java. This was because of the focus of the study, and also because of our limitations of energy and funding. We also carried out library research. Before writing the final report, we also carried out a series of limited discussions with other members of the History Commission of PUSdEP. In these discussions, we often criticized each other and exchanged ideas about problems that were the focus of our various studies, including this one.

Hostility between the Catholic Church and the Indonesian Communist Party

One study that examines the position and attitude of the Catholic Church towards the 1965 tragedy was carried out by examining the archives of the Semarang Archdiocese from 1940 to 1981.⁷⁶ Even though this study stressed the history of the independence of the Catholic Church there, some attention is also given to the position of the Church and the stance its officials took

⁷⁶ See G. Subanar (2005)

towards the 1965 tragedy. In general, the study points out that the Church prioritized humanitarian problems in the midst of this tragedy of bloodshed. In other words, even though the Catholic Church opposed communism and the Communist Party, when the violence was going on the Church called for protection for and gave assistance to victims without paying heed to their affiliation with the Communist Party.

It is commonly understood that all over the world the Catholic Church opposes communism. Indonesia is no exception. Long before the 1965 tragedy occurred, Catholic Church officials in Indonesia stated that institutionally the Church was diametrically opposed to the Communist Party, even though there were Catholics who became members of the party, or sympathizers.⁷⁷

This stance of opposition was evident when the clash of ideology between social groups began heating up. In December 1955, the Commission of Indonesian Bishops (Komisi Wali Gereja Indonesia) issued a manifesto called the Catholic Manifesto (Manifesto Katolik) making this position clear. In February and April 1957, when President Sukarno invited prominent figures from the Indonesian Catholic Party (Partai Katolik Indonesia) to respond to his 'konsepsi' or idea to form the National Council (Dewan Nasional) and 'Four-Legged Cabinet' (Kabinet Kaki Empat) which would include the Communist Party, they rejected this idea outright. It was noted, for instance:

[I.J. Kasimo stated that if one looked at history, when communists were included in the cabinets of Eastern European countries, they gradually made those countries turn communist. Therefore, he did not agree with including communist elements in the cabinet. And therefore, he could not agree with the President's 'Konsepsi'.⁷⁸

In line with the Church's rejection of communism, the Archbishop of Semarang, Msgr A Soegijapranata played a very important role in fostering this opposition within the Catholic lay community. Opposition towards communism and the influence of Communist Party mass organizations was fostered through discussions, for instance through contact with Catholic politicians and with lay organizations at the grass roots level.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Webb and Farram, 2005; Mujiburrahman, 2006.

⁷⁸ [I.J.] Kasimo mengemukakan bahwa menurut pengalaman sejarah, pengikutsertaan orang-orang komunis di dalam kabinet di negara-negara Eropa Timur, lama kelamaan menyebabkan negara-negara itu menjadi komunis. Oleh karena itu ia tidak setuju kalau di dalam kabinet dimasukkan unsur komunis. Dan oleh karena itu pula ia tidak dapat menyetujui Konsepsi Presiden. Panitia Penulisan Kompas-Gramedia, 1980:83–84.

⁷⁹ Subanar, 2005:149.

It seems that politicians in the Catholic Party were also working hard to stop the Communist Party gaining access to strategic positions in power. Anticipating the possibility that the Communist Party would strengthen its position with cabinet posts in government, Frans Seda, who initially refused to sit in the Cabinet of 100 Ministers, subsequently accepted the position of Minister of Agriculture (Menteri Perkebunan) with the support of the army. About this, it has been said:

While negotiating (with Catholic Party figures), General A. Yani telephoned and urged the party and Frans Seda to agree to sit in Cabinet, in order to strengthen the anti communist front in government. According to gossip in the palace, the seat planned for Frans Seda was Minister of Fisheries ([derisively called] Minister Lele fish). However Pak Yani said No ... he would fight, and he was lobbying Sukarno via Pak Leimena, for [Frans Seda] to get the Minister of Agriculture post, because this was a sector with capital, and had to be protected from Communist Party/ leftist influence.⁸⁰

It appears that the Catholic Party figures' attitude was welcomed by military officers who also wanted to demonstrate their enmity towards the Communist Party. A number of informants said that leading up to the 1965 tragedy, Muslim, Protestant and Catholic religious figures unified in their opposition to the Communist Party, and disseminated messages to their faithful of high alert towards the ideology and the party itself.

It is interesting to note that while relations between the Church and the Communist Party were in opposition, the Catholic Church consistently rejected the use of violence when the military mobilized the people to wipe out Communist Party members and sympathizers. One can find this stance in three letters issued by Church officials in the Semarang Archdiocese over those years. Among the letters is one that urges the government to avoid violence in its handling of things. As Subanar summarizes:

The first letter was written by Father Carri SJ, Assistant to the Bishop of the Semarang Archdiocese, and consists of a call to all the faithful

⁸⁰ *Sementara berunding (dengan tokoh-tokoh partai Katolik), Jenderal A. Yani menelpon, dan menganjurkan agar Partai dan Frans Seda menerima untuk duduk dalam Kabinet, supaya memperkuat front antikomunis di dalam pemerintahan. Menurut desas-desus di Istana, jabatan menteri yang direncanakan untuk Frans Seda adalah Menteri Perikanan ("Menteri Lele"). Tetapi Pak Yani berkata, "Tidak ... akan diperjuangkan dan sedang di lobby-kan pada Sukarno lewat Pak Leimena, untuk jabatan Menteri Perkebunan, karena sektor itulah sektor modal, dan harus diamankan dari pengaruh PKI/kiri. Panitia Penulisan Kompas-Gramedia, 1980:85*

to demonstrate their Catholic spirit of *pro ecclesia et patria* in Indonesia based on Pancasila which respects pluralism in society and acknowledges belief in God. The second letter was directed to the clergy and members of religious orders in the Semarang archdiocese and forbids them from taking part in military actions to sift out or hunt down members of the Communist Party. The third letter was addressed to the Catholic laity, and calls upon them to support the actions to sift out Communist Party members which are led by the army, but not to involve themselves in any acts of violence.⁸¹

The stance the Church took in giving priority to humanitarian principles cannot, it seems, be separated from the confused situation of the time, along with the Church's moral teachings that are indeed based on humanitarian concerns. The confusion of the situation was particularly connected to the varied positions and backgrounds of Catholics in the national political arena. Many Catholics, particularly those who were newly baptised, were anxious about suspicion and accusation that they were atheist communist party escapees. Some among the converts came from groups following traditional beliefs, and had formerly practised local religions. Even though among Communist Party members there were some Catholics, the number was not significant. Some parishes kept record of the increase in their congregations between 1965 and 1970. The wave of conversions was particularly driven by government policy with the ruling in 1966 that required all citizens to choose one of the five official religions recognised by the government, namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Attitudes towards the Catholic Church's efforts

In this tense situation, the Church rejected the proposal to make identity cards for Catholics, reasoning that this would sharpen the conflict, and also avoiding the accusation that new converts were purely escapee Communist Party members. Further, the Indonesian Bishops Conference issued an encyclical to parish priests to make a record of victims in their parishes. Apart from efforts to prevent violence, Church officials actively participated

⁸¹ Subanar 1995:149. When the violence was going on, the Archbishop in Semarang was attending the Second Vatican Council in Rome. Because of this, the letter was issued by the official representing him. When he returned from the Vatican, Msgr Darmojuwono reaffirmed the Church's stand by asking the military authorities to give security and protection to people, based on a commitment of mercy.

in assisting and giving relief to political prisoners who were members and sympathizers of the Communist party, and to their families.

In the Semarang Archdiocese in 1969 the Cardinal's Social Program (Program Sosial Kardinal or PSK) was begun especially for this purpose, and in Yogyakarta, the Realino Foundation (Yayasan Realino) likewise. In 1981, these programs and humanitarian activities spread to various areas in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Purwokerto, Malang, Surabaya, Pontianak, Banjarmasin, Makasar, Ambon, Medan, Pangkal Pinang, Padang, Palembang, and Tanjung Karang. Meanwhile, under the coordination of Father de Blot SJ, brothers, nuns and congregations gave not only pastoral care, but also material and health assistance in some prisons and detention camps, including Buru island. This assistance was not restricted to detainees, but also extended to their families. One of these prisoners has said:

Father de Blot did a lot for the political prisoners. He visited the detention camps, brought things to entertain us, and then negotiated food assistance like bulgur cracked wheat and corn sugar milk. This assistance came from the alliance of Catholic and Protestant churches. It is important to note, but without resentment, that there was never any assistance from Islamic bodies. Probably they thought that the communists were atheists, so let them just die. This was part and parcel of the authorities' propaganda and incitement. Then there was the issue that the Christians were giving aid so they could convert the political prisoners. We can swear that this was not true. The churches gave assistance based on humanitarian principles.⁸²

And another:

Thanks to the Dutch priest, Father de Bleg [de Blot, ed.] as we called him, my younger siblings and I were able to get out of prison. I had been in prison only a few months when Father came and collected me.⁸³

Pastoral care was a program that the government supported, through the army's Centre for Spiritual Development (Pusat Pembinaan Rohani ABRI) working together with the Department of Religion. This was intended for the mental rehabilitation program called 'Santiaji' for the improvement of

⁸² Mia Bustam 2008:123

⁸³ Abdullah Saleh et. Al. 2003:77.

political detainees accused of being atheist. But according to many political detainees, this program was more like indoctrination and instruction to perform one's religious obligations according to the religion they had been previously registered with, and they could not suddenly attend services of a different religion.⁸⁴

The clergy who former political prisoners remember as having performed pastoral care and humanitarian activities on Buru island include Msgr Andreas Sol MSC, Father Roovink, Father Mangunwijaya, Sister Cecilia dan Sister Fransisca. In Flores, a priest at Bola parish, Yosef Frederikus da Lopez, tried to free 45 people detained at the army headquarters because they were suspected of being members of the Communist Party. Father Lopez managed to meet the commander and gave a personal guarantee for their freedom, but he succeeded in getting only 10 freed.⁸⁵ The humanitarian activities of various Catholic social organizations on behalf of former political prisoners later spread to the parish level, or the lowest strata in the Church hierarchy.⁸⁶

This pastoral care and humanitarian work by Catholic clergy and laity did not proceed without difficulty. Some Catholic priests were under pressure from the military because of their activities in helping political prisoners. In Purwodadi (Central Java) for instance, some members of the parish management were arrested, tortured and detained after a parish youth and the parish priest gave testimony to H.J. C Princen, a staunch defender of human rights, about a mass killing that had happened in the area. They were arrested after the interview was published in the mass media, making the government and local officials feel cornered. The arrests seem to have been an attempt to stifle people so they would not talk about despicable things they saw. At the time this happened, the government extended an invitation to print journalists to travel around that area, as its way of deflecting attention and removing traces of the sort of disgusting things H.J.C. Princen related. People say that this tour by the group of journalists, sponsored by the authorities, was more like a picnic, because the people they met and the places they visited had been spruced up for them, and were nothing like the story they had got beforehand.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Sumarwan, 2007:159–199; Nugroho: 2008:113–114.

⁸⁵ Mujiburrahman, 2006:25.

⁸⁶ Subanar, 2005:153.

⁸⁷ About the efforts to cover up the tragedy, and the journalists' tour to Purwodadi, see Maskun Iskandar and Yoppie Lasut, "The Purwodadi Killings: Two accounts", in

Catholic attitudes towards the 1965 tragedy

The tension between political parties also affected the lives of ordinary citizens, including Catholics. The tension escalated in 1965.⁸⁸ Even though when the 30 September 1965 event actually happened, this was not seen as an extremely dangerous moment.⁸⁹

The Catholic Church's anti-communist stand had a significant influence on its faithful, both individually and collectively. One group of Catholics extremely active in exposing and opposing communism and its movements was the Documentation Bureau (Biro Dokumentasi) led by Father Beek S.J. The Documentation Bureau was conceived by and had the blessing of Church officials, but its position was not directly within the church hierarchy. The bureau collected various socio-political documents, analyzed them, and then distributed them in the form of a newsletter. The material aimed to provide information, at least to Catholic politicians, about the heated and unclear socio-political situation.

Among the analysis and problems highlighted by the Documentation Bureau at the time was the hostility between the religious, nationalist and communist groups. The Bureau supplied analytical material to support activists from the Pancasila Front and Sekber Golkar [Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya] who were taking a firm stand of opposition to the National Front supported by the Communist Party.⁹⁰ Even though the Documentation Bureau only distributed articles, the analysis of which was up to the readers, still it seems to have contributed to shaping the opinion and providing input to several important figures in their stance towards the Communist Party. In his autobiography, Cosmas Batubara mentions the importance of the Documentation Bureau in obstructing communism, which helped Catholic university students get prepared in the midst of the political tension. According to Cosmas,

Robert Cribb (1990), 195–226. We thank Father Baskara T. Wardaya SJ who allowed us to listen to an interview with a trusted source about this matter.

⁸⁸ Djoko Pranoto: 2010.

⁸⁹ Soe Hok Gie, in his diary also depicted the tense situation of these times. Members of Catholic Youth had to keep constant guard over their organization's secretariat, and were also involved in protecting churches. On 1 October 1965, one member of Catholic Youth from Yogyakarta went to Jakarta and had to go in hiding from place to place. See the account in this book 'The Grand Scenario'

⁹⁰ An example of the Documentation Bureau's analysis of the communist movement and the murder of the Generals can be found in Soedarmanto (2008:163–170)

The contribution of Father Beek SJ was enormous in developing a system of documentation about communist activities and the activities of non communist groups opposing them. From his documentation system we knew exactly what themes the communist group was employing to shore up its strength. As university student cadres were getting more prepared, we also prepared ourselves for undesired situations. Leading up to the G30S/PKI incident there were more frequent meetings between Catholic and Muslim groups.⁹¹

The Catholic students and activists' opposition movement towards the Communist Party took the form of moral pressure to dissolve the party and to participate in drawing up the 'Declaration by Pancasila Supporters, the Charter of Unanimity' (Deklarasi Pendukung Pancasila, Piagam Kebulatan Tekad) on 31 December, 1965. This declaration was made together with various social groups, religious mass organizations and political parties opposed to the Communist Party. The embryo of the movement came from a group of Muslim and Catholic high school and university students who, with the support of the military regional commander Jaya Umar Wirahadikusuma, established the Union to Annihilate the 30th September Movement [Kesatuan Aksi Pengganyangan (KAP) Kontra Revolusi Gestapu]. They demanded that the Communist Party be dissolved and the closure of all media that supported the 30th September Movement. They attacked Communist Party offices and buildings. On 25 October 1965, at a meeting of KAP, the leaders agreed to form KAMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia, Indonesian Student Action Union), which was made up of Muslim, Protestant and Catholic students in mass demonstrations. In January 1966, KAP became the 'Pancasila Guard' (Garda Pancasila) whose activities were more focused at the top level of politics. Meanwhile, in many areas the annihilation of the Communist Party and its followers was being carried out by religious mass organizations with military support.

It is not known how far Catholic youth were involved in the violence and annihilation of people accused of being communists, because organizationally both the PMKRI and Catholic Youth called for restraint in the racism and provocation of the government and army's operations to restore order. However, some sources have mentioned that there were Catholics who took

⁹¹ Quoted in Soedarmanto, 2008:161.

part in the killings, particularly those in the Pancasila Guard who received military training.

At the grass roots level

At that critical time, there were some Catholics who were not members of the Communist Party who were also thrown into prison because they protected families or people being hunted, or who were wrongfully arrested. Some documents note that the Communist party did not limit its membership exclusively, because it was an open party whose members could come from any religious group. Even so, opponents of Communist Party politics always tried to link the party with the issue of atheism and anti-religion. Paul Webb and Steven Farram (2005) have studied Catholics and Protestants in Flores, Sumba and Timur who did not escape violence and being hunted down because they were members of the Communist party. And Hasan Raid (2001) and Ahmadi Moestahal (2002) have told of their experiences as Muslims, and that of their friends in prison, who became Communist Party members because of their support for the people's interests. The image of the Communist party as being diametrically opposed to religious groups, and even being anti-religion, tended to be politicized by religious groups and the military in order to destroy the party and wipe out its followers.

As suggested above, even though on the one hand the Catholic Church opposed communism, on the other, the Church facilitated humanitarian efforts for victims and their families with instructions to prominent lay persons and priests. They not only prevented or averted violence, but also protected and assisted those in prison and their families left behind. Allegedly, the role and approach of Catholic church figures in humanitarian deeds attracted the sympathy of victims and the marginalized. Some researchers see the implications of this in the rise of converts after the 1965 tragedy.⁹² However, there are indications that the increase in the number of Catholics was not only from those who were victims of the 1965 tragedy, but also from those who previously were adherents of local religions.⁹³ After the government regulation of 1966, they were forced to choose one of the five official religions.

Stories in various areas show much diversity behind people's choice in becoming Catholic at that time. The hard work and dedication of priests and

⁹² Spyer, 1995: 171 ; Nugroho, 2008

⁹³ Budi Subanar (2005: 150)

religious teachers in answering their needs was one human meeting point. Another was finding new hope for improvement in their family's finances. Here is one testimony:

Eight years after I was baptized, my prayers were answered at last. Yes, in 1967 Mr Yohanes Suhardi – or Pak Hardi as I called him – from Gawan, was baptized Catholic. One day, Pak Hardi told me that he was interested in becoming Catholic. Apart from the fact that he had been a high school student at SMP Saverius Gawan, which was in its golden age at the time, he was also attracted by Father Wakkers SJ. His fluency speaking Javanese, even high level Javanese, reflected an extraordinary Christian view of life. No cultural divisions, no 'Dutch'ness could obstruct him in spreading the love of Christ. And what was interesting, Pak Hardi also talked about Father Wakkers' ballpoint which was an unusual one for those days. Jokingly, Pak Hardi did not object when some said that his faith grew from the point of Father Wakkers' pen.⁹⁴

Or this:

Ruslan Kocoatmojo not only taught religion. He encouraged those beginning to know Christ to make fish pools, cooperatives and chicken farms, and to open polyclinics. Because this practical work brought concrete results, people who were passive at first gradually took catechism classes. When there were more than ten of them, the village head got worried. He did not want to take responsibility for what would happen if the numbers swelled further. Luckily, the Commander of the Military Sector allowed us to continue. The people of Ngaliyan then appreciated the religion classes held on Tuesdays and Saturdays even more.⁹⁵

Some studies and documents above show that the 1965 tragedy dragged Catholics, both as victims and as perpetrators, into the current of violence which was supported by the military and the state. Even though the Church's position, in its hierarchy, prioritised the humanitarian giving of protection and assistance to victims, this did not mean that there were not Catholics participating in the violence.

⁹⁴ Lilik Andoko et.al., 2007:247.

⁹⁵ Budi Sarjono, Daniel Tatag, 1997: 26

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is clear that the Church's position at the time was diametrically opposed to communist ideology and the Communist Party in the national political arena. Even so, when the mass killings and hunting of party members and sympathizers was going on, the Church, through its officials, endeavoured to prevent the death of victims, and at least to prevent the participation of Catholics in violence. Later, the Church established social foundations to protect and assist the victims. There were also, undeniably, Catholics who were Communist Party sympathizers and who became victims, but this was not the reason the Church took the stand it did, rather its actions were based on humanitarian principles. The Church's position allegedly made many former political prisoners choose to convert to Catholicism, both as part of their effort to find political asylum, and for spiritual reasons.

Refreshing memory

A conclusion

We have followed and observed one account after another. Some are from those who were witnesses of the 1965 tragedy, and others from those who were victims of the dreadful historical events that happened in Indonesia. We have also observed the research report and explanation of one religious institution's attitude towards the tragedy. Now we have come to the end of this book.

Still influential

As we saw at the beginning of the book, a historical narrative is not made for its own sake, but for specific purposes. These include social, political and other purposes. It is not surprising that all over in the world, almost every social group feels it must convey its own narrative of history, and tell it from one generation to the next. Some tell it orally, some convey it in writing.

Observing what Paul Thompson said, we saw how history is important because it can become one tool society needs to make sense of what goes on around it, socially, economically and politically.

At the same time, we see that through history, society becomes aware that there is continuity between what happened in the past, what is happening in the present, and what will happen in the future. An event as an event might 'finish' in the past, but the effect and its influence will continue into the future. Seen the other way, what is happening now (and in the future) is tightly connected to what happened in the past. In other words, by understanding history, society is assisted to see the reality of life as a continuum, like continuously flowing water.

Much to learn

With regard to the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia, we can see from the accounts of those who were witnesses, that the events can be seen from various perspectives and are rich in life's dimensions. There is the dimension of conflict at the elite level between the Indonesian military and civilian groups; there is the dimension of the manipulation from above which altered relatively harmonious social relations at the bottom; there is the dimension of spiritual belief; but there is also the dimension of competing political

and economic ideologies at the international level. These accounts broaden our outlook, enrich our perspective, and encourage us to be more diligent in viewing life as multi-dimensional. And then there is the fact that the accounts make us aware that as an event in the past the 1965 tragedy may be considered 'over', but its effect and its patterns continue to influence us today, both collectively and individually.

We can observe how the 1965 tragedy was experienced individually and personally from the accounts of those who were victims at the time. There was the victim arrested and accused even though he was only a village youth of 19 at the time; there was the student who was mistakenly arrested, officially released, only to be re-arrested; there is the victim who was only 14 years old but who was arrested and imprisoned for 14 years because her name was the same as someone else's; there is the person who spent his youth fighting for Indonesia's independence but was arrested and endlessly tortured before being exiled to Buru island; there is the person who was not imprisoned but suffered throughout her life because her father and husband were both former political prisoners. These victim accounts make us aware that within every grand narrative or official narrative of a historical event, there are many real and personal dimensions that they miss. By studying these real and personal dimensions there is much to learn about history and about human life.

Reviving us

It is hoped that through the accounts shared in this book, together with the reports of the research into the attitude of one religious institution towards the 1965 tragedy, we can be more open and enriched in seeing what Indonesians went through, did and suffered in the mid 1960s and beyond. It is not enough, it seems, to merely try to see all this from the perspective of official narratives of the authorities. We have to see history from as many perspectives as possible, including that of those who have thus far been stifled – or have chosen to remain silent. Ronnie Hatley reminds us in his introduction that 'history plays a large role in shaping our future'.

We have been following the narratives from 'other people', namely our informants. But no less important are the narratives that come *from ourselves*. If the informants have conveyed their narratives with varied perspectives, now the time has come for us to convey our own narratives, according to our own perspectives. If our informants have revealed where they 'stood' when the 1965 tragedy was happening, now is the time for us to show ourselves and

where *we ourselves* 'stand' when we have to review the humanitarian tragedy that took hundreds of thousands of Indonesian lives.

Whatever the answer, hopefully the voices and accounts of the political and humanitarian catastrophe in 1965 in Indonesia can help us understand what happened at the time and subsequently. And in this way, one hopes that not only can we better understand Indonesian history, but we can be better aware of what happens when political interests and power are made the sole criteria in viewing and positioning others.

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Pseudonyms

Agatha Sumarni
Agung Priyambodo
Al Capone
Asnawi
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Swie Liem
Ch. Mujilah
F.X. Abdul Rochim
M.M. Sutini
Rahardjo
Samsul Ahmad
Sofyan Djaenuri
Suherjanto
Ongko Widjaja

Acronyms

- ABRI: Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
- AD: Angkatan Darat (Army)
- AKABRI: Akademi Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces Academy)
- APRIS: Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat (Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Indonesia)
- BAPERKI: Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (Council for Deliberations on Indonesian Citizenship)
- BAPRERU: Badan Pelaksana Resettlement dan Rehabilitasi Buru (Body for the Administration of Buru Resettlement and Rehabilitation)
- Berdikari: Berdiri di Atas Kaki Sendiri (Stand on one's own two feet)
- BKR: Badan Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Front)
- BMT: Baitul Mal wa Tamwil
- BTI: Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants Front)
- CGMI: Konsentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Movement Concentration)
- CHTH: Chung Hua T'jung Hwee (Chinese organization in Yogyakarta)
- CIA: Central Intelligence Agency (AS)
- Conefo: Conference of the New Emerging Forces
- CPM: Corps Polisi Militer (Military Police Corps)
- DanJaga: Komandan Penjaga (Guards Commander)
- DanKam: Komandan Kamp (Camp Commander)
- DanTon: Komandan Peleton (Platoon Commander)
- DanUnit: Komandan Unit (Unit Commander)
- Dekon : Demokrasi Ekonomi (Economic Democracy)
- DI/TII: Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (Darul Islam – Indonesian Islamic State/ TII, Indonesian Islamic Army)
- DIY: Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Special Region of Yogyakarta)
- EATWOT: Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologian
- ET: Eks Tahanan Politik (Former Political Prisoner)
- Ganefo: Games of the New Emerging Forces
- GERMINDO: Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Students Movement)
- Gerwani: Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Movement)
- Gestapu: Gerakan September Tiga Puluh (Thirtieth of September Movement)
- Gestok: Gerakan Satu Oktober (First of October Movement)
- GMKI: Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Protestant Students Movement)
- GMNI: Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Students Movement)
- GSNI: Gerakan Siswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National High School Students Movement)
- G30S: Gerakan 30 September (Thirtieth of September Movement)

- HMI: Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Association of Muslim University Students)
- HSI: Himpunan Sarjana Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Graduates)
- IKIP: Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Institute for Teacher Training)
- IPPI: Ikatan Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia (League of Indonesian Youth and Students)
- KAMI: Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Action Union)
- KampSus: Kamp Khusus (Special Camp)
- KAP Gestapu: Kesatuan Aksi Pengganyangan Gestapu (Union to Annihilate the 30th September Movement)
- KAPPI: Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia (Indonesian Youth and Student Action Union)
- KASREM: Kepala Staf Resort Militer (Head of Staff of Military Resort)
- KKIT: Kerabat Kerja Ibu Teresa (Friends of Mother Teresa)
- KKPI: Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang se-Indonesia (All-Indonesia Conference of Writer-Workers)
- KMB: Konferensi Meja Bundar (Round Table Conference)
- KMK: Keamanan Militer Kota (Municipal Military Security)
- KNIL: Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger (Army of the Netherlands East Indies)
- KODAM: Komando Daerah Militer (Regional Military Command)
- Kodim: Komando Distrik Militer (Military District Command)
- KOGAM: Komando Ganyang Malaysia (Crush Malaysia Command)
- Komdak: Komando Daerah Kepolisian (Regional Police Headquarters)
- Komnas: Komisi Nasional (National Commission)
- KONI: Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Sports Committee)
- KOPASSUS: Komando Pasukan Khusus (Special Forces Command)
- KOPKAMTIB: Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order)
- Koramil: Komando Rayon Militer (Military District Command at the kecamatan level)
- KOREM: Komando Resort Militer (Military Area Command, i.e. the army command between the Kodam and the Kodim)
- KOSTRAD: Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat (Army Strategic Reserve Command)
- KOTI : Komando Operasi Tertinggi (Supreme Operation Command)
- KTP: Kartu Tanda Penduduk (Identity Card)
- Lekra: Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (The Institute of People's Culture)
- Letkol: Letnan Kolonel (Lieutenant Colonel)
- LPKB: Lembaga Pembinaan Kesatuan Bangsa (Institute for the Development of National Unity)
- LPRKROB: Lembaga Perjuangan Rehabilitasi Korban Rezim Orde Baru (Institute for the Rehabilitation of Victims of the New Order Regime)
- LSM: Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (civil society organization, NGO)
- Madilog : Materialisme, Dialektika, Logika
- Manikebu: Manifesto Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto)
- MANIPOL USDEK: Manifesto politik / Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 (Manipol was Soekarno's 1959 Political Manifesto, and USDEK the acronym for; 1945 Constitution [Undang Undang 1945]; Indonesian Socialism [Sosialisme Indonesia]; Guided Democracy [Demokrasi Terpimpin]; Guided Economy

- [Ekonomi Terpimpin], and Indonesian identity,[Kepribadian Indonesia].
- Monas: Monumen Nasional MPR; Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
- MPRS: Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (Temporary People's Consultative Assembly)
- MUPENAS: Majelis Umum Pengembangan Ekonomi Nasional (General Assembly for the Development of the National Economy)
- Murba: Musyawarah Rakyat Banyak (Assembly of the People)
- NA: Nasyiatul Aisyia (Muhammadiyah organization for young women)
- Nasakom: Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis (Soekarno's ideological formulation that called for a united front of nationalist, religious and communist elements in Indonesian political life)
- Nekolim: Neo-Kolonialisme dan Neo-Imperialisme
- NRP: Nomor Registrasi Personil (Personal Registration Number)
- Ormas: Organisasi Masyarakat (mass organization)
- Orpol: Organisasi Politik (political organization)
- PANGAD: Panglima Angkatan Darat (Army Commander)
- PANGDAM: Panglima Komando Daerah Militer (Military Region Commander)
- PANGKOPKAMTIB: Panglima Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Commander for the Restoration of Security and Order Operations)
- PANGKOSTRAD: Panglima Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat (Commander of the Army National Strategic Command)
- PANGTI: Panglima Tertinggi (Supreme Commander)
- Partindo: Partai Indonesia
- PBB: Perserikatan Bangsa-bangsa
- PEPERTI: Penguasa Perang Tertinggi (Supreme War Authority/Commander)
- PERHIMI: Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Tionghoa) (Association of Indonesian Students [Chinese])
- PETA: Pasukan Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Homeland, i.e., the name given to the Indonesian auxiliary troops during the Japanese occupation).
- PKC: Partai Komunis China (Chinese Communist Party)
- PKI: Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
- PKU: Pusat Kesehatan Umat (Muhammadiyah Health Clinic)
- PMII: Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Student Movement)
- PMKRI: Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katholik Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Catholic Students Association)
- PNI: Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesia National Party)
- PNS: Pegawai Negeri Sipil (Civil Servant)
- PSI: Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist Party)
- PSMTI: Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Social Association)
- PUSdEP: Pusat Sejarah dan Etika Politik (Centre of History and Political Ethics)
- Pusroh: Pusat Rohani (Spiritual Centre)
- P2KP: Program Penanggulangan Kemiskinan di Perkotaan (Program for Alleviating Urban Poverty)
- Re-Ra: Reorganisasi dan Rasionalisasi (tentara) (Reorganization and Rationalization,

[army])

RI: Republik Indonesia (Republic of Indonesia)

RIS: Republik Indonesia Serikat (Federated Republic of Indonesia)

RPKAD: Resimen Para-Komando Angkatan Darat (Army Para Command Regiment)

RRI: Radio Republik Indonesia (National Radio of the Republic of Indonesia)

RTI: Rukun Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants Harmony)

SAKTI: Serikat Kaum Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants Union)

SARBUPRI: Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (Plantation Workers Union)

Satgaswal: Satuan Tugas Pengawal (Guard Unit)

SESKOAD – Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat (Army Staff and Command School)

SIT: Surat Ijin Terbit (publishing permit)

Supersemar: Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret (Order of March 11th)

Tapol: Tahanan Politik (Political Detainee)

Tefaaf: Tempat Pemanfaatan (location utilization)

TNI: Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Army)

Tohpol: Tokoh Politik (political figure)

TRI: Tentara Republik Indonesia (Army of the Indonesian Republic)

Trikora: Tri Komando Rakyat (Three People's Commands)

UGM: Universitas Gadjah Mada

UI: Universitas Indonesia

UUBH: Undang-undang Bagi Hasil (Laws for Produce Distribution)

UUPA: Undang-undang Pokok Agraria (Agrarian reform laws)

USD: Universitas Sanata Dharma

WaDanKampus: Wakil Komandan Kamp Khusus (Deputy special camp commander)

Waperdam: Wakil Perdana Menteri (Deputy Prime Minister)

WFTL: World Forum on Theology and Liberation

WKRI: Wanita Katolik Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Catholic Women)

WSF: World Social Forum

About the editor

After completing his studies at the Driyarkara College for Philosophy in Jakarta in 1986, Dr. Baskara T. Wardaya SJ went to the United States where he studied at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 1993–2001, obtaining a master's degree and PhD in history. In 2004–2005 he undertook post-doctoral research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas.

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TRUTH WILL OUT

INDONESIAN ACCOUNTS OF THE 1965 MASS VIOLENCE

This striking compilation of essays surveys a variety of views about the 1965 mass violence in Indonesia and current efforts to understand it. The book is the product of an oral history project involving senior and young researchers from Yogyakarta. The accounts it presents include a military man who continues to see the violence as justified and refuses survivors the status of victim; two Muslims who believe that the Communist were and continue to remain a threat to society; and a Catholic activist who reflects on how they were manipulated to support the violence. These accounts are complemented by the views of survivors of the violence, some of whom see this as a national problem that goes far beyond individual suffering. This book provides a valuable window into why this past remains contested today and some of the obstacles to reconciliation and full rehabilitation of survivors.

Dr. Baskara T. Wardaya SJ teaches at Sanata Dharma and Gadjah Mada Universities in Yogyakarta. He is also a consultant for the Asia-Pacific Jesuit Refugee Service in Bangkok. Dr. Baskara T. Wardaya SJ has published numerous books, particularly on Indonesian history of the 1960s, the Cold War period, and Indonesian-American relations.



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Cover image: A soldier watches suspected Communists held at Tangerang.
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