

Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ The Thirtieth September Movement As Seen By The Perpetrators. Between Registered Facts And Authoritative Opinions - Part One



They had their things pretty well organized, but reckoned too much with their success, their being right, and the cooperation of the President – Major General Ibrahim Adjie, Territorial Commander of West Java (IT65: 248).

The assassination of the generals on the morning of 1 October was not really a coup attempt against the government, but the event has been almost universally described as an “abortive coup,” so I have continued to use the term – (Crouch 1978: 101, note 7).

To prevent arbitrary policy measures, the prologue, the event and the epilogue of the G30S should be critically studied – Sukarno in:Perkara Njono: 274

The Thirtieth September Movement of September 30 1965 (G30S), though generally accepted as a conspicuous event in the history of Indonesia, has never been fully understood. The sources are few and most of them are rather unreliable. It is also a complicated history, touching upon the internal rivalries within the Indonesian armed forces, as well as those between the armed forces as

a whole and politicians from all imaginable dominations. Moreover, it is situated against a background of internal political competition, economic ruin and, internationally, with the rivalries of the Cold War in full blaze. Until recent times, the latter aspect has also to a large degree influenced the positioning of the Cold War historians. Therefore, though revisited every now and then, the history of this movement still holds many blind spots. It certainly is not my intention to solve these in a few lines. Yet I feel sure that much can be won by carefully rereading some of the sources that have not been fully analyzed yet. These include the notes of the military tribunal that was installed in 1966 and carried out its task under the directions of General Suharto, then on the road towards presidency.

Obviously, there is hardly any reason to take his conclusions for granted. However, new light may be shed by analyzing the inconsistencies between the analyses by renowned analysts of the G30S on the one hand, and on the other hand the reporting brought forward by accused Lieutenant Colonel Untung bin Sjamsuri and CC PKI Politburo member Njono bin Sastroredjo in the legal court drama that ended in their execution before the show was even fully over.

The 'communist coup' as it generally became known in the wake of the verdicts uttered by Suharto, became a public affair in the early morning of 1 October 1965, when Lt.-Colonel Untung, member of President Sukarno's palace guard, claimed via radio RRI Jakarta to have saved President Sukarno's life by cleansing the so-called Council of Generals of members that planned a coup for Armed Forces Day on 5 October 1965. Six of the seven targeted generals had been killed right away. In the afternoon of the same day, a final message was broadcast by the ringleaders, informing the public of their plan to constitute a Revolutionary Council that would seize power in order to end the legacy of the generals in governance and prepare for general elections. The contrast between the first message, in which Untung told the people that as member of the palace guard Tjakrabirawa he had rescued the president by capturing the guilty generals, and the second one which sounded like a coup d'état, left the people as well as analysts confused about the movement's goal: Was it aimed at saving the president or removing him from his office and changing the system?

So far the events of the 1st October 1965 in a nutshell. President Sukarno, who according to the plotters had been rescued from impending dangers by the hands of the generals, kept silent on the subject. And in the months after, general Suharto claimed the day's victory, by claiming he had rescued the country from a

coup engineered by Untung and his fellow conspirators from the PKI. It was the opening shot against the PKI and all others suspected of having communist sympathies, resulting in mass executions all over Java and Bali. Suharto's coup accusations dominate the analyses of the event up until the present time, but the whole affair started with the coup accusations against the Council of Generals, which had no clear origin.

My main motive for the revisit was to gain insight in what the defendants, the *"losers"* in the confrontation with the Council of Generals, said about their activities and intentions in 1966. Only selective bits and pieces show up in literature, not the whole story. The main question was how to go about it. Finding ignored evidence without a preset mindset is like digging in the dark. I decided to check whether every bit of evidence I found which did not fit the standard story about the G30S and the coup, had been discussed and listed in the analyses of Harold Crouch (1978) and John Roosa (2006). It is a rude way of selection but it worked well, unearthing a lot of evidence with clear explanatory value. I only considered evidence as relevant when unknown events and key persons came together in a timeline and when specific forms of coherence turned out to have explanatory value about the emergence and functioning of the G30S.

Both Untung and Njono recalled their initial coup confession and replaced it with a reconstruction of their own role in the G30S. They recalled their confession because they had signed it under pressure of violence and intimidation. The explanations of the defendants showed among other things that during the preparations for the G30S they cooperated with justice authorities that were loyal to President Sukarno and towards the end with the president himself via their reportage to him on October 1st. Moreover they testified they had got their information about the impending coup by generals from military and intelligence instances. Hence, theirs is a different story than the comforting conspiracy theory put forward by the *"winners"*.

Both defendants did not find a willing ear in court. They were ridiculed, and not taken serious by Western analysts either. The enforced coup testimonies of Untung and Njono get full attention, whereas the recalls are still met with doubt and mistrust. The reigning adagio of the coup believers seems to be "Every criminal denies his crime." In the 1966 political climate, Untung was kicked and beaten during his daily tour to the court and people spit on him, because as the ringleader he was held responsible for the murder of his former field commander,

General Yani and members of his staff. The prosecution branded him and the second suspect Njono bin Sastroredjo criminals and “worthless men”, a stigma against which both men and their lawyers protested in vain. Such judgments had nothing to do with a judicial trial tasked with finding the truth while refraining from prejudice. Not all the evidence provided by the defendants, and read in court by the prosecution, was registered in the minutes. However we know it was presented because the court administration kept record of it. Generally taken, the secretaries did a good job, providing a good picture of what happened in court and what the defendants and witnesses had to say, and what the courts covered up. This conclusion lead me to closely scrutinize the minutes in order to establish with some certainty that the statements included in texts represent what was actually said. It not only enabled me to organize the evidence contained in the testimonies according to what the suspects and subjects said, it also allowed me to identify links between them.

In this paper I will give the suspects the benefit of the doubt by letting them speak for themselves. I will add material from contemporary sources that regard the 1965 prologue of the G30S and which during my research appeared significant in finding the ties between the G30S and earlier events as well as key persons involved in them. Although Untung stated that he worked alone, the minutes reveal contacts with the authorities and it appears he received security support from the president’s legacy. However mid-August 1965 the movement was hacked by PKI leader Aidit, one of the president’s most loyal followers, for the benefit of the Revolution and in order to liberate the revolution from the long standing process of militarization and Westernization of governance and military. The hacked operation became the G30S, a name which first popped up in Untung’s description of the task given by Aidit to his assistants Sjam and Pono which was to make sure the G30S would take place (Perkara Untung: 35). It indicates Aidit had already taken the initiative. The G30S became the crossroads of several intelligence lines monitoring and mentoring the team formed by Lieutenant Colonel Untung bin Sjamsuri. Four intelligence lines dominated the security check under which the G30S operated: the Subandrio line, the Aidit line, the Omar Dani line and the Kostrad line. The first three key persons involved did everything to prevent the risk of an army coup as part of the suspected large scale Western subversion. The Kostrad line spied on the other three and lured on the opportunity to disturb the counter strike and strike back. All these complications meant that “the military” was under constant guidance and

surveillance from the outside. It caused mistrust, tension and division of opinion among the team members, preventing them from acting as one team with a straight line of action and from forming a generally accepted central command. It was the main cause of the failure of the G30S. Suharto used the military for his own interest. He exploited General Nasution's 1 October escape and the communist involvement in the murder of the generals. He attacked the G30S with a coup accusation and subsequently wiped out the traces of his own involvement by eliminating witnesses. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the prologue of the G30S and why PKI leader Aidit suspected the army leadership was planning a coup and left the president uninformed about his plan of action.

The main primary sources I used for this revisit are the publications of the *Proceedings* of the Untung and Njono trials published by the Military Academy of Law -Akademi Hukum Militer (AHM)- in 1966, *The Antara Yearbook of 1965*, Volume I published in 1966; Ibnusubroto's *Fakta2 Persoalan Sekitar Gerakan 30 September*, Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat, Djakarta 1965, and the illuminating chapter about the G30S in Subandrio's *Memoirs*. In the appendix a copy of a *CIA Memorandum of December 1965* is presented supporting the data and evidence provided by several Indonesian and American military commanders, as well as by Subandrio himself and PKI member NJONO, about the key role of Minister Subandrio's Intelligence Service in the G30S

What the reader should know about Untung

According to Lieutenant Colonel Untung's CV as presented by the Army Information Service, he was born on 3 July 1926 in Desa Sruni/Kedungbayul, Kebumen Central Java. At the time of the G30S, he was 40 years old and a Buddhist. He finished primary school and the Retail Trade School (Klein-Handel School) in Solo, Central Java. During the Japanese occupation he entered the Heiho in Salatiga and made it to Soldier First Class. During the Independence War Untung operated on the side of the Laskar Army (village-based troops) that opposed the Hatta government's demobilization and reorganization (ReRa) plans in 1948. According to a still living former member of Tjakrabirawa Suhardi, who has known Untung from infancy, in 1948 Untung belonged to the Sudigdo battalion which according to Military Governor Gatot Subroto had been infiltrated by communists. Gatot ordered Lieutenant Colonel Slamet Rijadi to cleanse the unit, after which Untung fled and joined the Madiun event (J. Pour). This information suggests Untung was a communist infiltrator and picked the so-called

communist side of the Madiun coup. The official Army Information Service CV does not mention this move. It only says that Untung fled after the cleanse of his unit. However, during the Second Dutch Military Action in December 1948 Untung joined the republican forces and fought against the Dutch. His opposition against the ReRa and other Renville issues, did not seriously harm his career. He climbed the military ladder to become one of the most decorated Banteng Raider commanders in Indonesia. It appears Untung was not so much an intellectual but loved the daily practice of operational command. According to Suhardi, Untung's original name was Kusman, which he changed to Untung after the Madiun event. It might indicate that he was starting a new life and was happy to have escaped prosecution, like many of the original protesters who chose Sukarno's side after the start of the 2nd Dutch Police Action. Untung denied to have ever worked with communists or even befriending them in court (Perkara Untung: 37-38).

Banteng Raider was the nick name of three Special Forces units - the West Java Based 328, the Central Java based 454 and the East Java based 530 Para Battalion - all created by late Lieutenant General Ahmad Yani. Yani studied at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, USA, in 1955 (Wikipedia.id). In 1954 Untung took the Special Course SUS-A in Bandung. In 1958, he operated with Company II of the Banteng Raider II Battalion under Yani's command against units of the PRRI/Permesta separatist movement. In 1963, he participated in three Banteng Raider II companies in operations in the Irian theatre, again under Yani's command, and returned to Java that same year. As his subordinate, Untung's military career largely coincided with Yani's. Untung continued to move up in the military ranks and on January 1 1965 he was appointed Commander of Battalion with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He took his Banteng Raider II battalion from Central Java to Tjakrabirawa (Conboy, K: 131). The president himself had a role in this appointment. As Dale Scott commented, the new post included stiff scrutiny of his political past, which he effortlessly passed. It is clear that the 454th was definitely not a communist unit. Being General Yani's personal creation and due to his long standing close relation with America, the 454 was one of the main recipients of American military support (Scott 1985).

Untung's daily task was to serve and protect the president in the palace, as well as during press conferences, meetings, and ceremonies. As such, he practically functioned as his bodyguard. The armed Siliwangi unit Berlapis Baja, a part of the

Tjakrabirawa regiment, served as protection when the President was on the move. In view of the assaults on the president's life that had happened since 1959 and the growing social unrest about increasing inflation and food and cloth shortages, the safety net around the president had been tightened and upgraded, and Untung had a central role in it. During Untung's installation as Tjakrabirawa Battalion Commander, Sukarno highlighted Untung's special responsibility in this respect: "Do your duty without counting the consequences", which he did; he paid for it with his life (Perkara Untung: 238). During his trial, Untung explained he had worked alone during and after his search for information about the Council of Generals and had no contact with his regiment commander or any other commander (Perkara Untung: 36-37). This leaves open the possibility that he worked for an external agency or agencies. Air Force Major Sujono told the court that Untung had informed his team that the protection of the president and ministers during a visit to Halim on 1 October was a task of Tjakrabirawa (Perkara Untung: 93). As for the abduction of three of the ringleaders of the Council of Generals, namely Yani, S. Parman and Nasution, it was Untung's Tjakrabirawa Battalion I that brought the men in.

During the period between 4 August 1965, when alarm about the president's health and safety emerged, and 1 October 1965 when the action against the Council of Generals known as the military Thirtieth September Movement (G30S) started, Untung worked on the matter of the Council of Generals. During that time Untung formed a command team consisting of himself, Colonel Abdul Latief - commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade of the Jakarta Garrison, and Air Force Base Major Sujono, Commander of the PGT Strike Force of Halim airport. Two informants from the Garrison Intelligence Staff completed the team: Kamarusaman, alias Sjam, and S. Pono. Whereas the military was investigating the intentions and activities of the suspected generals as well as preparing a strike against them, the two communists had a different interest. They had an order from PKI leader Aidit to attend those meetings where the planning of the Gerakan 30 September would take place. The PKI would provide support for mass organizations. Support from other Nasakom denominations was being worked on under responsibility of Sjam and Major Sujono. On September 30th Sjam proposed calling the movement the Thirtieth September Movement (G30S) (Perkara Untung: 35, 38-9, 55). It is interesting that the name of the movement was invalidated in the operational order, which suggests PKI leader Aidit already knew that a G30S would take place mid-August 1965.

Untung was not happy with the extension but could not get rid of the two. They were sent by PKI leader Aidit and fell under his authority. In practice Aidit hacked Untung's effort to build a political movement. This fact might explain why Untung is seen to have no jurisdiction regarding the political side of his operation, even when he was appointed commander of the G30S by Latief and Sjam. But Sjam and Pono were also informers of the intelligence service of Colonel Latief 1st Infantry Brigade, which made Latief their intelligence boss. As such, Sjam and S. Pono had a double role in the operation. Although Latief and Sjam operated together, Untung gave no indication Sjam and Pono were under Latief's command. Latief and Sjam only took command of the arrest action in the last three days, when Untung accompanied the president on his public duties in Jakarta. Both team members changed the purpose of the arrests and turned it into a definitive removal of the top of the Council of Generals by killing them. Untung had been intent on surrendering the generals to the president for interrogation, but did or could not protest (Perkara Untung: 111-2). Sjam, and with Aidit in the background, made the decisions, indicating Aidit knew about the planned killings.

General Supardjo, an applauded general of the West Java based Siliwangi Division and a close friend of the president, was head of Untung's delegation to the president on 1 October. He was not a member of the command team since he had an operational command in Kalimantan. Administratively he belonged to the KOSTRAD command of General Suharto. That command managed the transport of troops between the regions and also had three Banteng Raider battalions at its disposal plus a cavalry and a few infantry units, among them Siliwangi units (Conboy: 132, 134). Summarizing, the permanent military members of the team represented the three cornerstones of the presidential security scene, whereas Supardjo represented Suharto and his West Java based Siliwangi Division, and was a trustee of the president. He was in charge of the delegation because he claimed to be a member of the Council of Generals and claimed to have knowledge and evidence of their coup plan. His antecedents had been checked and approved by Untung's mentor Minister of Foreign Affairs and Intelligence.

Untung was in charge of managing and arranging the troops and the territorial aspects of the action in Jakarta. His team member Colonel Latief managed the troops and territorial matters in Jakarta. Air Force Major Sujono managed the logistics of the operation from and to the base camp at Lubang Buaja (Crocodile Hole).

Pasopati had the task of arresting the generals belonging to the Council of

Generals. His unit consisted of one company taken from Untung's own Tjakrabirawa battalion, a platoon from the 1st Infantry Brigade of Colonel Latief, and units from the 454 and 530 battalions. Then there was the Pringgodani unit that according to its name was the place where the generals were to reflect on their sins. It had the task of managing and defending the base camp and receiving the abducted generals. According to its commander Air Force Major Gatot Soekresno, Colonel Latief's standpoint was to kill them, preferably not during the arrest but somewhere else, and leave no traces. In other words "no traces, no crime." And finally there was the Bimasakti unit named after the mighty God Bima, occupying the sectors and the vital objects in and around the palace area in Jakarta, and managing the broadcasts ordered by Untung on 1 October. When necessary, it also supported the Pasopati unit (Perkara Untung: 39, 72). The best documented and analyzed activities of the Bimasakti unit were the Untung ordered radio messages broadcast on 1 October via radio RRI Jakarta about the arrests and the foundation of the G30S and the plan for a Revolutionary Council.

Untung's first task as team leader was to find information about the suspected Council of Generals and report it to the proper authorities, i.e. the Ministries of Justice and Prosecution, and Minister Subandrio of Foreign Affairs and his BPI Intelligence Board. Unlike what he said in court, this indicates Untung did not operate alone. It is custom in security operations that in case of failure no reference is made to the agency that ordered the action. Untung did not report to the president directly since he feared that the president would stop him. Untung admitted he had no facts or proof of the existence of the Council of Generals, only hearsay (Perkara Untung: 36). In his last public interrogation he forwarded a witness who testified about hard copy evidence that had been given to Untung by four civilians. The man had been Untung's informer in General Nasution's office. The evidence was a tape recording of the founding meeting of the Council of Generals on 21 September. From Subandrio's Testimony it appears that Untung sent the providers of the evidence to Subandrio, who brought the tape to the president and listened to it with him. Consequently, the president invited army chief General Yani for a meeting on 1 October and Yani's intelligence assistant General S. Parman on 3 October. The meetings did not take place because both generals were murdered on 1 October. Subandrio had his doubts about the tape since it seemed odd to him that civilians leaked a highly classified piece of evidence to outsiders (Subandrio: 11).

The evidence problem was solved in September, when General Supardjo, a member of the West Java based Siliwangi Division, told Untung about his membership of the Council of Generals and his knowledge of, and documentation about, the coup plan. Untung in turn asked Supardjo to report his story to the president as soon as the latter was informed of the arrest action. Supardjo agreed and he met with the president on 1 October at Halim, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Heru Atmodjo, representative of Air Force Marshall Omar Dani. Dani appeared to be a close friend of Untung, to whom he complained about the dominant communist stock of the civilians trained by Air Force Major Sujono to defend Halim military airport. Shortly afterwards the training was taken from Sujono and transferred to Latief's Intelligence commander Captain Suradi. However Sujono contacted Njono bin Sastroredjo via Sukatno, head of the Pemuda Rakyat, to see to it that already trained local communist organizations would participate in guarding Jakarta center against assaults. Untung was not informed of this change, but Sjam was.

The reports to Subandrio could have resulted in the action being stopped but it did not. It is conceivable that the addressees did not take the bait because of the lack of solid evidence in Untung's reconnaissance. It caused Untung's effort to trigger early disciplinary measures against the generals to fail. He certainly was not in favor of killing the generals. He wanted a proper processing of the generals by the president himself. Killing the Generals was Colonel Latief's idea, who managed to see it through, together with team member Sjam, in Untung's absence on 29 and 30 September (Perkara Untung:72).

From Subandrio we know that Untung also contacted General Suharto, probably to get his cooperation for the requisition of troop support. Traces of that contact also appear in Untung's testimony when he talks about his visit to Semarang to arrange the support of his 454 Banteng Raiders battalion from Central Java and the 530 Banteng Raiders battalion from East Java for his action against the Council of Generals on 1 October. Both battalions belonged to the Para Brigade 3 that fell under Kostrad administration. The fact that 454 fell under Suharto's administration, indicates that Untung's Honorary Guard battalion in Tjakrabirawa, which in practice belonged to the 454 battalion, also fell under Suharto's administration. The trail to Suharto is supported by the story of witness 1st Lieutenant Ngadimo of the 530 Banteng Raiders battalion, that on 20 September 1965 and in the following days a series of radiograms arrived at the

office of the military governor of East Java with the order to prepare 530 for a visit to Jakarta for the celebration of the Armed Forces Day on 5 October. One of these radiograms included an explanation plus instructions. Untung admitted that he gave instructions to Major Sukirno, commander of 454, who forwarded them to the 530 Battalion and finally to Kostrad which reported back to the battalions belonging to Para Brigade 3 (Perkara Untung: 45, 127). The previously mentioned Tjakrabirawa member Suhardi stated in his testimony to J. Pour that Kostrad Command had been ordered by the army to prepare Brigade 3 for participation in the Armed Forces Day celebrations on 5 October 1965. In Latief's Plea, presented during the much later organized Latief trial, he also mentions a visit to General Suharto a few days before 1 October and on the evening before, a statement to which Suharto replied in an interview. But both testimonies remain vague as to the meetings' content and subject. According to Subandrio, Untung and Latief were informers and representatives of Suharto. We may presume that Untung's team was a crossroad of external intelligence contacts and agencies that covered Subandrio, Aidit and Suharto, with the president as the final beneficiary of the abduction of the generals and the G30S, and thus last in the report chain.

Based on the complaints forwarded by the Dutch educated lawyers of Untung and Njono, the following special features of the military penal courts judging the coup accusations against Untung and Njono are to be mentioned (Perkara Njono: 263). The prosecutors and courts founded their operation on the Dutch penal code and on the revolutionary law created for the occasion. The court martial administration of justice was not intended to contribute to Indonesian law. Other than prescribed by the Dutch penal code the trials were treated as incidents with no precedence value for similar trials, and to be completely forgotten after their closure. There was a right of pardon but no right of appeal. The PKI was treated as a criminal organization, a description that did not exist in the colonial penal law. It declared PKI member Njono a member of a criminal organization who shared his responsibility for his actions with the PKI. Ms. Sunito, Njono's lawyer called this an illegal and primitive way of prosecution that had no place in a proper court martial administration (Perkara Njono: 261, 263). However, the prosecution submitted that the trials were not proper court martial trials but followed a mixture of written and unwritten law, in particular revolutionary law created for the opportunity.

Untung was officially accused of (A1) leading and initiating an action to overthrow

the legitimate government on 1 October 1965 (1a) because he ordered the broadcast of a radio message via Radio Republik Indonesia Jakarta about his capture of the generals thereby saving the president, and (1b) signing a Decree No. 1 as Commander of the Thirtieth September Movement (G30S) together with ex Brigadier General Supardjo and ex Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Heru Atmodjo, and sending it to RRI Jakarta to be broadcast to the people. The decree spoke of overthrowing the official government through a seize power by the Revolutionary Council, and the preparation of a new government by organizing general elections. Since it did not mention the president, the decree was viewed as staging a coup. (2) Leading and organizing an armed revolt against the government, and (3) conspiring against the state to overthrow the official government during August and September 1965, which ended on 29 September 1965 (Perkara Untung: 3-17). The murders, the planning and the gathering of troops for the murders i.e. the mutiny part, were dealt with in part B, which part I will not discuss. The citation Decree No. 1 included in the indictment was actually false. Instead the decree stated that a cleansing operation had taken place against members of the Council of Generals which had planned a coup on Armed Forces Day, 5 October 1965 (Perkara Untung: 4). There was no reference at all to a coup d'état. Every measure mentioned in the decree, including the seize power of a Revolutionary Council, concerns the task of cleaning up the legacy of the Council of Generals in the cabinet and the regions. The accusation is only correct when the army generals involved in the Council of Generals are viewed as representing the state. However, that is not stated in the decree, nor in the indictment.

In court, Untung rejected the coup confession he made during the police interrogation that was at the basis of the indictment against him . He rejected the indictment as “not to the point, i.e. burdening his behavior with things he did not do and did not intend.” Untung’s court martial trial started on 12 February 1966 and ended on 7 March 1966 in the death sentence (Perkara Untung: 22, 31-32, 317). Untung admitted in court that his operation was indeed illegal, but that the purpose of the operation – safeguarding the president’s life – gave him the right to act as he did (Perkara Untung: 59). This statement presents the key concept of both the abduction operation and the G30S: the primacy of the Greater Purpose. It also explains why Untung and Sjam stuck to the same concept and kept the president uninformed, uninvolved and not-committed, and, after the reportage on 1 October, ignored his stop orders regarding Sjam’s G30S. It is the behavior of paladins refusing to burden their king with the dirty jobs that need to be done for

his safety. It is exactly this behavior that Suharto sold to the public as coup behavior.

Untung's death sentence included the offer of a request for pardon from the president. Untung asked time to reflect on the opportunity but in the end decided to reject it. His lawyer however still sent a request for pardon to the president, which was rejected by the head of the Special Military Penal Court, who confirmed the conclusions of the penal court. In his turn, Untung formulated, in the name of all his fellow defendants, a request to the president to appoint an investigation committee to research the G30S and its activities and find a political solution for it. That request was rejected by the Prosecutor General on 5 April 1966, because Untung had deliberately undertaken action violating the Pantjasila and was anti-Nasakom, and thus would remain a threat to the unity of the Indonesian people; the accused, as mid-level officer and despite his military oath, had committed activities that were counter revolutionary and thus would remain an element of violence, and had pushed for, managed and planned activities threatening the power of the legal state and the ideals of the Indonesian Socialism (Perkara Untung: 352, 354-6, 357, 358-9, 365). Hence, Untung was a danger to the state, the people and the revolution, and did not deserve any easing of his penalty. In both cases the requests had not reached the president but had been handled by the Jakarta court itself. These and most other facts mentioned in this paragraph are not mentioned in Crouch and Roosa.

What the reader should know about Njono

The second suspect on trial in 1966 was Njono bin Sastroredjo, accused of being the leader of the G30S and the presumed PKI-coup behind it. He was born on 28 August 1925 in Cilacap, on the south coast of Central Java. In 1965, he was a member of the Cooperative Parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong, DPR) for the PKI and member of the Provisional People's Congress (Majelis Permusjawaratan Rakyat Sementara, MPRS). He was also Great Leader of the National Front (Front Nasional) and member of the National Production Council, as well as permanent member of the CC PKI Politbiro, and First Secretary of the Regional Committee in Jakarta of the communist party PKI. Either way, he was a PKI ace. He was not a part of Untung's command team, did not even know Untung and worked alone. As I mentioned before, this part of his confession may have been intended to cover up his relations with the PKI party. Instead, at the request of Sukatno, Chair of the Pemuda Rakyat office of Jakarta,

he agreed to help Air Force Major Sujono by delivering civil auxiliary manpower to guard Halim military airport. On 1 October they were also employed to do guarding work for the G30S in Jakarta (Perkara Njono 1966: 16, 18). Njono's indictment did not refer to the participation of women's union Gerwani in the killings of the generals, as fed to the press by Suharto and his Kostrad staff. It appears that Njono's involvement in the G30S ran via the communist mass organizations which were autonomous.

The Prosecutor General of the penal trials against G30S leaders, General Suharto, accused Njono of (1) planning a coup with PKI chair Aidit and eight members of the CC PKI, including candidate member of the CC PKI Politbiro Peris Pardede, (2) organizing a military operation and forming a Revolutionary Council to replace the Dwikora cabinet, and (3) being tasked with forming an auxiliary force for the military operation of the G30S. The CC members accused of being involved in the G30S besides chair D.N. Aidit were M.H. Lukman, Njoto, Sudisman, Ir. Sakirman, Anwar Sanusi, Rewang, and Suwandi. Njono's trial took place from 14 February 1966 up to 21 February 1966. Njono's indictment also shows he was accused of the same acts of which Kamarusaman alias Sjam was accused at his trial in 1968, i.e. being the executive leader of the G30S and acting as the representative of PKI chair Aidit. Possibly the Sjam trial was made necessary when the initial statements made by Untung, Njono and Peris Pardede during their police interrogation were recalled and did not provide a solid watertight case against the PKI. Njono's death sentence refused him the right of pardon and was signed on 1 March 1966 (Perkara Njono: 19-24, 31, 261-263 and 336). Shortly after he was executed.

At the start of his trial, Njono decided to recall his initial confession about a PKI coup; he did that for two reasons. The first one was that he had surrendered to pressure and beatings during his initial interrogations. The second reason was that after reading the newspapers in prison, he concluded that the PKI had become the victim of anti-communist propaganda (Perkara Njono: 31, 59). His initial testimony said that in August 1965 he and some key members of the CC PKI Politbiro had decided to plan a coup and organize the G30S. He replaced this confession with a thorough reconstruction of the decision-making process in the CC PKI Politbiro that led to the Politbiro's final decision to abstain from supporting Untung's action, inform the president about the danger of Council of Generals and ask him to handle the affair as an internal military affair, and to do

it fast. The Biro would await the president's measures to prevent or fight the coup plan (*pentjegahan*), before deciding on further action. There was no reference to the action of "the military" in the letter. The letter was written and signed on 28 August 1965 and dispatched to the president that same day. On 1 October 1965 the Politbiro had still not received an answer and it was fed up (Perkara Njono: 37, 50, 65, 73-74). John Roosa rejected Njono's reconstruction as nonsense and not worth reading. He gave no reason for his rejection, but one explanation might be that members of the CC PKI Politbiro were also members of the Central Committee of the party, and many of the survivors, if not all of them, had no idea about the G30S, let alone the Politbiro meetings. Hence Njono's reconstruction of the Politbiro discussions about support of the "military" looks suspicious and thus should be ignored.

However, I decided to summarize Njono's testimony. First of all the court interrogated him repeatedly in two marathon meetings about the decision making process in order to catch him on mistakes. But he remained upright and made no mistakes. Second, as will become clear, his testimony explains a lot about the prologue of the G30S that otherwise would be unexplainable. Third, there is no contradiction between Njono's reconstruction and the fact that Central Committee members did not know about the Politbiro meetings in August 1965. It all depends on the setup of the meetings and the status of the members. If Aidit decided to keep the group small, the meetings confidential and only invited experts from outside the PKI administration, the ignorance of many Politbiro members is understandable. Moreover, it might have been Njono's aim not to name persons, status or numbers of the participants but only use the administrative title under which the meetings took place. One of the Central Committee members and candidate member of the CC PKI Politbiro, Peris Pardede, originally gave a full coup confession and was made crown witness for the prosecution in Njono's trial. However during his witness statement, he recalled his initial confession and publicly confirmed Njono's testimony. Pardede's recall is absent from the analyses of Crouch and Roosa. From Crouch's analysis it appears that CC PKI member Sudisman also did not know of Pardede's recall or kept quiet about it, since he endorsed Pardede's initial confession about the PKI "decision" to support a pre-emptive strike by the "progressive military" during his trial (Crouch 1978: 104, 111). Apparently, Sudisman only knew about the first CC PKI meeting, as will become clear from my paragraph about the three meetings that took place.

Njono's use of the term "*pentjegahan*" in the letter from the Politbiro to the president to qualify the expected response is fascinating. It implied that in case of the expected reply from the president, any action by the military would be cancelled. Yet from Untung's minutes it appears that Sjam used the month of September to prepare for exactly what the letter to the president was meant to prevent – active support for a pre-emptive military strike against the Council of Generals. Since Sjam was apparently in constant contact with Aidit about the preparations and their implementation, it appears that Aidit was betting on two horses. Aidit was at Halim on Action Day 1 October when Untung's team conferred there about the course of the G30S, the president's orders, and the broadcast of the final text of Decree No. 1, and must have had contact with Sjam about these subjects. The Decree instructed the regional contacts to create regional branches of the Revolutionary Council. This was thought to be essential in preventing the army from implementing April 1965's Tri Ubaja Sakti doctrine. I will come back to this issue in later paragraphs.

In Untung's testimony about the Decree, and in that of witness Ngadimo, the Indonesian word *pembersihan* (clean up) dominates, referring to the removal of sitting governors and commanders and replacing them with trusted and most likely Nasakom oriented ones, or for that matter by communist ones. Hence, with the Politbiro letter to the president, Aidit did indeed bet on two horses – namely, the president either stopping Untung's action, and in case that failed, executing the plans of the military. It appeared to be a sloppy way of fooling around with tactics and it was easily crushed by Suharto. Aidit was not a combat ready man and was perhaps overwhelmed under Sjam's pressure to go ahead and broadcast the decree text in order to mobilize supporters of the G30S. Suharto used the decree to suggest that the term "*pembersihan*" translated to killing opponents in the regions, similar to the Madiun coup story that was told about what happened in Madiun and other regions in 1948.

Crouch appears to be aware of the fact that Njono recalled his initial testimony and forwarded a reconstruction of the final decision by the Politbiro to abstain from supporting Untung's action. However Crouch also refers to the testimony of Peris Pardede which confirmed Aidit's preference for supporting the "progressive officers", indicating he did not read Pardede's recall. Njono's recall also requires special attention because it provides information about the sources from which Aidit and Njono derived their information about the Council of Generals and

Untung's action. Their sources were Brigadier General Sutarto, head of Subandrio's BPI Intelligence Bureau and Minister of Prosecution General, as well as Minister of Justice Astrawinata. The information in this paragraph is absent from the analysis by Roosa who rejected Njono's scenario and minutes as total nonsense and advised against reading them. Moreover, this information was also not mentioned by Crouch, since he did not list Aidit and Njono's sources.

How and why Njono entered the G30S

According to Njono, the actual cause of his involvement in the G30S was a request from Untung's team member Air Force Major Sujono in early September 1965. Sujono requested the sending of more members of communist mass organizations to Lubang Buaja (Crocodile Hole). Sujono trained civilians for guarding tasks at Halim airport at Lubang Buaja, located outside Halim airport. The reason for these trainings was President Sukarno's preparation for an all-out assault on the recently installed federal state of Malaysia which bordered Indonesia's north coast. PKI leader Aidit viewed Malaysia as a British "puppet" state and a steady threat of British subversion. Many troops had been evacuated to Sumatra and Kalimantan, among them elite troops. As a consequence, Java had a shortage of strong combat ready troops, and Halim airport lacked guarding units. Starting July 5th 1965, Sujono had developed a training program for civilian guards, mostly from communist stock. He had been training members of the Pemuda Rakyat, Gerwani, BTI and Sobsi, but also from other non-communist mass organizations, and needed new trainees. Gerwani trainees are not mentioned anywhere (Perkara Njono: 82, 92). Sujono had always approached Sukatno directly before September. Njono admitted that before September 1965 he knew about Sujono's trainings at Lubang Buaja, because Sukatno informed him about the trainees there. The question why Sukatno suddenly asked Njono's help in supplying Sujono with more communist trainees was not discussed in court, and Njono did not touch upon the matter either. He only told the court that he had asked Sukatno if Sujono belonged to the group of military that was preparing an action against the Council of Generals. Because Sukatno's answer was affirmative, Njono agreed (Njono: 80). This information indicates Sukatno's visit concerned the use of communist trainees for the G30S action. Njono was not in contact with the military before, and did not know anyone personally. He received information about them and the Council of Generals from the head of Subandrio's BPI staff, Brigade General Sutarto, who also held the position of Minister Prosecutor General.

The witness statement made by Achmad Muhammad bin Jacob, who on 2 September 1965 was ordered by Muladi head of Njono's Sector Organization to join the training of voluntaries at Lubang Buaja, is interesting. On 29 September the sector commanders were called together to be informed about the coup to be launched by the Council of Generals on 5 October, which would include the murder of President Sukarno. The president had to be rescued from this danger. To that aim, the Lubang Buaja trainees were to gather early in the morning of 1 October. Military guides would be present and weapons would be forwarded by the Air Force (Perkara Njono: 158-160). Apparently the trainees were gathered under a guise and could not escape once they were charged with the rescue task.

Njono decided to join hands with "the military" based on Sukatno's request to take care of the civil trainees delivered by Major Sujono. He belonged to the group in the Politbiro that supported Aidit's idea of helping Untung's action, and disagreed with the final decision of cutting off relations with "the military" and asking the president to handle the danger of the Council of Generals himself and as an intra-military affair. He set up a network of control posts in Jakarta to make sure the guardians would not be used for the wrong things. Sudisman, member of the CC PKI, had kindly warned Njono to be careful with his control posts but he had not forbidden it (Perkara Njono: 65).

The context and prologue of the G30S

There are several lines of development leading up to the events surrounding the G30S. The most important lines regard the economic, political and military problems that haunted Indonesia at the time, plus the handling of those problems by key people in president Sukarno's entourage in order to ensure his legacy. The G30S became the spearhead of these actions as well as the crossroads of intelligence services monitoring, consulting and supporting the team that built the G30S movement. It resulted in a command team that was split up in factions and suffered from mutual mistrust, obstruction and contradictory greater interests.

In 1965, the Sukarno government faced enormous economic, political and military problems. The early 1965 Surabaya mutiny managed by the Movement of Progressive Revolutionary Officers had shown personnel of the Surabaya navy base in action. After a long march to Jakarta and fruitless discussions with the president about the problems they had with navy commander in chief Admiral Martadinata, they planned to kidnap said commander and bring him to the

president for interrogation. However, this plan failed to materialize. Although some of the leaders had communist sympathies, most of the participants were more worried about the state of the fleet since it was neglected by Martadinata (Crouch 1978: 85; Ichdisar Tahunan 1965 I: 29). The kidnap plan may have been a model for Untung's action and it must have been discussed in Untung's team, but the court did not ask Untung about it. Synchronous to Untung's preparations for action, plans for a mutiny arose in the Brawidjaja Division in East Java. On 1 October an action similar to the one in Jakarta and bearing the same name took place in Central Java. The leader of the Java movement, Colonel Saherman, had recently returned from training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas USA, and in Okinawa, Japan, meaning he had no problems passing American and Japanese scrutiny (Crouch: 85; Dale Scott 1985). When asked if Untung had a hand in the Central Java based action, Colonel Saherman denied it (Perkara Untung: 51).

The socio-economic context of the prologue was one of raging inflation and stagnating urban salaries, worsened by cloth and food shortages and armed civilian and military rampage. On 25 August 1965 August President Sukarno published his Decision No. 20 which put imprisonment as well as the death penalty on military operating in groups or alone captured in the act of armed rampaging (Ichdisar Tahunan 1965 I: 140). However, the number of critics of Sukarno's economic policies grew by the day. The indictment against Untung as well as the evidence he presented during his second meeting show that initially economic problems were the main discussion point between Untung and his team members. Untung and Sujono testified that the whole team, including the two communist members Sjam and Pono, was critical of the economic situation and the lack of empathy for the suffering of the soldiers from the army administrators in Jakarta. When Untung was asked to explain the arguments, he had to be interrupted because the exchange of arguments with the court got out of hand. Air Force Major Sujono testified that instances of armed conflicts between and within the armed forces, in particular army and air force, had been discussed as well. However, soon after starting these meetings the team became fully involved in the security issue at stake, namely how to protect the president from a coup planned by the Council of Generals, and how to make enough reliable troops available (Perkara Untung: 11, 50, 106).

A second point of concern for the team was the fear of American and British subversion and attacks on the president's life. The social unrest and rumors about

the president's ill health that rose early in August 1965 might induce these countries to prepare a strike and urge Indonesian army friends to take their chance and remove the president from his office. The fear among the president's trustees of such a coup could be seen in the setup of an anti-subversion campaign resulting in an Anti-Subversion Command Center in March 1965, and two Subversion Alarms. One alarm had been raised by President Sukarno at the end of May 1965. In his annual address to regional commanders he called on them to support the hunt on Western subversion in their jurisdiction. A second one was raised by Minister Subandrio early in June 1965. He warned the public and the parties to be aware of Western subversion events in the coming months (Ichtisar Tahunan 1965 Volume 1: 81, 86-7).

The subversion alarms revived the traumatic experiences of 1957 when the start of the first great reform of governance (Law No. 1 1957) had caused the rebellion of military commanders on Sumatra and Sulawesi against this law which benefited the overpopulated island Java as well as the PKI. The American CIA had supported the rebels with money and arms and military actions. Such trauma should not happen again and disturb the implementation of the basic decentralization law No. 18 planned for 1965. General Yani promised Sukarno he would endorse his call on the regional commanders for support.

A suspicious document raised the fear of Western subversion even further. It was a "copy" of a letter that the former British Ambassador in Jakarta had written to his Foreign Office about Western plans for Subversion in Indonesia. One of the plans even mentioned subversion supported by Indonesian army circles. Subandrio made sure the president read the letter, who reacted furiously and used it to stir up the regional commanders and make them aware of the subversion risk during his address.

Yet another process put the relations between the president and army leadership under stress. The unification and centralization of the polity and military and the democratic system was announced in the Bogor Declaration of December 1964. That document had been signed by ten trusted Nasakom parties and regarded the mobilization of the regions for executing government tasks, called decentralization.

Aidit forwarded two options: Either put Nasakom commanders and officers in command, or add Nasakom advisors and consultants to army commands. According to Aidit, this would unite the armed forces and the people as had once

been the case during the Independence War. However, General Yani informed the president that these ideas would not work because it burdened the appointees with the problem of creating a balanced Nasakom team, which was not in the interest of bringing together a good command team. The president accepted this standpoint and said so during the yearly briefing of the regional commanders on 27 and 28 April (Crouch 1978: 88-9). Deep in Yani's heart his real objection was that Aidit's plan would re-create the situation of the first two years of the revolution, when army units had direct contact with political parties and vice versa. This had created the unrest which reached a climax in the Madiun seize power.

Army leadership also objected PKI dreams which included the formation of a true People's Army, in order to form a Fifth Force under direct presidential command. Yani rejected these notions because he had his own ideas about returning to the principles of guerrilla warfare as developed during the Independence War. In the end, Yani reduced Nasakom to a concept to be included in the military's academic curriculum and military practice, as one of the principles that should inspire all branches of the armed forces. However, the Antara clippings about 1965 clearly show that from the beginning of 1965 the so-called Nasakomization of the government bureaucracy and of the political parties and movements was well underway. The Nasakom idea could also be seen in the G30S with the military gathering troops for the abduction of the suspected Council of Generals; and the two communist team members ordered by Aidit to advise and consult the military in organizing Nasakom mass support and push the setup of the G30S and the Revolutionary Council. Untung's minutes show that the process did not work and instead split the team in factions.

Yani's wish for an army plan in reply to the planned centralization of state and in order to get a grip on rising economic and military problems and challenges, was fulfilled in the Tri Ubaja Sakti (Three Holy Promises) doctrine of April 1965. According to Subandrio, this doctrine had been conceived by General Suharto and his Kostrad Command. It was subsequently accorded by the president who probably saw it as a first step to unite army and people. The comment forwarded by the Prosecutor of Njono's trial at the end of the trial is interesting. He stated that the root of the rumor about the Council of Generals was PKI leader Aidit's comment about the doctrine being the setup for a coup. The prosecutor explained what the Tri Ubaya Sakti Doctrine entailed. He explained to the audience that the

doctrine had already been accepted by President Sukarno, but called it the source of leftist suspicion against the Council of Generals. The doctrine did not make a political party out of the army as one might suspect. Instead it became a functional group that would participate on all levels of governance. According to the prosecutor the comment about the doctrine transforming the army into a political group – the Council of Generals – planning a coup, originated in the PKI. And, the prosecutor continued, what disastrous results that condemnation had, implicitly referring to the G30S and the murder of the generals (Perkara Njono: 239).

PKI leader Aidit had condemned the doctrine as the setup for a coup, because he saw the real intention behind it. The army doctrine did exactly what Aidit wanted from the revolutionary army, namely bring army and people together, and stimulate cooperation between the two. The doctrine thus robbed the PKI from its own plans for unity. Moreover, the doctrine positioned a fourth doctrine besides the three ideological Nasakom denominations, by creating a Mil-Nasakom pyramid, in which the army was dominant. Instead of obediently walking at the president's side, the army started biting the other dog, the PKI; and the PKI snapped back. According to the prosecutor, shortly after the seminar that discussed the doctrine, the first rumors about the Council of Generals started circulating. This coincidence is interesting since it shows Aidit's understanding that directly attacking the doctrine by mass action would be counterproductive, since the president had already accorded the doctrine. Instead, the Council of Generals became an anonymous enemy accused of high treason. When it would lead to actions resulting in the removal of the generals from office and their replacement by generals that were loyal to the president, the president could easily drop the doctrine.

The final answer of PKI leader Aidit to the Tri Ubaja Sakti doctrine would be the G30S and proclamation of Decree No. 1. Apparently the fruitless struggle of President Sukarno to get Nasakom accepted by the army leadership had convinced Aidit that Nasakomization of the army would be a long term project, that is to say, beyond the president's expiration date. Hence, in early August 1965 Aidit overacted the danger of the president's sickness and called in a Chinese doctor who confirmed Sukarno's weak health. Apparently Aidit wanted to put pressure on key members in the Sukarno legacy to take immediate measures against the Council of Generals.

Judged by its content, the decree broadcast on 1 October 1965 wanted to block

the implementation of the army doctrine by stopping the militarization of national and regional governance and replacing the governors and commanders by revolutionary minded people. The revolutionary council, key battle device of the decree, would temporarily claim the position of the not yet existing constitutional People's Congress, not that of the cabinet as the indictment claimed. The decree prospected general elections and the formation of a constitutional and true People's Congress that would support restoration of the 1945 Constitution and its basic principle of People's Sovereignty. This was the only way army and people could grow together under political Nasakom control and representative presidential rule. One must conclude that the decree covered a well devised operation to restore the Indonesian revolution and the 1945 constitution.

Untung obstructed the G30S from the beginning by rejecting the support of communist consultants and communist mass organizations. It split the team in two sections that operated parallel to each other and only sparingly shared information. Untung informed Subandrio and Air Force Marshall Omar Dani about the problems with Sjam and the communist mass organizations, Sjam reported Untung's obstruction to PKI leader Aidit who informed the CC PKI Politbiro that the military were not cooperative regarding civil support, and Untung and Latief reported to General Suharto who supported Untung's abduction plan.

If we put the findings of this paragraph together, the prologue to the G30S showed three lines. First there is the line of the army TUS doctrine. Aidit's subsequent condemnation of the doctrine as setup for a coup and the launch of rumors about the Council of Generals planning a coup. The second line connects the subversion alarms I mentioned earlier to the Gilchrist document which spread suspicion about the army friends of the Western powers, and to the president's efforts to create a people's army or a Fifth Force of armed civilians. The third line links the security connections of Untung and his team to Subandrio and the Ministers of Justice and General Prosecution mentioned earlier, and the security connections of the PKI and Njono to Subandrio and his BPI staff as well as to the parties of the Bogor Declaration Group. One may conclude that the G30S had a strong institutional and political embedding, which prevented the PKI-Army confrontation Aidit was after from becoming prematurely confrontational. Apparently Aidit did not want a repeat of Madiun 1948. He needed a safe and solid military and political shelter against army attacks.

Part Two: [*Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ The Thirtieth*](#)

*September Movement As Seen By The Perpetrators. Between Registered Facts
And Authoritative Opinions – Part Two*