

# Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ Preface



The articles contain the edited versions of the presentations discussed during the Wertheim Seminar, held on June 4, 2008 in the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam. The subject was Blind Spots and Preoccupation in the research on Post War Indonesian Political Crises. The seminar was part of the 3-day Wertheim Centennial. It was hosted by the International Institute of Social History (IISH), the ASIA Platform of the University of Amsterdam and the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) and organized by a team from the Wertheim Foundation, i.e. Ibrahim Isa - secretary, Farida Ishaya - member, Jaap Erkelens - member, and Coen Holtzappel - chairman and convener of the Wertheim seminar. The speakers, guests and audience honored the legacy of Professor Doctor Wim Wertheim with this event, the distinguished academic who after World War II founded the Amsterdam school of the historical sociological analysis of modern Asian history and political development. Wertheim also played an important role in the Dutch and international resistance against the murderous war on Indonesian communism, which President Suharto started after the 1 October 1965 Affair, and his destruction of Indonesia's Sukarno legacy. The seminar was opened by Emil Schwidder, research staff member of the IISH, with a special task on the China collection. He reminded the audience of the close professional relationship that Professor Wertheim and IISH maintained during his life, and the fact that Wertheim's children donated their father's correspondence, publications and other documents and tapes to the institute. The IISH was founded in 1935 and has become one of the leading institutes in the world to rescue, conserve and register important archives of socialist social movements. Before the Second World War, archives were rescued from Austria, Germany and Spain, including papers by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. War archives from Eastern Europe, Turkey, the Middle East and Asia followed. The collection of Wertheim's personal and official correspondence, publications, personal and press photographs is now

part of the archives.

Coen Holtzappel, convener of the seminar and chairman of the Wertheim Foundation, thanked Emil Schwidder for his kind opening words and welcomed the speakers, the audience, and the special guests. He called to attention the subject of the seminar, i.e. the disturbing role of political and social ignorance, taboos, neglect and denial in the study of historical events and phenomena. They should not be mistaken for “white spots” in our knowledge of the world; i.e. not yet discovered domains of research and phenomena. The real focus is on subjects and domains of knowledge that governments and political elite groups close for research, for example to hide specific aspects of their political behavior, such as crimes, irresponsible wars, blunders, and crimes against humanity. The speakers of the seminar would discuss examples of such disturbances they encountered during their studies of major political crises in and between the Republic Indonesia and the Netherlands during the first two decades of Indonesia’s existence. For many Indonesians, the Netherlands is still the former colonizer and occupier. For many Dutch people Indonesia is the former Netherlands East Indies. They call Indonesian food “Indies food.” According to Wertheim, such ‘blinkers’ have a history. In authoritarian states they are the products of carefully maintained systems of political myth formation, created by elites. To cite the closing statement of Ben White’s chapter in this book, which stems from Wertheim’s *Elite and Mass*, “The blind and the ignorant, in general, are not busy making themselves or others blind and ignorant. What Wertheim drew our attention to, in contrast, was a process by which elites, and scholars, *choose* to describe societies and history in ways which made both themselves and others blind to social reality.” In other words, the sources of blindness and ignorance that we should pay attention to, are the elite groups and scholars that use their power and influence to make people look at the things they want them to see and refrain them from looking at things they want them to ignore or deny.

Although I am convinced that such tyrants also exist in people’s personal life, bringing others to crime and suicide, in social and political history we are primarily interested in the political and public social level at which political tyranny occurs. The level where political and religious leaders program people to follow their prejudice and abstain them from using their innate human capacities to study the unknown. In this respect the chapters presented in this book reflect an effort to tackle the problem of how to approach the prejudices in the Dutch-

Indonesian discourse about the history of the first decades of Independence War and subsequent decolonization. Instead of the dislikes that burden Dutch and Indonesian views of each other, we should work on a value free and neutral historiography of the shared process of separating Indonesian and Dutch households and interests, and the development of their own ways of continuance. Central in this effort should be the urgent advice to historians, social and political academics to base restudies of past crises and events on the primary sources and eye witness reports. It is the only way to stay as close to the past as possible.

The subjects covered by the seminar are as follows:

[1] The ignorance in Dutch and Indonesian literature regarding the role of the Republican Pemuda units as protectors of Indo-Europeans after the Japanese capitulation. The findings of Mary van Delden appear to challenge conceptions that still exist on both the Indonesian and the Dutch side,

[2] Coen Holtzappel calls attention to General Nasution's analysis of the roots of the Madiun Affair of 1948 as exposed in Part 8 of his 10 volume *Publication on the Indonesian Independence War*. Instead of delivering a tale about how he crushed the communist Madiun coup, Nasution went back to his notes, and the available Indonesian and Dutch sources. He produced a study of the registered and unregistered events that caused the Indonesian military Madiun uprising of 1948 and the communist support of it.

[3] Pieter Drooglever emphasizes the ignorance regarding the roots and meaning of Papua nationalism during and after the conflict about the international status of Netherlands New Guinea between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

[4] Holtzappel uses the minutes of the first two martial law trials against two leaders of the Thirtieth September Movement of 1965 to show that Western and Indonesian analysts ignore the conflict that ignited the movement. Their focus is too much on the view of "winner" General Suharto and ignores the view of the "losers" which reveals a different story.

[5] Saskia Wieringa turns our attention to the ignorance and denial after the Reformasi of 1999 of the use of sexual slander against the communist women's organization Gerwani by General Suharto. Sexual slander was used to stigmatize communism, and communist women in particular; and to legitimize genocide in order to destroy President Sukarno's political and social legacy. Apparently, Reformasi has not created the clean break with the Suharto past many had hoped for in 1999. There still is no room for reconciliation and truth finding, unlike other countries with a communist past and a dirty war against it.

[6] Ben White points to the conservative roots of a renowned American anthropologist's unwillingness to analyze the massacre, which fitted existing standards of scientific knowledge and morality. Referring to outsiders in order to explain the massacre as having cultural roots shows elitist escapism. It asks the question but leaves the answer to the anonymous and politically disabled victims and the perpetrators.

Four special guests participated in the seminar. Dr. Ruth McVey, pioneer of international 1965-studies, chaired the afternoon panels, and Mr. Martin Sanders, board member of the Bilateral Dutch-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, chaired the morning sessions. We also welcomed Jan Breman, one of Wertheim's best-known pupils and intellectually closest to the model of historical sociology as established by Wertheim during his academic career in Amsterdam. Last but not least, we welcomed Benny Setiono, winner of the Wertheim Award 2008 for his interesting evaluation of the long-term history of turmoil experienced by the Chinese communities in the Indonesian archipelago during their stay in that area.

We picked Preoccupation and Blind Spots as a theme for the seminar, better known under the label Ignorance when it emerged in the early 1970s. Although in daily English parlance Ignorant means "behind the times", "rude" and "improper behavior", the methodological Ignorance movement refers to the fact that prejudices and lack of knowledge, as well as lack of the proper concepts and instruments of observation, can blind researchers to features and properties of their subject.

After the 1970s, the Ignorance concept developed into a constant component in the detection of observation errors and mistaken arguments in psychology and social science. At the end of his academic career, Wertheim also dived into the Ignorance hype. He pointed to the fact that Ignorance as a subject of methodological research had a predecessor in the Sociology of Knowledge. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Lukacs and Karl Mannheim were its founders and main protagonists, and focused on structural societal causes of ignorance, like Ideology, the religious concept of the Chosen People and Class. They studied the societal forms of false consciousness that hamper the development of true knowledge about social phenomena and their causes, in particular the bias caused by the social inequality between researcher and informant. Moreover, the founders identified groups in society like the ruling and middle class, which would structurally be unable to understand what people in lower and/or higher echelons

of society feel, see and think. The recent experiences with Dutch movements like the Party for Freedom, and Proud of the Netherlands, the following of which belongs to the new emerging middle class, expose these features as well. With the exception of some scholars of the Mannheim School who developed techniques for the interviewing and observation of German war criminals, and Post Structuralism, the founders were generally not involved in developing the technical side of observation and concept formation.

In his article, *The State and the Dialectics of Emancipation*, Wertheim took Emancipation as the opposite and only sensible alternative to social inequality and the related ignorance phenomenon. He defined emancipation as follows: “any form of collective struggle of groups that feel themselves to be treated as ‘underdogs’, fighting against the privileges of the ‘upper dogs’”. In this sense, emancipation includes a whole range of social groups struggling for recognition as being at least equal to those who thus far exercised political, economic or social power over them. One may think of emancipation of laborers, peasants, middle class, colored nations, racial or ethnic minorities, women, youth and many other categories (Wertheim 1992: 257-281). In *Mass and Elite*, Wertheim devoted two chapters to the Ignorance theme, in which he related Ignorance to the conservative political restoration movement that developed in Europe immediately after the bloody French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century this reactionary elitism developed into a structural source of people’s ignorance and deception, which fiercely condemned and fought any deviation from the way to restoration of class, status and elitism. Typical for that elitism is that it divides society in worthwhile and worthless subjects and events, in wise and dumb, and strong and weak people, in born leaders and born losers. It blocks any view of the people or what the elite judges to be not worthwhile knowing. It also blocks any efforts of people fighting for emancipation, i.e. to liberate people from social inequality and physical, social and intellectual oppression. It is interesting to note that at the end of his life Wertheim positioned either deliberately or unwittingly the elite-mass distinction as basic of all forms of Social Inequality. Indeed, reading Wertheim’s book about Elite and Mass leads to the conclusion that elitism is present in communism, socialism, fascism, Nazism, Stalinism, racism, ethnicity, ideology and religion, i.e. in any social movement, transcendental or inner worldly in nature, that claims to hold the eternal truth about the Chosen People.

Wertheim's last Masters' Course in the academic year 1972/1973 was devoted to the theme of Ignorance and contained a serious warning against the at that time emerging form of structural ignorance - Neo Liberalism. This movement dismissed the empirical value of Marxism, Structuralism and Historical Sociology as leftist constructions and intellectual fancies, and threatened to refer established empirical knowledge about structures and institutions to the garbage can. However, most of Wertheim's examples regard colonial capitalism in the Netherlands Indies that served the rich in the colony and at home, and forgot to properly reward the serving indigenous part of colonial society. The colonial government's cover up of Rhemrev's 1904 report about the bad labor relations in East Sumatra's plantations is one example of many instances of colonial and Dutch neglect of bad labor relations in Indonesia's plantation areas. In 1992 Jan Breman published a long-term study on these relations in his book "Koelies, planters en koloniale politiek: Het arbeidsregiem op de grootlandbouwondernemingen van Sumatra's Oostkust in het begin van twintigste eeuw (Coolies, Planters and Colonial Politics: The labour regime in the plantations of East Sumatra at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)." New in this field of interest is Breman's study *Kolonial Profijt van Onvrije Arbeid. Het Preanger stelsel van gedwongen koffieteelt op Java, 1720-1870*. Amsterdam University Press 2010. [Colonial Profit from unfree labour. The Preanger scheme of enforced coffee culture on Java, 1720-1870].

At the proposal of the late Frans Husken we chose the concept of Ignorance as discussed by Wertheim in his *Elite and Mass* and his last Master Class of the 1973/1974, and looked for colleagues that could provide new Ignorance material. That material is contained in these articles, which also aim to show that research of primary sources, contemporary to the revisited events and crises and preferably produced by them, is a basic requirement in revisiting the past.

The discussions during the seminar showed that these subjects and issues still draw attention. About 50 people participated in the lively discussions between speakers and attendees about the new data, insights and interpretations presented. The discussions whet the appetite for more news about these subjects.

### *The discussions*

As might be expected from a seminar about the effort to search for material and insights that until now remained outside the attention of mainstream analyses

about Indonesia's early postwar political and social history, most discussions served to link the audience to the subjects by informative questions and using related issues to get started on the subjects. Mary van Delden was asked to what extent her study differed from existing camp studies, or complemented them. She explained that the archive material in her study had never been used by other authors, regarding camps that had never been studied before. Pieter Droogleever was questioned about the facts he revealed and the extent to which the Dutch effort to prepare the Papuans of Netherlands New Guinea for independence was immoral in light of the Indonesian Irian war theater. He answered that in his exposition he did not touch upon moral issues. His endeavor was to demonstrate that Papuan nationalism was a direly underestimated force, not only by the Indonesian administration, but by most foreign participants in the dispute as well. There was also discussion about the question to what extent the presentation of Nasution's view ignored the political dimension of the Madiun Affair, i.e. the ideological confrontation it was part of, and the subordination of the military problems to the political struggle that the Indonesian government fought in and outside Indonesia. Coen Holtzappel repeated that General Nasution wrote about the period in which he was chief of staff of Supreme Commander General Sudirman and his efforts to counter the urge the Dutch put on the Indonesian government to demobilize its troops. Nasution focused on the technical military problems he had to solve in contact with the field; on the military preparations for an uprising to force the government into an all-out assault on the Dutch; and on the meetings of the Indonesian parliamentary committee. His story showed how the so-called communist coup attempt exploited from the outside, and for its own interests, violent inter service problems. Of course these were political problems, but the military, and in particular the local militias, viewed them as existential problems. They pragmatically sought support from those sides that promised to serve their interests best. For many of them, ideology was for primarily a support device, not a class station yet. Ruth McVey commented that in the given situation of a young country fighting for its life, the standard differentiations between political and military affairs as we know them in our Western world are irrelevant.

The afternoon discussions did not focus directly on the subjects presented but instead focused on the 1965 massacres and the number of victims and their suffering, the role of the CIA in the massacres, and the option of reconciliation and illumination by national discussions and research. Ruth McVey opened the panel discussion asking if there were questions from academics or activists - for

example, why academics tend to be silent about the massacre whereas the activists are not very effective. An Indonesian man stood up and asked if Ben White could say something about CIA activities during his stay. White answered that he is not an expert on Indonesian communism, the Indonesian killings and Indonesian politics since he is happier counting chickens and coconuts and things like that, and that is what his research is about. He was talking as a non-expert who wanted to see what the experts had to say about the massacre. As to the CIA involvement, he did not know. He knew that someone from the US Embassy who operated on his own account, had handed over a list with names of communists to the Army. No one told him to do that. But it was also known that the embassy gave fifty thousand US dollars to carry out the anti-PKI campaign in Central and East Java and in Bali. This was revealed by a telegram sent to Washington and these telegrams recently became publicly accessible, albeit with some names deleted. Ruth McVey replied that she knew that the CIA's role in events always excites people. She also knew that before 1 October 1965 some generals had contacts with the CIA about money and sources of money, just to ensure themselves of the backing of some Western powers in the future. Suharto had contacts with the CIA, the British and the Japanese. In the period after the coup, it was important to get the Americans on your side. Nasution, who survived the coup, was the highest in rank in the armed forces and officially the man to deal with. Both Nasution and Suharto sent emissaries to the US Embassy saying "I am the man to deal with." The embassy very quickly decided that they were dealing with Suharto. Therefore, Nasution was cut out.

Ruth McVey continued that if we are looking at foreign relations, almost everyone had a finger in the pie. However, that does not necessarily mean that the origins of the massacres rested outside Indonesia. Saskia Wieringa continued that she fully agreed with Ruth McVey. It is very clear that it was very much an Indonesian coup. The CIA intervened afterwards and gave their support to those who surrendered people to the killers and so on. However, it was easy to find them. The PKI operated in the open; they had their signs in the front yard of their offices. Holtzappel remarks that talking about THE army as the agent active in the aftermath of G30S is just too easy. As most of the combat ready troops were either consigned for the Malaysia campaign or stood at the frontiers with Malaysia, Java was more or less short on troops ready for combat. At the time, there were four units that were strike ready. Three of them participated in G30S and one of those chose Suharto's side afterwards. Hence, as to the American



decision about whom to deal with, the choice was easy. Suharto could do something; Nasution had no troops, since he was a bureau man. He had nothing to strike with against the PKI. This automatically disqualified him for a leading position.

Ratna Saptari returned to Ben White's story of a renowned anthropologist who refused to speak out about the foreign, political, military and moral side of the massacre. As for the recent Indonesian discussion about 1965 and the massacre, she had two comments. First, she pointed out that the activist and academic discussion in Indonesia generally takes place outside the universities, and is open to debate. Second, several platforms have been created that feature sharp and good discussions. She teased Ben White about whether he agreed with her that counting chickens and coconuts in a country like Indonesia can also be considered a blind spot. Ben White replied that it was his job to do so.

Ruth McVey ended the seminar with some closing comments. The discussions covered two subjects on two different levels, i.e. the massacres and the question Who Did It. The massacre discussions produced two main points, [1] whether it should be made a principal discussion and head for a judicial procedure or leave the matter to die out, and [2] who did it. As to the last issue, everyone loves a good puzzle, and the best approach might be to allow everyone's story to be told. If there is a lesson to be taught by the seminar, then it is that new ways of research need a constant effort of reporting about it and that we should build on the recently gained insights.

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# Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ Internees From The Republic



## *Introduction*

'Blind spots and preoccupation' is the leading theme of our seminar of today. As a basic phenomenon in historiography, it is applicable to nearly every subject, but it springs to the eye more so when one touches upon controversial matters. As such, I want to discuss in the present paper[1] the matter of the internment camps for Europeans, mainly Eurasians, installed by the Indonesian Republic during the Bersiap period in the early years of its existence. I will narrow down two closely interrelated questions. My first question is if the Republican leadership

intended these camps to intimidate the Eurasians and keep them as hostages in the oncoming struggle with the Dutch, or whether they were meant to protect them from insurgencies by rebelling youths. The second question is, how and by who have these questions already been addressed and, if there are any marked differences, how come?

I will start with a short survey of events that led to the setup of these camps in the second half of 1945. The proclamation of a new state calling itself the Republic of Indonesia - broadcast on August 17, 1945 by Sukarno and Hatta - took the Dutch by surprise. They had been the dominant power in the archipelago for more than three hundred years - and wanted to continue what they considered 'their task' in the Indies. However, that would prove to be no easy task. In 1941/42, they had participated in the war against Japan with the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, and had made a worthwhile contribution. After the initial Allied defeats, the other Allies had managed to regain strength in order to continue the war, and bring it to a happy end. The Netherlands, however, was no longer in a

position to contribute to a considerable degree. After the German invasion of the mother country in Europe in 1940 and the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands East Indies in 1942, they lacked the means to do so. After the German defeat on 5 May 1945, they had to rebuild military power from scratch. At that time they were very much the junior partner in a war that was running to its end in Asia as well. For the Dutch, the proclamation of the new Indonesian Republic would prove to be a serious threat.

In Potsdam (15-17 July 1945), with the defeat of Japan in sight, the Allies agreed that the responsibility for taking over all Southeast Asia, excepting the Philippines, should be entrusted to Lord Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC).**[ii]** He therefore had to accept the Japanese surrender, rehabilitate the Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (APWI) and restore law and order in Indo-China, Siam, Malaya, Burma and the Netherlands East Indies. As far as the Dutch were concerned, the limited forces available to them operated within the SEAC organization. Meanwhile, Dutch civilians balanced on the edge of starvation in concentration camps, and Prisoners of War (POW) of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) were awaiting evacuation in camps outside the island of Java. Inside the Indonesian archipelago, about 180,000 Eurasians (Dutch nationals of mixed race) were living together with the Indonesians in appalling conditions in impoverished cities and in the countryside. Most Eurasian families had not been interned, as a consequence of the Japanese policy on Java, which considered them to be a distinct group of people. Being the offspring of Asians and Europeans, they were to co-operate with the administration set up by the Japanese 16<sup>th</sup> army and would be treated like the indigenous inhabitants.**[iii]** However, this policy failed. The Eurasians were proud of their Dutch nationality and resented being placed at the same level as the native population. The Indonesians themselves had no sympathetic feelings towards the Eurasians, who they felt had been sheltered under the colonial umbrella. At the same time, nationalist and anti-Western feelings increasingly found their way to the surface, incited by the Japanese. These contradictions were the uncertain position of the Eurasians at the time the Indonesian revolution started.

Since Mountbatten was initially unaware of the real situation in the Indies and preferred to deploy his troops elsewhere, it was more than a month after the Japanese capitulation before the first British-Indian troops were ordered to move from occupation duties in Malaya to Java. This delay resulted in a power vacuum

and an atmosphere of tremendous enthusiasm among the Indonesian youth. Many 'pemuda' joined the newly organized People's Security Organization (Badan Keamanan Rakjat - BKR) or established numerous irregular bands grouped around older nationalists, religious teachers (*kiyai*) or gangsters (*jago*). Anxious to contribute to 'merdeka' (freedom) these youngsters raised red and white flags everywhere, organized mass-meetings and demonstrations, and began to look for arms to defend their 'merdeka' against the returning colonial power. Until then the atmosphere had been rather quiet, but by the end of September 1945, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Chaos, anarchy, lawlessness and violence predominated.

Initially the Netherlands-Indies authorities regarded the resistance as the aftermath of the Japanese occupation and the militant youngsters as hooligans. However, they soon found out this was a severe underestimation of the situation. During the occupation, most of these militant youngsters had received Japanese military training, which had emphasized fighting spirit and physical endurance. Such courses had been given to trainees in the Volunteer Homeland Defense Army, the police and the navy. Crucial for the developments afterwards was the fact that these courses were given in the districts and sub districts, resulting in revolutionary outbursts simultaneously starting all over Java. **[iv]**

The Allied command watched the revolutionary uprising with concern. The last thing it wanted was to get involved in a colonial war. Mountbatten decided to alter his policy drastically. Instead of re-occupying the whole of the Netherlands East Indies, he switched to a key-area strategy. For Java, this initially meant the re-occupation of two major coastal cities: the capital Batavia (Jakarta) and the marine-base Surabaya. On second thought, the re-occupation was extended to Semarang and Bandung, where many APWI were concentrated. Besides, Mountbatten was determined to persuade the Dutch to negotiate with the Indonesians in order to reach an agreement.

#### *The internment into republican camps*

The violent developments took the leading figures in the newly formed Indonesian government by surprise as well. They rejected murder and bloodshed and wanted to gain international support for their independence by means of diplomacy, especially from America. They realized that continued looting, kidnapping and murder would not earn them international credit. For them this might have been the reason to take the initiative to set up camps for the safety of Dutch/Eurasian

men, women and children who until then had been living amidst the Indonesian population. For this thesis, support can be found in the fact that on October 9, 1945 Sukarno wrote in a letter to the British commander, Lieutenant General Christison, in which he emphasized that the Indonesians were ideologically opposed to Dutch rule. He reminded him of the fact that a Dutch/Eurasian population of well over 250,000 men, women and children were scattered all over Indonesia, surrounded on all sides by Indonesians. Quite rightly, he wondered who was going to guarantee the safety of these non-combatants when mob psychology would replace ideological arguments. All of them would then also be in danger. Actually, he was able to point out that there was already ample evidence of such fighting - even in that early state - demonstrating all the undesirable features of a race-war. (NIB I, pp. 285 - 290) **[v]**

It was not left at that. Soon after the writing of this letter, that is to say between 11 and 19 October 1945, all over Java and Madura, the internment was set in motion. Though there is no proof that it happened upon the orders of Soekarno himself, the fact that it was initiated by the newly appointed local authorities (KNI-Komite Nasional Indonesia) indicates some central order. The KNI's ordered the local BKR, pemuda-groups or police to pick up the people from their homes or require them to assemble at certain places under the pretext of a registration or meeting. This strongly suggests that the republican leaders had more influence over their following than is commonly assumed. It also proves that one should be careful calling all the Pemuda violent, since many Pemuda-groups brought the Dutch nationals, in a more or less friendly but sometimes frightening way, safely to their camps. The situation however differed from place to place. On several occasions, men lost their lives when large-scale slaughter parties took place such as happened in the Simpang club and Kalisosok prison in Surabaya and Pledang prison in Bogor.

When the internments started, initially only men and older boys were taken into custody in most places, while women and children were left behind for the time being. So one has to wonder if the idea of protection was the one and only motive. From the second half of September on, skirmishes had increasingly taken place between groups of Eurasian boys and men and the Indonesian Pemuda, especially in the larger cities like Batavia and Surabaya. The spirit of the Bersiap was one of attack upon an ill-defined enemy, and these Eurasian boys and men were the first at hand. It has to be added that the latter, too, often acted in a provocative and

aggressive way, and that in some places a regrouping of former KNIL-units took place. By isolating these men, they were out of reach and general unrest could be prevented. Put in these terms, internment was a measure of a military or a policing nature. However, with the Bersiap gaining strength, Dutch and Eurasians, as well as Amboinese and Chinese people, were increasingly under attack. Moreover, the large majority of the Eurasian population lived scattered throughout the country. They formed relatively small, unarmed groups, surrounded on all sides by Indonesians. It has to be noted that in a few residencies where violence ran high, like Ceribon, Pekalongan, Buitenzorg and Banyumas, women and children were interned at once, some in the same camp as the men, and some in different locations. In all these cases, internment clearly served their protection.

According to several interviews, questionnaires and documents, it seems that in most residencies the women were relatively safe. The way they were treated differed from place to place, but the sometimes unfriendly or aggressive attitude of the population didn't necessarily mean their lives were in danger. In places such as Malang, Solo, Yogyakarta and few places near Bandung in West-Java, they were even allowed to bring clothes, mattresses, food and medicines to their imprisoned male relatives. Only in the months November and December 1945, when heavy sustained fighting occurred between the British and Indonesians in Surabaya and Central-Java - which had the potential to incite the Indonesian masses to violence - the majority of women and children were concentrated in republican camps. It is conceivable that the Indonesian leaders decided to intern them as a measure of prevention.

From this limited survey of the internments during the Bersiap one may conclude that motives from the Republican side may vary, but that the element of protection decidedly got the upper hand as time went on. Central guidance may be induced from the scale of the operation and the way it was executed. Within three months, about 46,000 people, most Eurasians and about 4,500 ex-Japanese Prisoners of War and Internees, the so-called APWI, were put up in whatever shelter was available.**[vi]** They often lived squeezed together in schools, prisons, warehouses, hotels, convents, mansions, bungalows, sugar factories or barracks. Scattered all over Java (and Madura) were approximately 400 camps, with the number of internees ranging from ten to seven thousand (Malang-camp De Wijk).**[vii]** However, even when carried out with the best of reasons, for those concerned the internment more often than not was forced upon them against

their will, which contributed to a negative opinion. The inhabitants more often than not considered them places where they were kept hostage by the Republic. The Indonesians, from their part, called them 'kamp-kamp perlindungan' (protection camps), and for good reasons. Some internees as well told me that they were convinced that they were being protected and had chosen to enter the camps voluntarily.

*Operation POPDA (Organization for the Evacuation of Japanese and APWI)*

These mass internments in the last months of 1945 happened outside the small regions controlled by the British. Most of them took place without their connivance but when detected, they accepted the camps, as a matter of fact. Nevertheless, they had to fulfill their Allied commitments to repatriate the Japanese troops and to recover all APWI, of which according to their estimates ca. 4,500 people were still out of reach in Republican area in Central and East Java. Since the British wanted to leave the Indies as soon as possible, they did not waste any time. As early as the end of 1945 and without informing the Netherlands Indies authorities, they had entered talks with the Republican government to co-operate in transporting the APWI to the British key-areas, and the Japanese army to Galang, an island in the Riau-Archipelago. Indonesian seamen, educated by the Japanese themselves, shipped out the latter. Two formal bipartite meetings were held in Batavia on 9 and 17 January and in the first week of April 1946, the so-called Jogjakarta-Agreement was reached.**[viii]**

In fact, according to their commitments under the Potsdam Agreement, the British military authorities were mainly interested in the APWI that had been interned by Japan. For the British, these were the 'genuine' APWI, but they declared they were willing to receive all the newly interned Eurasians from republican camps wanting to evacuate to the Allied-occupied cities as well. They put pressure on the Indonesians, pointing out the negative effects on world opinion if they refused to cooperate, but they need not have done so. For the Indonesians, it was an interesting proposal. First of all, their political and military leaders were well aware that it offered them an opportunity to show the world that they were not the 'unorganized extremists' the Dutch continuously called them. By restoring order after World War II, they hoped to gain international support for their independence. Second, since the newly established Indonesian republican army (TKR - Tentara Keamanan Rakjat - People's Security Army) would execute both tasks, it implied recognition of this army with the additional

advantage that the British would supply them with much needed armaments and means of transport. Third, the Indonesian leaders undoubtedly enjoyed the fact that the British excluded the Dutch from these negotiations, which greatly added to Indonesia's international status. They strongly insisted on keeping the Dutch out, instead preferring to make the arrangements concerning visiting and supplying camps with the International Red Cross instead of the Netherlands Indies Red Cross. Fourth, the sooner the Japanese and Allied internees could return to their rightful places, the sooner the British troops would leave the island.

However, the Indonesian leaders realized that they faced great risks due to internal problems. In the hinterland, the situation was unstable. The army, which in principle stood behind the government, had just been established. Laskars (local desa militia) went their own way, and army-units and Laskars were fighting each other. Under these unsteady circumstances, the army had to properly uphold the agreement. In November and December 1945, Sukarno and the Sjahrir Cabinet made strong efforts to calm down the mass uprisings that took place in Surabaya and Central Java. Though not without effect, an uneasy calm could only be effectuated after heavy fighting by the British troops, at critical moments assisted by Japanese units, in Semarang and Surabaya.

From March 1946 onwards, things changed. The Dutch troops entered Java on a larger scale and gradually took over from the British. The practical aspects were discussed in a series of talks between the British, Indonesians and the Dutch. By then it was obvious that the Dutch no longer could be kept at the sideline. At the same time, negotiations started up between the Sjahrir Cabinet and the NEI authorities under leadership of the Lt-governor general Van Mook. A marking point was the Batavia Concept of 25 March 1946, which contained a first sketch for a political solution of the conflict. Although the discussion about evacuation and political affairs went through different channels, they were interrelated nevertheless. A few weeks afterwards, on 3 April 1946, the Republican minister of Defense Amir Sjarifuddin announced in a press conference the withdrawal of Japanese and internees from the interior under allied British supervision. By then, the matter had been thoroughly discussed between the Dutch and the British mediator Clark Kerr. The evacuation would be carried out by the TRI. It would get technical support, transport facilities and the armament for two battalions from the Allies to protect the internees during their voyage. The whole operation would take two or three months to complete.



And so, in April 1946 the evacuation of the internees from the interior started. The task was entrusted to a special organization, the *Panitia Oeroesan Pengangkoetan Djepang dan APW* (POPDA). The Indonesians promised the British to deliver the internees in 'good order' in the key-areas Batavia and Semarang. The Republican government appealed to large pemoeda-organizations not to interfere with the evacuations, in order to show the world that Indonesia was capable of executing a task in which the British had failed.**[ix]** Pemuda-leaders recognized the importance of 'Operation POPDA' and offered their co-operation. The headquarters of the Islamic Hisbullah-organization, ordered its divisions not to be provocative and to follow the orders of the army.**[x]** Even Sutomo, a radical leader in Surabaya, pointed out the importance of a successful evacuation and announced that everybody who disturbed the transports would be punished.**[xi]**

POPDA took no half measures. The strategically situated city of Solo in Central Java was chosen as its headquarters (POPDA I). Malang, as POPDA II, became the center for assembling internees from East Java, while the coastal cities of Tegal, Central Java (POPDA III) and Probolinggo, East Java (POPDA IV) were suitable for shipping out the Japanese army. Because the Indonesians lacked sufficient locomotives and carriages to transport both Japanese and internees at the same time, the evacuation of the internees slowed down soon. A situation made worse by a serious shortage of coal. The British found this system of transport too slow and at a meeting in Solo on May 10, 1946 they proposed the use of aircraft. The 31st Squadron of the Royal Air Force (RAF) flew six days a week from Batavia to the airfield of Panasan (near Solo), the destination for POPDA transported evacuees from different residencies. Between May 20 and July 24, 1946 the RAF succeeded in transporting 19,490 evacuees either to Batavia or to Semarang, using four, later six Dakota's.

On July 25th, the evacuations suddenly came to a standstill. It appeared that a number of incidents had irritated the Indonesians. A POPDA-boat transporting evacuees from Madura to Probolinggo, was detained by a Dutch destroyer in the Straits of Madura and forced to hand over the evacuees. Another Dutch destroyer stopped POPDA-chief Major General Abdoelkadir at sea for twelve hours, on his way to inspect the republican camps in Madura. However, the Indonesian tolerance ended when the Dutch bombed the city of Banyuwangi (East-Java) and a ferry in the Straits of Madura. In a speech, delivered in Solo on July 27th, Sukarno announced that he had ordered to stop the evacuations.

At the same time, he promised Republican leaders and the Allied Headquarters would do their utmost to come to a solution. On 3 September 1946, the representatives of the parties involved met in Cirebon and on September 12, it seemed that the deadlock had been solved. By the end of the month, evacuations started again. This time, however, the use of aircraft had not been permitted by the Indonesians, which slowed down the whole process considerably. In the following eight months another 16,000 Eurasian internees were evacuated from the interior, together with some 10,000 Chinese. It may be noted that these were the months in which the Dutch-Republican negotiations on the Linggadjati Agreement and its aftermath took place. Evacuation-matters were discussed in a special Dutch-Indonesian subcommittee on Evacuation and Contact. By the end of May 1947, POPDA closed its activities, - as it turned out - a few weeks before the first military clash. The organisation had successfully completed the evacuation, transporting about 40,000 Japanese and 37,000 Dutch/Eurasian internees in turbulent times, thanks to the determination of many people involved.

*Back to the questions: blind spots and preoccupation*

In the period 1984-1994 I worked for the Dutch Government in the field of recognition and support for civilian victims of war in the former Netherlands East Indies - including the Bersiap time - and as such I was well aware that many ex-internees from the republican camps still considered themselves hostages. They firmly opposed the word 'protection camps' and often used the word 'hostages'. In October 2007, I published my dissertation on this subject. My book was announced in a newspaper with the headline, 'Sukarno protected Dutch nationals'. This was a shock for many ex-internees. Being protected by Sukarno was not what many of them wanted to hear and consequently I received a lot of mail, suggesting revisions to my research in order to make it more "scientific". Furthermore I was accused of having a one-sided view which was called 'een beetje dom' (a bit stupid). Others told me that hunger and humiliation in their camps had nothing to do with protection by Sukarno and so on. I was also informed that this headline had led to many angry telephone calls to 'Indische' organizations, representing the repatriates from the Netherlands Indies in the Netherlands.

However, headlines do not tell the whole story, and in my dissertation I made it clear that the matter of the evacuations was more complicated than mere transportation. Indeed, as emphasized in this article, protection certainly was the central element in them. In the context of the theme 'blind spots and

preoccupation', the first question is why until this day ex-internees deny that the camps were intended for their own protection. Some of the answers have already been given in the preceding pages. Most of them did not enter internment by their free will, and the memories they have of the time they spent in the camps do not correspond with protection. They remember the way they were taken and sometimes humiliated, locked up in small cells or poor shelter and the lack of clothing and medicine and especially the poor food rations. It took place in an atmosphere of enmity towards the Republic. Since ex-internees do not associate their lives in the camps with protection, most of them will not accept the idea that Sukarno - in order to prevent more murder and bloodshed - organized isolation of this vulnerable group for their own safety. They may have good reasons to consider themselves victims of the Bersiap period, but tend to forget that things might have been worse without the protection offered by the camps.

The second question is internees' own story of being kept hostage. My research, based on extensive interviewing, and search in the archives, reveals that there are no indications of the deliberate use of internees as hostages, either at the time of internment or during the evacuations. Both for political and humanitarian reasons, the Republican rulers had ample reasons to do what they did. However, the installation of the camps in 1945 and the POPDA operation of 1946/47 did not take place in a vacuum but in a political context, and this necessarily influenced the way the operation was carried out. Moreover, the steering power of the Republican government was under attack, especially so in 1945. Both factors tended to disturb the process. After the initial discussions with the British in December 1945 for instance, it cost Sjarifoeddin a lot of time to get the first batches of internees actually on the move. It was no easy task to convince the largest irregular pemuda-groups to give their full cooperation.

Although the relationship between politics and Popda was evident, the subject was discussed apart from the political negotiations as much as possible, to prevent it becoming a factor in the *do ut des* of the negotiations. Yet, it was inevitable that mutual irritations hampered a smooth continuation of the process. Such was the case in July 1946 when Soekarno brought POPDA to a standstill because of Dutch bombardments of a ferry and the harbor of Banyuwangi, and a few other matters that in Soekarno's opinion violated the Jogjakarta-Agreement. One may also ask why the Indonesians made such a fuss about air transport, with the help of which the evacuations could have been carried out much faster than

was the case. They must have had good reasons for doing so, but at the same time, the Dutch had good reasons to be annoyed as well. Moreover - although positive information on this subject is lacking - according to Dutch reports demand for more coal, transport and medicines was an ever returning matter in the ensuing discussions between the parties involved. 'Keeping hostages' is not the right phrase, and it was never used during the high-level negotiations between the Indonesians and the Dutch. Nevertheless, evacuation matters were certainly discussed on the lower level of the special subcommittee, and the mutual irritations can be read from the reports. It is worthwhile to note that in the final report of the chairman of the Dutch section of the subcommittee, Van den Wall Bake, these irritations were not only explicitly summed up, but the chief negotiators were explicitly advised to make them public too. **[xii]**

With this advice, we touch upon the subject of propaganda and public opinion, which necessarily has its effects on history writing as well. After all, the evacuation issue was only one part of a much larger conflict, in which serious issues were involved at both sides. It was serious enough to wage a war for it, which implied propaganda as well. It was in this context that the terms 'internment' and 'hostages' came in use. For the Dutch authorities, the sentiment of Dutch internees, held captive by the Republic as long as two years after the end of the second world war, certainly was too convincing an argument not to use. This is normal behaviour in cases of political conflict and war. The Dutch were fighting with the republic, and in those circumstances, it did not make sense to praise the enemy. They continued to do so up to 1949 in order to achieve two goals. Their first aim was to put the Republic in a bad light internationally; the second aim was to influence public opinion in the Netherlands. Sending soldiers to the Netherlands East Indies was widely opposed and with propaganda like: 'Save the hostages in Indonesian hands', or, 'Still thousands of hostages under the heel of the Indonesians,' the authorities tried to manipulate Dutch public opinion. However, there was a third and largely unintended side effect. The continuous use of the word 'hostages' in the media convinced the ex-internees, that they were indeed hostages. That is how they entered history. Moreover, in the following decades, historians adopted the idea of hostages from the archives, thereby 'confirming' the image of internees as victims of the republic, and giving rise to the blind spot, as far as Indonesian intentions were concerned.

I will finish this article with an example of disavowal on Indonesian side; not

entirely representative, but nonetheless remarkable. I sent 18 books to my Indonesian host. After some time went by I phoned him to ask his opinion about my book. I could immediately hear from his voice that something was wrong and after some urging, he told me that he disagreed – not with the contents – but with the subtitle, ‘A method in the madness’ – or as we say in Dutch – ‘Orde in de chaos’, because he said, there was no madness. I can probably explain to some former ex-internees that Sukarno was trying to protect them, but I could never explain that there was order in the madness during the Bersiap period.

## NOTES

**[i]** The following is a revised edition of the original paper. I wish to thank Pieter Drooglever for his sound advice, which resulted in a better situating of *Popda* within the wider context of the British-Dutch-Indonesian relations.

**[ii]** Until Potsdam only Sumatra had been part of SEAC. The other Netherlands East Indies islands had been the responsibility of SWPA (South West Pacific Command) under the command of General MacArthur. The sudden change caused many problems for Mountbatten, since he lacked troops, ships and materials.

**[iii]** E.Touwen-Bouwsma, Japanese minority policy: The Eurasians on Java and the dilemma of ethnic loyalty. Unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on ‘The legacy of Dutch and Japanese rule in Indonesia: Myths and Realities’. Amsterdam/Leiden, 7-10 November 1994, p. 2.

**[iv]** Interviews with Indonesian veterans, among others: Army: Purbo S. Suwondo. Oetarjo, G.P.H. Djatikoesoemo, Imam Soepomo, Iwan Stamboel, A. Kosasih. Navy: Rachmat Sumengar, Haryono Nimpuno. Police: Hoegeng Imam Santosa, Moehammad Jasin, Mohammed Subekti.

**[v]** Despite Mountbatten’s order to stay in their ex-Japanese concentration camps, many people left for their former houses in the country (republican area). Next, they were interned anew; this time by the Indonesians.

**[vi]** During my research, I found approximately 400 camps, but they did not all exist at the same time. The number of camps constantly fluctuated, because people were transported to other locations, or camps were split up, joined or closed down because of the evacuation. Sometimes the internees had to make room for Japanese troops on their way home or for Indonesian troops.

**[vii]** NIB III, no 84 en no 123. Nationaal Archief, archief Algemene Secretarie, inv. no 2808, Recapitulatie evacuatie binnenland, 13 maart 1947.

**[viii]** NIB III, no 349; IV no 17.

**[ix]** Centraal Archieven Depôt van het Ministerie van Defensie. (CAD), archief

NEFIS 1946. FY5/27345, 16-04-1946, inv.nr. 29, AA11.

[x] CAD, archief NEFIS 1946. FY5/28707, 26-04-1946, inv.nr. 29, AA11.

[xi] CAD, archief NEFIS 1946. FY5/28707, 26-04-1946, inv.nr. 29, AA11.

[xii] NIB IX, no 193.

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# Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ The Year 1948 And The Madiun Affairs - A Year Of Cheat And Rumors



*"The Reorganisation-Rationalization (Re-Ra) was the detonator of the explosion that struck the TNI and Indonesia and was abused by the Dutch and the PKI for their own aims" (Nasution II a: 5).*

The year 1948 and the *Madiun Affair* were of decisive importance for both the existence of the young Republic of Indonesia, and the military career of Lieutenant General Abdul Haris Nasution. He devoted several publications to the major events of that year, among them *Book IIa* of his *Memoirs*. I will use that book to present his view of the events, since he had a pivotal role in both their genesis as well as their aftermath. My interest in Nasution developed during my work in Indonesia, where my Chinese bookseller Liem regularly provided me with books that stemmed from libraries of former regional government officials and military who spent their retirement in Malang, East Java. Among these books were Mahmillub court martial notes and books that Nasution wrote during and about his military career, and the events he encountered. Back in the Netherlands, I began reading Nasution's books, as well as books about him. His history fascinated me, since he was a man who continuously had trouble with authorities and interest groups, but always managed to come back stronger than before, until his companion and opponent President Sukarno finally had to leave the political scene mid-1960s. In discussions with Wertheim, he objected to my fascination with the man, since he saw him as a liar and a cheat. In August 1993, I interviewed Nasution for a biography about him and met a charming and inspiring man who, just like Wertheim, had a photographic memory for people, events and books. Again, Wertheim condemned the effort and predicted a tremendous task in separating fact from fiction. I never had any inclination to adhere to his point of view, and started working on the biography. Gradually, and by checking Nasution's data and insights with existing and authoritative literature on the events he participated in, I realized that he had something important to say. His memories are relevant and his insights worthwhile to report to a larger public. In this chapter, I will use his memories of the year 1948; one of Indonesia's many Years of Living Dangerously. They are taken from Volume IIA of his *Memoirs*, called *Memenuhi Panggilan Tugas*, i.e. "*Doing My Duty*". Despite Wertheim's objections against my work on Nasution, he nevertheless remained interested in my work and supported me when and wherever feasible; for which I am grateful.

### *Appeasement and its political problems*

In [the preceding chapter](#) we have seen that Sukarno's policy of appeasement vis-à-vis the Allied Forces was intended to be positive for the former Eurasian prisoners of Japanese camps, and was even facilitated by *pemoeda* support. It served Sukarno's goal of appeasing the Western Allies by showing his good

intentions regarding victims of the Japanese occupation. However, the political history of the year 1948 shows the growing dissatisfaction within the Indonesian army, among the village militia and the political parties with the other facets of the appeasement policy. It is probably this history of dissatisfaction and mistrust, and its dramatic end in civil war and coup accusations, which has blinded subsequent Indonesian and foreign historiographers to the two sides of Sukarno's appeasement policies. In essence Sukarno was a Jacobin, which means that he changed camp whenever it served his interests. Before the Second World War Sukarno took the non-cooperative side of Indonesian nationalism, and continued that line during the Japanese occupation when he chose to side with Japan. After the Independence Declaration of 17 August 1945 he chose, for tactical reasons, to co-operate with the Allied Forces, whose support he needed in the Independence war against the Dutch. After the Republic and the Netherlands parted ways for good in 1956 after fruitless negotiations about the division of mutual interests in the archipelago and repayment of war damage caused by Indonesian military, Sukarno used the Western Allies once again in a campaign aimed at making the Netherlands stick to its 1949 promise of handing over New Guinea to the Republic of Indonesia. Without any clear reasons from the Dutch for doing so, that issue had been excluded from the Round Table Agreement. From 1964 on, and forced by Indonesia's miserable international financial debt, Sukarno relied heavily on support from Communist China. After October 1965, appeasement was not as important, and was replaced by Suharto's balancing act of looking inward and outward.

### *An independent analysis of the 1948 affairs*

For an interesting Indonesian analysis of the 1948 events, I will use Part 8 of Nasution's 10 volume Publication on the Indonesian Independence War. The analysis is based on Nasution's personal memories and notes about his stay in Yogyakarta in 1948. At that time he was chief of staff of Commander in Chief General Sudirman and worked with him on an encompassing strategy plan that served two goals. On the one hand, a proper solution was needed for the relentless Dutch effort to destroy the Indonesian army after its infamous defeat against the first Dutch Aggression of July and August 1947. On the other hand, they were in search of a way to covertly rebuild a new and combat ready Indonesian army that would be able to conduct mobile strike operations at the regional and national level, and guerilla war at the local level. Nasution's analysis of the Madiun Affairs regard this effort and its complicated political context.



Nasution's memoirs were first published in 1983 by CV Haji Masagung in Jakarta. I use the second, 1989 edition in which the original Volume II has been split up in two separate volumes, i.e. Volume II a, and Volume II b. Volume II provides Nasution's analysis of the preparations for guerrilla warfare against the expected second Dutch aggression. Chapter 2 contains the PKI Insurrection. It is a mixture of ideas, notes, and other materials from 1948, as well as personal memories, and as such it is still relevant to revisiting the 1948 crisis. Nasution sharply separates his military analysis of the 1948 events from his conclusions, in which he ventilates his anti-communist sentiments. Where necessary, I will augment his analysis with facts, documents and analyses from McTurnan Kahin's thesis on Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia. This thesis is based on Kahin's experiences as journalist and member of the Indonesian Ministry of Information during Independence War. Although his exposition has some odd misses regarding the dates and order of events, it makes some interesting points. It focuses on the political side of the 1948 events, in particular the emergence of a strong leftist protest against President Sukarno's "sloppy" way of negotiating about peace and independence with the Dutch from February 1948 on. But it also builds on Siliwangi Intelligence which dominated the marshes of rumors circulating in and around the Ministry of Information in 1948. Solely for that reason, and despite the fact that so many years after the event it is a difficult to check these sources, as a contemporary of Nasution Kahin's study is helpful for a historical analysis of 1948 with two starting points: the objectifying analysis of Nasution and the left leaning analysis of Kahin based on Siliwangi dominated information. Since this piquant confrontation deserves a much larger and broader analysis than this chapter permits, I will primarily use Kahin's English translations of Indonesian speeches and proclamations.

Contrary to the personal success story that Dutch and foreign studies ascribe to Nasution, and the bad image cultivated by contemporary left wing 'hate literature' in and outside Indonesia, he presents a nuanced and often troubled and grim story in his memories of 1948. They cover his bumpy career at the time, including his continuing and sharp discussions about strategy and tactics with his partners in battle, i.e. representatives of the village militias, called Laskar, as well as territorial commanders and rebelling army units, and last but not least his Commander in Chief General Sudirman. Each of these parties had their professional and existential interests and perspectives, which divided them so much they could not reach a compromise. Nasution's report also relentlessly

shows his failure to adequately handle the task he was given by Sudirman, namely to massage away the fears the Laskar village militias had of the policies of the much hated Hatta cabinet, and convince them to participate in a plan he conceived in 1948 while Chief of Staff. He opted for a combined attack on the enemy, whereas General Sudirman preferred an all-out guerilla war against the Dutch. Nasution's plan included the covert build-up of a small core of combat ready mobile troops and a large amount of stationary village militias. For Nasution, finding a way across all the obstacles was a painful experience but he describes his blunders and failures, as well as his final success, with candor. Despite his personal charm Nasution failed to get in contact with the Java based Laskar commanders, who revered General Sudirman. As a military man with a Western military education, he had no understanding of the emotive side of the Laskar motivation for entering the war against the Dutch, i.e. *semangat revolusi* (revolutionary fire). In the end, these failures as well as those of Sudirman, who had extensive connections with the rebelling troops and political parties, contributed to the final explosion, which in Western terms became known as "The Madiun Affair". The misunderstanding between the two commanders moreover enlarged the risk of what Hatta in August 1948 explicitly stated was to be prevented at all cost, i.e. a discussion about social revolution, which would not only trigger a struggle between ideologies and classes but also escalate it. For Hatta, on the eve of an expected second Dutch Aggression, national unity and strength had absolute priority over social revolution, which could only split the ranks; dissent had to be denied, and eventually suppressed. On the other hand, the PKI Musso as well as independent activist Tan Malaka, pushed the idea of class thinking. It found a willing ear with the village based Laskar units who felt confronted by Nasution who treated them, as they said, as *kelas kambing*, i.e. as peasants. Again, Nasution was quite honest about his failures and successes.

Nasution's analysis shows that the so-called communist Madiun coup was an accident in a long-standing loyalty conflict between army units and village militias, lumped together in the inlands of Central Java, and the government and the president. For the protesters the subject of the conflict was the expected impact of the policy of appeasement with the Dutch and the Allied Forces on their professional and family life. Kahin uses the same framework but is more oriented on the side of the National Front, the PKI and other political parties. For the Laskar commanders, the price of independence paid by the government was too high, i.e. submitting to Dutch and Western imperialist powers which condemned

them to a marginal position in a federated Indonesia. Nasution's analysis shows the military side of the Independence War and approaches that as the essence of the struggle. For the military, Nasution included, the war contribution was indispensable. Without it, the government had no legs to stand on. Whereas for the Central and East Java based units that conception was the reason to resist the government and push for a policy and personnel change; for Nasution and Siliwangi it was the reason to support the government. Moreover, in Nasution's opinion, fighting an independence war without unity of command and political leadership could never bring independence, only heroic and deadly defeat. For Sukarno, submission was the only way to get support for independence from the Allied Forces, which in its turn was the only way to reach Independence. For Nasution, the ideological difference regarding the loyalty issue between the nationalist PNI and the modernist Muslim Masyumi party which divided the KNIP parliament, and the protests from the Left Wing (*Sayap Kiri*) and the National Front of Amir Sjarifuddin, were serious mishaps. According to Nasution, the politicians involved missed any understanding of the disastrous impact that political dissent would have on the military defense against the forthcoming second Dutch aggression. The commanders that understood the backgrounds of the dissent, drew their lessons for the next two decades, i.e. do not let politics get a hold on military affairs. Local people are the army's only and basic ally, not the government. However, for tactical reasons Nasution maintained the connections with the government since they were needed to keep his Siliwangi Division upright and combat ready. The government had the money he needed to achieve that goal. The Central and East Javanese units were left behind in poverty, working with untrained and unqualified troops, because they did not have that link. They stigmatized Nasution as a traitor, a party pooper who sucked up to the government for his own private and Western interests.

#### *Sukarno's accusation and the name of the event*

The name "Madiun Affairs" was born when President Sukarno gave his 19 September 1948 speech of about the battle between loyal and disloyal troops in Solo Central Java and the presumed coup attempt in Madiun East Java, one day earlier. He opened his speech by stating:

*"Yesterday morning the Communist Party of Musso staged a coup in Madiun and formed a Soviet government there under the leadership of Musso. They consider this seizure of power by force as a preliminary step in the seizure of the entire government of the Republic of Indonesia. From this fact, it is obvious that the*

*Solo and Madiun incidents are not isolated events but are constituent parts of an over-all pattern of action designed to overthrow the government of the Republic of Indonesia. To achieve this end, the rebels have used units of the Twenty Ninth Brigade, the former irregular force commanded by Lt. Col. Dahlan. By so doing, Dahlan has betrayed the country and has violated the oath of the army. Therefore I hereby dismiss Dahlan from the army.”* (McTurnan Kahin 1970: 292).

The event he is referring to is the message that the Pesindo garrison commander Soemarsono of Madiun broadcasted in the night of 18 September with the headline “In Madiun starts the victory.” One hour and a half after Sukarno’s speech PKI leader Musso replied with a speech that was born out of despair, since according to McTurnan Kahin the events of September 18<sup>th</sup> had completely surprised Musso and had neither been planned and prepared by him, nor been ordered. Musso started his speech with the sentence:

*“On September 18, 1948, the citizens of Madiun seized the authority of state in their own hands. With that the citizens of Madiun have done their duty in our national revolution, which as a matter of fact must be led by the people and not by any other class!”* (McTurnan Kahin 1970: 293).

Musso continued by accusing those people in government and army who during the Japanese occupation had manned Japanese organizations (Sudirman) or had been Romusha slave dealers (Sukarno and Hatta), of selling out the country to the former colonizer; and so on and so forth. He talked about how the middle class nature of the cabinet and government was not very different from the bourgeois rule of the colonial time, and commented that only the labor class could wage an effective war against the aggressors. Musso ended his speech with a call on the Indonesian people to follow the example of the Madiun citizens and take their fate in their own hands.

Already on that first day, dissent arose over the question of what had happened in Madiun, which still continues today. Was it a coup? In the night of 18 September a local Pesindo commander named Sumarsono did broadcast a message titled “From Madiun victory starts”. According to the papers and Antara, the message called for a change of government by the people. In 2002, Sumarsono denied Sukarno’s accusation in an interview with Radio Netherlands. He denied having performed a coup but admitted to having taken measures against eventualities. These measures included the creation of a regional branch of the National Front

(Front Nasional Daerah/PNI) that appointed him military governor of Madiun. Contrary to what newspapers in Yogyakarta stated, there were no pro-PKI mass demonstrations in Madiun and no red flags. The Indonesian flag was not removed from government buildings. No commanders and town officials had been arrested or killed.

Sumarsono said that Commander in Chief Sudirman sent Lieutenant Colonel Suharto to Madiun to have a look and discuss the rumors. He arrived at night and accompanied Sumarsono on a tour through the town the next morning. After that tour, Sumarsono asked Suharto for his opinion and, when he agreed with Sumarsono about the real state of affairs, asked Suharto to write a letter to the president about his findings. It was important that the president should know what really happened, and not believe the Siliwangi controlled newspapers in Yogyakarta. Suharto replied that he indeed had seen nothing to worry about and Sumarsono should write the letter and he would sign it. Sumarsono wrote the letter, which Suharto indeed signed. Sumarsono also talked about a letter from Amir Sjarifuddin to the president, regarding the same issue. The Radio Netherlands reporter did not ask him about which letter Suharto took with him. Anyway, Suharto took a letter home, and later replied that on his way back he had been arrested by Siliwangi troops; the letter never reached the president who consequently went with the news as reported in the Yogyakarta newspapers (Kolom Ibrahim Isa in *Milis Nasional*).

Although Sumarsono did not specify the precise reason for his seizing power in Madiun, his actions come across as a local martial law proclamation in order to defend the town against the Siliwangi's hunt for disloyal troops and FDR and PKI officials. McTurnan Kahin did not commit himself fully to what he had heard about the coup message broadcasted by Sumarsono in Madiun on September 18<sup>th</sup>, because he could not find an authorized copy of the radio message, only a second hand version (Kahin p. 291 note 66). Hence, just like the public in 1948, we still depend on hearsay, and do not know for sure if there was a coup attempt. It looks as if Sukarno, in view of the rumors about risks and threats, and the Siliwangi Intelligence reports, decided to make a pre-emptive strike against the PKI Musso in order to prevent the man from exploiting the opportunity, and damage the defense against the expected second Dutch aggression by creating civil war. Whatever the case; in the 1950s and after, Sukarno refused to call 1948 the year of the PKI coup. He always referred to "the Madiun affairs", since he needed the PKI as his personal apparatus for spreading the message of Indonesian socialism

to the peasants and laborers.

### *Nasution on the prologue*

Survivors of the Madiun affairs who were part of the rebelling troops, still accuse Siliwangi and Nasution of having been traitors of the military and leftist resistance against the scandalous demobilization and reorganization of the Indonesian troops ordered and implemented by the Hatta cabinet. Within that framework, it is important to also get the view from the other side of the hill, i.e. Nasution's report about 1948. What was his view of the events, then and afterwards?

From Nasution's description of the events of 1948, it is quite clear that the source of all the fuzz was not the threat of a communist coup. During the preceding Amir Sjarifuddin cabinet, the PKI had supported the reorganization. But the Hatta cabinet triggered a change of course in the PKI. Hence, Nasution's focus is the serious dissent in the army about the government's demobilization and reorganization policies, because that was the problem with which he wrestled. He shows that the route to the Madiun explosion was much longer than the tensions of August and September 1948 between Siliwangi units present in Central Java and local and East Javanese units that had gathered in Central Java after the demobilization. Dutch and American studies usually focus on these tensions. However, Nasution shows that the Madiun explosion was the result of structural issues. The events in Solo were only the powder barrel of a fire that subsequently spread fast to other towns. The threat of disappearance as a result of the implementation of the first Hatta cabinet's plans, was cause for dissent among the militias. An important intensifying factor of dissent was the Siliwangi stand, which was loyal to the president, but also strived to move up in the ranks as an elite unit. This division was rewarded when Sukarno created a mobile strategic reserve brigade in 1948, which became the president's security force for the time being, and included Siliwangi. One outcome of this policy was that Siliwangi was spared a reduction of its manpower. The effort raised suspicion and jealousy among the Central and East Javanese units that apparently were not favorites of the president and Hatta.

The ReRa plans implemented the lessons learned by the General Defense Staff from the republican defeat against the first Dutch Aggression in August 1947, and the Dutch exigencies presented by the strangling Renville Agreement. Nasution had good relations with that staff, thanks to the former Chief of the General Staff

Lieutenant General Oerip Soemohardjo. Both had a common KNIL background and when in private, enjoyed common memories of their pre-war time in Bandung. However, both were also completely dedicated to the ideal of a professional, non-ideological oriented and combat ready Indonesian army. Though Oerip resigned after the defeat in 1947, he had accepted Sukarno's offer of becoming his military adviser. Unfortunately, Oerip died in November 1948, leaving Nasution in despair over how to close the gap to the president.

The Renville agreement which finalized the first Dutch aggression of July 1947 stipulated, just like the earlier Linggadjati Agreement did, a complete disarmament and demobilization of the Indonesian armed forces in the territories occupied by the Dutch. However, this time the Dutch forces would execute and guide the demobilization themselves. Second, the territory of the Republic was reduced to the inlands of Central Java and Sumatra. In its turn, the Indonesian defense staff reflected on the chances that the defeat offered for a new approach, for example abandoning the enormous but rather unorganized mass of lightly armed combat units that served before August 1947. It had proved to be only effective in some places and only at the *desa*-village level; as an army, it did not work. Within this framework, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Amir Sjarifuddin had already made preparations for a plan of reorganization and rationalization of the armed forces in October and November 1947. It would make use of Dutch finances intended for the disarmament and demobilization operation, in particular pensions and social insurance, as well as Indonesian sources such as the textile industry and agriculture. Sjarifuddin thought that the design and implementation of these ideas should take place with the full support of the political parties in the appointed KNIP parliament, which since Proclamation had direct relations with armed units. His Biro Perdjungan would play a prominent coordinating role in these relations. In their turn, the army commanders regrouped their forces in Central Java, including Nasution who ordered the members of his Siliwangi Division to find their way individually and in small groups via the southern mountain areas of West and Central Java to Yogyakarta. He called it Siliwangi *hidjrah* (evacuation, reference to Mohammed's departure from Mecca).

When the KNIP parliament subsequently sent Amir's cabinet home in December, the Indonesian government had accepted the Renville Agreement, which reduced the republic to the inland areas of Sumatra and Central Java, cutting off the

seaports. The constitution of a new cabinet that would implement the Renville Agreement appeared to be difficult and as a result Sukarno appointed a presidential cabinet. Vice President Mohammad Hatta became Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. This new cabinet started work on February 22nd 1948. As for the reorganization, it was executed through the Defense or Baharuddin Law, based on the Baharuddin motion accepted by the KNIP parliament in December 1947, which was a call for government action. Based on that law, the reorganization pertained to a coup de frappe by the government, which gave operational and administrative command of the army to the government in order to fully control the military budget. Hatta based his policy on the plans of the preceding Amir Sjarifuddin cabinet but dropped the role of the political parties in the operational command designed by his predecessor. Regarding the military side of the reorganization, Hatta's concept used Nasution's design, created after the 1947 defeat and pertaining to the creation of a small core unit of well-trained and educated professional soldiers paid from Dutch and Indonesian sources, and the abandonment of the mass of unarmed or badly armed non-regular units. The core unit could function as the start of republican and federal armies, whereas the village militias would be functional in both. For Hatta, the rather chaotic collection of Laskar peasant militias and the multitude of other non-regular units which emerged since the Bersiap Time (1945-1946) was on the list for rationalization. Hatta's ReRa plans rendered Sukarno's 1947 Law on the TNI useless. That law regulated the creation of the concept of Tentara Negara Indonesia and the terms of TNI membership, and included the Laskar as regular part of the TNI. However, Renville stipulated that the TNI be disarmed and demobilized. Hence, the Hatta government took the Renville terms as an opportunity to get rid of all the non-professional units, which according to the defense staff had to take place anyway. This move was the main reason for the mistrust and disloyalty which haunted the Hatta cabinet. The implementation of Renville and the abolition of direct party political influence in the combat units made the ReRa effort a highly abject affair. It robbed the remnants of the TNI, and other combat units like the Laskar peasant militias, of the opportunity to seek support from parliament which until then had been an option for all Indonesian armed forces.





The start of the Siliwangi hijrah from West Java, (in Pierre Heijboer: 105).

After the fall of his cabinet, former Minister Amir Sjarifuddin constituted in response to the emerging fear, anger and unrest among the troops and the militias, an additional parliamentary lobby of mostly Left Wing parties in parliament plus other organizations like his own Biro Perjuangan. This lobby was called Front Demokrasi Rakyat (FDR, People's Democratic Front). It had the explicit aim to support individual military and groups, and to put continued political pressure on the Hatta cabinet under to stop its ReRa policies. Hatta's scrapping of party political control of the reorganization as well as his creation of a support lobby split the parliament in a left wing of PKI, PSI, Murba and other groups, and a right wing consisting of PNI and the modernist Muslim Masyumi party. Whereas before Renville these wings cooperated on legislation and motions, from then on they went separate and increasingly opposite ways. According to Nasution, it created the climate for agitation against him and Hatta, which triggered the escalation that resulted in the Solo and Madiun affairs.

A further escalating factor was the cabinets trouble with creating the financial and fiscal frame needed for the planned massive demobilization and pensioning of soldiers and officers. The Dutch mobilization funds were too small to cover all the expenses. Moreover, government had to create or find new jobs for the demobilized military, which in most cases failed. Disarmament became a very controversial affair. Paying for it from Dutch funds aroused anger and made the cabinet look even worse.

In July 1948, when it became clear that Hatta would not give in to pressure to stop the ReRa operation, Amir made a plan B that provided for the mobilization of

military pressure against the government plans in case further political pressure would fail. It remained unclear for a long time what he meant by that. Moreover, the idea of mobilizing military pressure appeared dangerous and might trigger civil war. This was not in the interest of the Independence war and many commanders were suspicious of the idea, in particular Siliwangi and Police units.

Sjarifuddin made a list of units and commanders that might support military pressure. It was Amir's Plan B that caused Moscow to send pre-war PKI leader Musso to Java with the instruction to take over the FDR, bring it under the roof of the PKI and develop PKI into a people's party that would be able to attract mass popular support and take the lead in republican politics and military. Musso arrived in August 1948 and immediately took action by performing a coup within the party organization, with internal support from the Polit Bureaus younger generation. Aidit, Lukman and Sudisman constituted the new PKI top. The PKI had to be rebuilt from a small and old-fashioned Stalinist urban elite party to a large and popular party with a significant role in bourgeois democracy and the ability to solve Amir's dilemma regarding Plan B, namely the danger of civil war.

Hatta's acceleration of the ReRa operation irritated Commander in Chief General Sudirman immensely. The policy ignored his design of a total popular war against the Dutch. Following long consultations with his commanders, Sudirman was ready for his famous STOP Order No 1 of June 6<sup>th</sup> 1948. The order was designed and edited by his Chief of Staff Nasution, and redressed all Hatta's schedules and implementations. It solidified Sudirman's position as Commander in Chief, by also making him Chief of the General Defense Staff of the ministry of Defense. It put him in charge of both the army and the ministry of defense. The order was a cunning Coup de Frappe with Sukarno's silent support.

Even though Sudirman's move came late, perhaps too late to be of any political impact, it was a definite signal to politicians that in wartime the army was essentially the people's and military affair, instead of a matter of fooling around with abstract economic calculations and political schedules (Nasution II a: Lampiran II). This fact would be driven home in the prologue and epilogue of the Thirty September Movement in 1965, which had a macabre and disastrous end in the murders of tens of thousands of helpless peasants.

It is important to note that in 1948 yet another dangerous situation surfaced. One very similar in motivation to the Madiun Affair, but that got quite a different response from the government. It took place in West Java, where Muslim militias

were just as angry about the government's ReRa operation and its dismissal of constitutional values and interests as their colleagues in Central and East Java were. They united in the Darul Islam movement and proclaimed Darul Islam, i.e. the Indonesian Islam state. This movement intended to replace the rotten Republic of Indonesia with a decent Indonesian Islam State. Whereas the so-called communist coup of Madiun got all the national and international attention, Indonesian and foreign parliaments as well as authors either ignored the D.I. event or treated it as a second hand affair.

In the 1950s the Darul Islam movement blocked communications with Jakarta and the surrounding areas in Java, as well as with the export areas in Celebes, and thus constituted a much larger and more sustained threat to the country's existence than the presumed coup attempt of Musso's PKI ever did. One cannot escape the notion that the Cold War climate determined domestic political and security priorities. This odd situation was made possible by the republican government's dependence on support from the Dutch and the Allied Forces, which were part of the Cold War against communism. Even Nasution mentions the Darul Islam emergency only once in his chapter on 1948, and he does not elaborate. His chapter on ReRa gives a clue to his ignorance. After the TNIs failure to successfully stand up against the Dutch army in August 1947, he moved to Yogyakarta. At the time of the emergence of the Darul Islam movement, he was highly involved with the regrouping of his demobilized Siliwangi division in Central Java. Moreover, in 1948, his work as chief of Sudirman's Army staff confronted him with the disastrous impact of Tan Malaka's campaign against him and Hatta, and against Western educated politicians and commanders in general, on his relation with the Laskar units in Central Java. The preparations for the expected second Dutch aggression also absorbed more of his attention than the Darul Islam event did. Nasution did not elaborate on the Darul Islam as a national threat in other publications either, unless its impact on the guerrilla capacity of the army demanded his attention. He never expands on the reasons behind his attitude.

### *The Sudirman/Nasution dissent*

With the arrival of the Hatta cabinet, Hatta took Nasution's earlier plan for an independent Indonesian task force as a lead. It had to be implemented immediately and Hatta sent his orders to the commanders in the field to do the job. However, in view of the expected second Dutch aggression Nasution's plan

had to be redressed. Sudirman and Nasution discussed the nature of the defense strategy. Should supreme command stick to Nasution's scenario after the defeat, constituting a small core of mobile elite troops and a solid base of stationary village militias, or should they opt for a different concept that would allow all troops and militias to have a place in the defense? This last option had Sudirman's preference. The first scenario necessitated the rationalization of all non-regular and regular troops and militias, which did not fit the plan. Sudirman considered it a threat to a unified command structure since the troops in the field rejected the option, which made them unreliable and not combat-ready. The second scenario promised a place in the fight to all troops and thus ensured obedience and rest. Nasution's felt that in the remaining few months before the Dutch aggression, such a mobilization was unfeasible, since it would not have enough military spin off. Without a strong professional military core, Indonesia would not be able to maintain mobility, cooperate with the local militias and constantly strike back from unexpected and reliably defended local edges and angles against the suspected Dutch aggression. What remained was nothing more than an enormous landscape of local trenches and foxholes without a central command and strategy. A dualist approach was unavoidable. The position of the Laskar village militias had a central place in the debate. They had to hold on to their position against all odds, and lacked the possibility to travel around to evade Dutch aggression and strike from behind, a situation they were unhappy with. They felt victimized by Hatta's and Nasution's plans which, in their view, condemned them to exploiting their inferior class position, i.e. *kelas kambing*, the goats cabin in colonial/Indonesian trains where peasants with their livestock were forced to stay on their way to the market. Professionals had the opportunity to hit and run, the Laskar village militias had the freedom to stay behind and be bombed.

A painful period in the first half of 1948 was Nasution's failure to succeed in the task given to him by Sudirman - winning the acceptance of the Laskar units and commanders for his dualist planning of a mobile elite core unit and stationary village militias. The Java based Laskar units rejected the plans. After that defeat, Sudirman took the Laskar under his own wings and pushed further for Sukarno's support of his Total Guerrilla concept. He contacted the representatives of Sjarifuddin's Front Demokrasi Rakyat (FDR) and the Biro Perdjjuangan, in an effort to get them behind the concept. That connection, which was Sudirman's personal affair, was an effort to temper the anger among Laskar, FDR and PKI members over the Hatta plans, since they involved the elimination of the political

parties from the reorganization. Sudirman kept his political efforts to himself and left Nasution out. Thus, several scenarios were in the pipeline at the same time, with Hatta's scenario and Nasution's plans under attack and Sudirman's scenarios being discussed with field commanders, the Laskar militias and FDR and PKI oriented troops. It created a climate of indecisiveness and division of command, which led to several deep misunderstandings and clashes between Nasution and Sudirman. The continuing tensions between the two commanders exhausted both, and in Nasution's opinion hampered the establishment of a united command structure. Another complicating factor was that the General Defense Staff at the Ministry of Defense had its own agenda and strived after its realization on its own. The situation as a whole made Sudirman announce his famous Stop Order, created by Nasution, in which he rejected the Hatta schedule and unified supreme command and general defense staff by putting both under his command. It had Nasution's full consent. Whatever scenario would end up coming to fruition, it was clear to both commanders that it needed political support and that they would need the freedom to act. To them, government was instrumental and not the leading branch, since politicians knew nothing about the military craft. Both commanders were also completely loyal to the president, in their eyes the only man who could keep the different interests and interest groups together. They viewed the government as an obstacle between the military and the president. This attitude remained intact until 1 October 1965, when six generals of the army top were killed at the command of Sukarno's security force, under the suspicion of preparing a coup. It meant the final blow to the military's trust in their president.

In hindsight, Nasution regretted his failure to win the Java based Laskar for his plans for a professional army core and a stationary Laskar base. In his opinion, his failure undoubtedly contributed to the clashes that eventually led to the Madiun affairs, in which the Laskar and other units under threat of rationalization considered Nasution to be part of Hatta's camp, which had to be wiped out. Nasution explained that failure as the outcome of being a Dutch educated citizen and military. He lacked an understanding of the emotive *semangat* spirit that reined Laskar militia behavior, as well as an understanding of their resistance against external top down command structures, which was not rooted in their small-scale group dynamics and did not have their approval. Sudirman in his turn understood the Laskar sentiments quite well, and met the Laskar objections appropriately. However, he could not prevent the explosion of anti-Nasution

sentiments and the accusations of being NICA agents against Hatta and Nasution which emerged in August and September 1948. According to Nasution, they focused on his KNIL past, his “Dutch behavior” and his loyalty to the Hatta cabinet. In Hatta’s case they focused on his Dutch past, and the arrogance of the disciplined and well-trained Siliwangi soldiers who supported the government’s political horse trade with the Dutch. At least that was Nasution’s feeling at the time. Hence, in his view, nationalist sentiments split the people in Java along the line of pro and contra Sukarno’s dealings with the Dutch, and pro and contra against the colonial Dutch educated legacy in the nationalist movement. The dissent did not hurt Sukarno immediately. He had a colonial education and many Dutch and Western contacts, and was a necessary part of the Independence effort. No one could replace him.

### *The Solo affairs*

Nasution draws attention to the demographic and catering problems Central Java had to deal with after the regrouping of tens of thousands of demobilized troops in Central Java, which meant a multiplication of people who needed food. The problem was worsened by the fact that family members of the regrouped troops and other fugitives also followed, adding to the number of immigrants. In the rural rice economy of Central Java, which had been ruined by the Japanese demand for small and large cattle meat, Malthusian checks developed, i.e. violent rampage, starvation and civil war. There is no doubt these problems worsened the tensions between the military units.

Nasution reports that on September 14, a number of PKI-oriented Laskar units of the irregular marine Panembahan Senopati division attacked troops of Ali Sadikin’s Siliwangi Brigade in the Solo/Surakarta region. Commander in Chief Sudirman immediately ordered the fights to stop and approached Nasution to remove the Siliwangi troops from Central Java, send them to West Java and stop further escalation. Nasution was not prepared to do this. Subsequently, Sudirman went to Solo to meet with the fighting units. However, during the following days the skirmishes severed, revealing deeply rooted sentiments of mutual hatred. According to Kahin, on 17 September Sukarno ordered a first stage Martial Law in the Solo region and Semarang, i.e. the State of Danger (*Keadaan Bahaya*). Ali Sadikin’s Siliwangi Brigade remained in control of Solo city, whereas the rebelling units of the marine Panembahan Senopati Division remained in position at the city’s precinct. Actually, as Harry Poeze from the KITLV emailed me, Sukarno conceived the order on 16 September, and published and implemented it

on 17 September.

On that last date, Sukarno also appointed Colonel Gatot Subroto, Commander of the Corps Military Police, as military governor of Surakarta and Semarang. In that authority, Subroto issued his Decree No. 1, which mentioned and condemned the skirmishes in Surakarta, and ordered the fighting units to cease their fighting as soon as possible, ultimately at September 20, 12.00 hrs. He ordered all commanders to report to him in the Residency Office, in order to explain their position vis-à-vis the government and receive orders on how to restore order. According to Nasution, it was this decree that triggered the start of the Madiun affair the next day, 18 September 1948 (Nasution II a, 86). The final explosion came on 18 September, just as Siliwangi Intelligence had predicted. On that day, TNI units of Amir Sjarifuddin's Biro Perjuangan seized power in Madiun and arrested the Chief of the Defense Staff of East Java, as well as staff officers, District Commanders, and the regional commanders of Military Police and others, and killed several of them. They were replaced by FDR officers and administrators (Nasution II a: 81- 85). According to a 2005 interview with PSI commander Soemarsono, no killings had taken place. He had led the seize power of Madiun and it had no communist background, just a local defensive one against Siliwangi.

According to McTurnan Kahin the TNI units were PKI oriented Pesindo units. Nasution does not mention the background of the units. The rebellion showed how dangerous the construction of troops was under party political control and command. It split the army in a TNI part and a party political part, which in light of Amir Sjarifudin's plans to escalate the pressure on the Hatta cabinet by mobilizing the military units under the Biro Perjuangan, increased the danger of local civil war. Musso fed the public's fear of civil war, as well as Nasution's and the government's, by incorporating Amir's Plan B in his own plan of action. McTurnan Kahin reports that almost immediately, the Hatta cabinet started removing FDR and PKI oriented field commanders from their post by moving them to less dangerous positions or retiring them.

At the request of President Sukarno, in the night of 18 September, Nasution conceived a 'plan de campagne' for taking out the rebels and the communist party. In Yogyakarta, Colonel Suharto also did an efficient job. While the whole campaign lasted about two and a half months, in one night, he had abandoned and arrested the local branch of the communist party. Sudirman did what he had to do, and commanded the strike units that crushed the rebelling troops that

allied with FDR and PKI, but God heard him mourn. However, his call for a peoples' war was not heard again until 1 October 1965. Nasution took a breather and then restarted his work on his dualist strategy. In December 1948 the long expected second Dutch Aggression began. The Indonesian troops operated according to Nasution's plan of local flexible assaults, based on village militias and mobile units, cutting enemy lines and attacking from behind. Contrary to the first Aggression, the Indonesian forces operated in a more disciplined manner and according to plan, but they never reached the level of an army with a central command organization.

### *Conclusion*

The Solo and Madiun affairs were immediate outcomes of the ReRa issue raised by the Hatta cabinet policy of bringing army command under total government control. It was the second time a large-scale conflict erupted between army and government; the coup attempt of 1946 which I did not discuss in this chapter, being the first. The 1950s would bring new conflicts, such as 17 October 1952, the 1955 affairs and the 1957 affairs. Whereas Western literature on the early republic focuses on the analysis of the 1948 events and in later years on the competition between army and PKI over political power, Nasution presents a different picture that shows the birth convulsions of the TNI and the inability of the Sukarno government to get permanent grip on those dynamics. He viewed that encounter as more serious than the competition between Army and PKI, because the 1948 situation concerned the rebuilding of a combat ready army as the one and only guarantee of defense against Dutch imperialism and retaliation. The 1 October 1965 affair was the last time army and government openly opposed each other. Under Suharto, any conflicts remained more or less invisible to the public. According to Nasution, quibbling between army and government about military matters was characteristic for the first two decades of the republic, as was the army command's fear of the PKI infiltrating the battleground again, like it did in 1948.

Nasution's reconstruction gives no answer to the question whether 1948 was a political or a military affair. Before 1948, politics and military command were heavily interwoven as far as planning and operations went. The political parties had direct access to the units and vice versa. However, Hatta's coup de frappe of making the military budget a cabinet matter and excluding the political parties from control over any military command, appeared to make army reorganization



an exclusive matter of cabinet and government. On the other hand, Sudirman's Stop Order of 12 July 1948 was another coup de frappe, bringing ministerial planning, financing and operational command under his personal leadership. This made the planning and countering of military action once again a primarily military affair. However, his move came too late to get a grip on both the growing unrest between loyal and disloyal troops, as well as the formation of a left wing front headed by the PKI, set up to support the protest of the disloyal troops against the ReRa plan. As mentioned above, the power struggle between army and government continued during the whole of Nasution's career. In the 1950s, and based on the experiences of the Independence War, army command was of the opinion that the army was the prime people's representative, standing beside and above the government, serving as watchdog. It followed Sudirman's line of taking initiative whenever needed. According to Nasution, the main problems were the birth convulsions of the TNI, which had great difficulty accepting government authority and a central military command. Consisting of a bunch of undisciplined units with bossy commanders, most of them without military academic qualifications, the army lacked the basic characteristics of a real army, and remained stuck in the legacy of the Independence War - a free military enterprise with a direct relation to the president. Nasution considered it his task to overcome the convulsions and build a proper combat ready republican army that could manage any foreign and domestic threat.

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# Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ Papuan Nationalism. Another Blind Spot



Stimulated by the closing lectures of professor Wertheim, we are in search of signs of ignorance in and on the Indonesian past this morning. Put in other words, we are looking for blind spots in the history of Indonesia during the first decades of its existence as an independent state. In historiography, it is a well-trodden path, which leads us from 19<sup>th</sup> century positivism to the peregrinations of post modernism and after.

In their daily practice, historians and social scientists have never fully embraced either one of these philosophies. After all, the first approach would have led us to make ever-expanding lists of facts without offering understanding, the other towards an empty space crowded with ghosts we are unable to define. More often than not, historians have looked for what is relevant for their understanding of past and present, aware of the fact that both things are interrelated. As far as I understand, it is in this spirit that Wim Wertheim presented his farewell lectures here in Amsterdam, and it is in that same spirit that we have to look for blind spots today.

## *Nationalism in the making*

In their contributions, Mary van Delden and Coen Holtzappel have already discussed some of the events of the 1940s. Their focus was on the dispute between the different groups in the centre of the young Indonesian Republic about how to organize their state and wage their struggle for independence. In the afternoon, our attention will shift to the mid-sixties, and mainly to the same kind of questions. To bridge the gap in time and subject, I have decided to focus

on the New Guinea dispute. It enables us to shift our attention to the fifties and early sixties, to international affairs and, above all, to the way both parties handled the crucial matter of Papuan nationalism. I will say something about its origins, the way it popped up in the fifties and survived on the stage of history until the present day. Moreover it will give us a fine opportunity to test how the phenomenon of the blind spot works in policymaking and the process of history writing.

Nationalism, then, can be summarized as the political expression of a sense of collective identity. A special brand of it developed in the early twentieth century in the more progressively administered European colonies in Asia. Its development is aptly described by Dutch civil servant Jan van Baal in his small but penetrating booklet, *Mensen in Verandering* (Van Baal 1967, pp. 90-99). In such colonies, and he meant the Netherlands Indies, modern rule and economic exploitation demanded the creation of effective administrative structures and the accompanying paraphernalia of education, infrastructural works and means of transport. To man the colonial state, promising young men from the native elites received professional training and were put to work in various parts of the vast colonial domains. In doing so they transgressed the boundaries of their previous native lands and got to know the wider colony as their own country. It also meant partial adaptation to the culture of the European colonists. The latter, however, had difficulty accepting them as equals in the colonial enterprise. This confrontation led to the development of a new sense of identity, leading to the sprouting of nationalist movements everywhere. In Indonesia these found their focal point in the Youth Conference of 1928. Here, the new nation was provided with the symbols of a national oath, a flag, a national anthem and the acceptance of a common language. They were the symbols of the new nation on the road to independence in the second half of the forties.

That nationalism, however, did not spread equally over the whole of the archipelago. Its creation had mainly been the work of the Javanese-Minangkabau elites that had delivered the cadres for the colonial state. The people from the Moluccas had played a rather important role in this process as well. However, many local and ethnic groups only followed at a distance, especially in the eastern part of the archipelago. Of these groups, the Papuans had been left out nearly completely. They lived in some of the least developed areas and had hardly participated in the forming of the colonial state. Until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century

the Papuans had no sense of having a common identity of their own. In this region, modern colonial development and the accompanying processes of acculturation had started late, and as a consequence the Papuans had missed the nationalist boat. None of them were present at the 1928 youth conference and everything that went with it. Even so, it is questionable they would have participated anyway, given the cultural distance between them and the rest of Indonesia.

In 1945 as well, when Indonesia's independence was declared, no Papuans were present. That is not to say that they were ignored without a word. Their future was rather extensively discussed in the meeting of the preparatory committee for Indonesian independence on July 11th 1945. Prominent nationalists discussed the territorial extent of their new state. Most prominent among them were Hatta and Yamin. The latter pleaded for the greatest possible territory, including the surrounding British possessions on Malaya and Kalimantan. In his opinion, Papua belonged to the Indonesian lands as well. Although the population differed from that of the rest of Indonesia, the Indonesians had dwelt there since immemorial times, which was sufficient to defend its inclusion in the new state. Moreover, the internment camps in Boven Digul had strengthened these ties in recent times. In this respect Yamin was warmly supported by Sukarno, who added that anybody who cared to cast a glance at the map of the archipelago, could see it lying there. So obviously, it was the will of God that New Guinea be a part of the new Indonesia.

One of the other speakers, the Sumatran economist Mohammad Hatta, took an opposite view and warned his audience against all too imperialistic propositions. Partly he did so for financial and organizational reasons. For the first decades to come, Indonesia would not have the means at its disposal to develop the backward lands of the Papuans. But he had a moral argument too, adding he was not convinced by Yamins arguments in support of uniting the population with the rest of Indonesia. In the end, it was left to the Papuans themselves to decide what kind of state they would prefer. It was an argument in favor of the right of self-determination, but Hatta did not find much support among his audience. When it came to voting, only 6 of the 66 members of the committee opted for his proposal to leave out West New Guinea. They obviously accepted another thesis of Yamin, that if the Papuans were no Indonesians yet, they could be made to become so. Thus, the preferences for a greater Indonesia were laid down for the future.

*Conflict with the Netherlands*

Another central decision of the preparatory committee for Indonesian Independence was that it laid out its preferences for a unitary state under strong presidential rule. It was to become the core of the ensuing conflict between the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch later in the year. After they had sufficiently made up their mind, the Dutch opted for self-determination and federalism as the central values for the making of a new Indonesia. That option served two ends. The first was to restrict the territorial extent of the Republic, the second to do justice to the wide variety of cultures and different stages of development within the archipelago. It led to the agreements of *Linggajati* and *Renville*, which were difficult to swallow for the Indonesian Republic. It resulted in the *Round Table Conference* of 1949, which created a federal Indonesia in which actual power was in hands of the leaders of the former Republic. However, it enabled the Dutch to reconstruct their economic position and left West New Guinea in their hands for the time being.

That RTC-decision marked the beginning of a 12-year conflict about the future of New Guinea. It stimulated the Dutch to begin a series of programs to accelerate development of the country. These were essentially the same development policies as applied in the Indies before 1942, but this time decidedly more based on the principle of self-determination. Thus they left open the possibility of a Papuan option for Indonesia from the beginning, but *within a changing perspective*. During the first few years, the development of New Guinea was seen as a long-term affair. On a practical level, relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands were still effective. Yet these deteriorated systematically, leading to increased pressure on the remaining Dutch interests in Indonesia. These developments were parallel to a decline of the Indonesian parliamentary system. When in the second half of the fifties all other options for putting pressure on the Dutch were exhausted, Jakarta began to mobilize any means at its disposal to remove the Dutch with force from their remaining position in New Guinea. From 1958 on, President Sukarno and his foreign minister Subandrio saw fit to exploit the Cold War to this end. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were incited to provide them with modern armament. They did so successfully. After a few years, Indonesia was in possession of a military might with the capability to beat the Dutch.

This military development was part of a broader phenomenon. The Cold War accelerated the process of decolonization all over the world. The United Nations played a crucial role in this process. In October 1960, the Soviet Union introduced

the General Assembly to a draft declaration declaring all colonialism an evil that had to be swept from the surface of the earth as soon as possible. It was eventually accepted on 14 December. The quality of the administration and the capacities of a population for self-government were no longer acceptable preconditions for independence. In doing so, the UN not only weakened the position of the Dutch, but that of the other European colonial powers as well.

Meanwhile in New Guinea, the Dutch were countering these developments with a flight forwards. Existing development programs were accelerated. More attention was devoted to the training of Papuan elite. Increasing numbers of Papuans entered the lower and middle ranks of the civil service. Moreover, regional councils were erected, giving the population a direct say in the running of its local affairs. On top of all this, a *New Guinea Council* was created in April 1961, partially chosen and provided with advisory powers on a wide range of topics. It was the beginning of an independent political life of the Papuans, which led to a flowering of political parties. To the Papua elite, it offered many opportunities to take initiatives of their own. Later in the year, they established a National Committee that voted for a national flag, an anthem and some other tokens of nationhood. It was a neat repetition of the *Sumpah Pemuda* of 1928. This time, however, not directed towards the formation of an Indonesian nation, but one of the Papuans themselves.

In its international policies, the Netherlands played the cards of the UN, trying to solicit the organization to take a direct say in the administration of the Papuans. It was an endeavour to surpass Indonesia in the fight against colonialism. Apparently, the Dutch were working for the sake of self-determination for the Papuans, while Indonesia stuck stubbornly to the proposition that they were already theirs. It was Indonesia, and not the Dutch that were the colonialists. That Luns-plan might have been a brilliant idea, but in a world divided in political and cultural blocks, it did not work out well. The Dutch minister failed to collect the votes he needed for the acceptance of his plan, not least by the subterranean but effective opposition from the United States. The result was an invitation from the Secretary General of the United Nations to the disputants to come together and resume their discussions on the fate of the Papuans, this time under supervision of a third party. In light of the Indonesian preconditions, acceptance could only mean acceptance of the Indonesian claims. Grudgingly the Dutch cabinet agreed. The meeting led to new negotiations. These took place under increasingly grim conditions of threatening war and continuing US pressure. On 15 August 1962,

the New York Agreement was signed which provided for the transfer of the administration to the UN as a step to an Indonesian take-over. The only concession to the Dutch was the option of an Act of Free Choice for the Papuans in 1969 under Indonesian administration. It was close to a failure of Dutch policies for self-determination during the previous 12 years.

For most Papuans as well, it was a bitter pill to swallow. At the time, a new future was starting to appear at the horizon as an independent state of their own, possibly linked together with the rest of the Papuan lands in a Melanesian Union. It led to heated discussions among themselves and with the flabbergasted Dutch. For the Papuans, these discussions took place in a spirit of a fervent new nationalism, and the possibility of declaring independence on their own initiative was seriously discussed. However, it was rejected in the end. Upon insistence of the Dutch, the Papuans accepted the agreement and decided to wait for the 1969s Act of Free Choice.

### *Two nations together*

So far the story of rising Papua nationalism in a nutshell. It offered a striking parallel to earlier developments in the rest of Indonesia. Both stemmed from the first generations of Western trained cadres, and both were modeled along the lines of the modern national state that had developed in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth centuries. However, both nationalisms turned out to be detrimental to each other. Papua antagonism towards its western neighbors had its roots in the past. The wanderings of Yamin's ancestors had mainly consisted of slaving raids on their coasts. It was followed by condescending behaviour from Moluccan officials in service of the Dutch. Nevertheless, for many years the door had not been closed completely. Whatever their shortcomings, many Moluccan gurus and administrators had served them well. The developments in Indonesia after 1945 had been followed with interest, and had not been completely rejected. When the option of separation arose in 1949, some of the Papuans had hesitantly accepted it. After all, Indonesia would become the nearest neighbor, and good relations would be necessary for their own survival. Yet, developments in Indonesia soon widened the gap. The dissolution of the federal states and the war in Ambon had taught them that not much freedom for minorities was to be expected in Indonesia. When Yamin, as a member of a combined Dutch Indonesian fact finding committee, visited New Guinea in the summer of 1950, he had great difficulties in finding traces of sympathy for the Indonesian cause. It deteriorated in the following years. Dutch development policies were warmly

accepted by the Papuans, which widened their distance from Indonesia. So did hesitant cooperation with Australia, with its implicit promise of a future all-Papuan or Melanesian state. Still later, the impending war brought them to think of their Indonesian neighbors as foes. It was accelerated by Indonesian propaganda through radio Makassar and Ambon, threatening Papuans who assisted the Dutch.

Later experience was to confirm this trend. After 1962, right from the beginning the intruding Indonesian soldiers, behaved as hostile occupants. Every Papuan nightmare came true, and years of oppression followed. The Indonesian administration was marked by suspicion towards the Papuan elite, which was subsequently replaced by newcomers. All modern facilities crumbled away and they had to learn to live as third rank citizens in an impoverished and badly managed country. Those who dared to speak up for themselves were beaten, jailed and killed. When Indonesian foreign minister Adam Malik visited the country in 1966, he was shocked by the arrogance among the rulers, and the depression he encountered among the ruled. The Act of Free Choice was duly held, but manipulated by Indonesia from beginning to end. There has been continuing repression and exclusion from the rest of the world ever since.

### *Blind spots everywhere*

The story of Papuan nationalism is a story of blind spots everywhere. They can be detected in the behavior of the Dutch, Indonesians, Americans and other participants in the UN. For any of these, explanations may be found. However, that exceeds the scope of this presentation. So let us concentrate on the blind spots of the main players in the field, that is to say: Indonesia, the Dutch and the Americans, and even those we will touch upon just lightly.

First *Indonesia*. We have to go back to the meetings of the preparatory committee for Indonesian independence of 1945. There, a large majority accepted the inclusion of the Papuans in the new state, without giving much attention to their wishes. For most of its members, it was quite evident that the Papuans would accept this without protest. If not, they could rely on the assurance of Yamin that the Indonesian state would be able to educate them in the spirit of its own nationalism. Thus, its leaders simply acted as if Indonesian nationalism was already an accomplished fact, and refused to accept it when this proved not to be the case. During the big campaigns of the fifties in support of the struggle for West Irian, the people of Java were made to believe that the Papuans were



already full-fledged Indonesian citizens, craving their liberation from Dutch rule. So when its soldiers and administrators entered the country in 1962, it came as something of a shock to them that they were not met with a warm welcome, but with suspicion. The Papuans recognized them as their earlier foes. As we have seen earlier, the new rulers did not much to improve that situation and continued to make it worse in the years after. To the Indonesian mind, Papuan nationalism was not an acceptable proposition. It was negated and repressed, as is done to the present day. If there was ever a blind spot for Papuan nationalism, it was here.

Next, there are *the Dutch*, about whom a word must be said. We have seen that they had pushed the cause of Papuan nationalism to the limits of its capacity. They had done so, not because they deemed the time ripe for it, but for political reasons. It was accepted in Papuan circles, though not without misgivings. The cleverest among them felt it was an initial maneuver by the Dutch in order to sneak out and eventually leave them in the dark with the Indonesians. This suspicion proved justified by the facts. Nevertheless, they played the game as best they could. However, chances for Papuan nationalism were over by the time it was born. In the summer of 1962, Dutch policies took their decisive turn. Since that time, Papuan nationalism did not suit them any longer and it was nearly completely forgotten. All attention went to the renewed friendship with Indonesia, but the Dutch never put pressure on this friend in order to make it keep its promise of fair treatment of the Papuans. During the Act of Free Choice, the Dutch kept quiet. On the road towards it, in May 1969, the Dutch and Indonesian ministers Malik, Luns and Udink met in Rome to pacify any remaining doubts. During that meeting they took note of each other's plans: the Indonesians promising a honest plebiscite, the Dutch direct support for the development of the Papuans through independent channels. They made it public in a solemn statement. However, when it came living up to the agreement, Indonesia backtracked. The plebiscite turned out to be a fake and any direct links with New Guinea through third channels were not acceptable to Indonesia. Any support for New Guinea henceforth went through IGGI and Bappenas, where Papuans had no say. Therefore, in the end they were left empty handed. It was accepted without visible protest. Their fate and ambitions have been a conspicuous blind spot in the Dutch-Indonesian relations ever since.

This was true as well for the United Nations and Australia, the most interested foreign countries. In the United States, policies were guided exclusively by the

demands of their Cold War with the Soviet Union; for Australia the wish to retain a Western power in New Guinea proved the underlying need for working relations with its northern Asian neighbor. The fate of the Papuans, let alone their political aspirations, was hardly a matter of relevance to the leading politicians of these states. If any, manifestations of Papuan nationalism in the early sixties were nearly completely dismissed as a result of rather opportunistic moves on the part of the Dutch. The end of the conflict and the transfer of West New Guinea came as a gift from heaven to most of the Western countries and it enabled them to settle their relations with Indonesia on a more stable foundation.

Finally a word about the academic world, especially in the Netherlands. The end of the conflict with Indonesia created new opportunities. A cultural agreement was reached, which was part of the *Program Indonesian Studies*. The program promoted academic cooperation with Indonesia between 1974 and 1992. But in this case as well, it was quite evident that Indonesia was not willing to accept special Papuan-programs that might have political implications. Therefore, the program remained limited to some anthropologist, linguist and bibliographical projects. This was also true for the Iris projects led by Stokhof since 1992. As far as I can remember, this restriction was accepted as a matter of fact by all academics involved. We were very happy as well with the new opportunities to cooperate with Indonesian institutes, and it was not hard to accept some limitations. After all, not much was heard about Papuan nationalism at that time.

Outside the sphere of direct cooperation, scholarly work on New Guinea concentrated on internal Dutch and international policies. The conflict with Indonesia about the future of New Guinea was studied as being the result of some deviations in the Dutch psyche, or as the outcome of international machinations. You can tell from the titles, running from Lijpharts *Trauma of Decolonization* to *De Nieuw-Guinea kwestie, aspecten van buitenlands beleid en militaire macht*, written in 1984 by the former Secretary of State for Defence De Geus. There were comparable publications from R. Gase and the journalists Van Esterik and Koster. Here the focus is on the behavior of Joseph Luns and his manipulation of American promises. Other works focus on the personal experiences of the Dutch soldiers and administrators in New Guinea. All of them fine works in their genre, but they remain silent on the fate of the Papuans. The only real exception is the work of former civil servant in New Guinea, Kees Lagerberg, who published *West Irian and Jakarta imperialism* in 1979. The role of Indonesia and the fate of the

Papuans were discussed in a factual and critical way in this book. No wonder the Indonesian government disapproved of the book. Lagerberg was called in at the embassy in The Hague, and was censured sternly for his foolish behavior of seeing things different from Indonesian orthodoxy. He was forbidden to enter the country for years. It certainly was no stimulus for others to tread the same path. And so, in Dutch academic circles, the subject of Papuan development, their ambitions and their nationalism remained a blind spot. With some exceptions, the same was true for the English speaking countries. Notable exceptions here were Nonie Sharp, Robin Osborne and Carmen Budiardjo. In Indonesia itself, John Djopari saw fit to place critical notes in his 1993 OPM study.

### *The surprise of 1998 and after*

Under these conditions, the developments in West New Guinea in 1998 came as a big surprise, for Indonesia as well as the rest of the world. In that year, in the closing days of the Suharto regime, out of the blue the Papuans proclaimed themselves loyal to their earlier nationalism, waving the long forbidden flag and collectively singing their never forgotten anthem. They organized mass meetings and formulated their demands to the Indonesian government. They invoked their national rights, and asked for a reprisal of the sadly mismanaged plebiscite of 1969. They wanted to make history right, as the phrase rang. The result was that Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid spent the first day of the new millennium among the Papuans, promising them greater freedom and, if it came to that, even the right to secede from Indonesia. Ever since, the wheel of history has been turned back considerably, but not to the point where it all started. Talks about greater autonomy are going on, but pressure will be necessary to bring the Indonesians to real concessions. However it may be, the issue of Papuan nationalism is back on the agenda, and it deserves the attention of policymakers, historians and social scientists alike.

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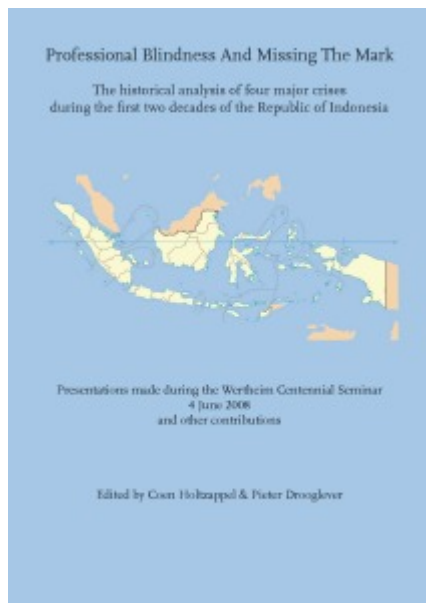
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# **Professional Blindness And Missing The Mark ~ The Thirtieth September Movement As Seen By The Perpetrators. Between Registered Facts And Authoritative Opinions - Part One**



*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 Politbiro 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 led 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 Saastroredjo, 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; Ichtisar 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 (Ichtisar 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***

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



## *Who informed Untung about the Council of Generals? Evidence problems*

In the previous paragraph I referred to Untung's information and support network. In this paragraph I will reveal some details about it. According to Untung himself, his search for the Council of Generals began on August 4, 1965, when Lieutenant Colonel Ali Ebram, head of the intelligence service of the Tjakrabirawa regiment, informed him about the president's collapse earlier that day. Ex-Minister Subandrio calls the illness "a trifling flu" in his Memoirs, and the rumor about it a serious provocation (Perkara Untung: 55; Subandrio 13). According to Crouch the rumor originated from Brigadier General Djuhartono of the Joint Secretariat of the Functional Groups (Sekber-Golkar) and was quoted the next day in a column in the army newspaper Berita Yudha (Crouch: 96). The officers subsequently contacted by Untung for a meeting discussed the security risk posed by the rumor, probably since it might move the Council of Generals to strike first (Perkara Untung: 37, 38, 91). However, after sending his aide-de-camp First Lieutenant Dul Arief on reconnaissance, Untung concluded there was no solid evidence against the suspected generals, only publicly known professional information, as well as hearsay. Asked by the chair of the court during the first fact finding session of Untung's trial, what facts he had about the existence of the Council of Generals, Untung answered "I had no facts or evidence but I was convinced that the Council of Generals existed and indeed planned a coup. What I

received were only statements, but when needed, I can forward witnesses” (Perkara Untung 1966: 36, 164, 212). Witness Air Force Major Sujono admitted during Untung’s trial that communist team member Sjam, and the other team members were also of the opinion that there was no solid evidence (Perkara Untung: 104). These facts are absent from Roosa.

Crouch mentions the fact that “very little evidence for the council’s existence was provided” (Crouch: 106). But that is not what Untung and Sujono meant to say. Their judgments raise the question that Crouch did not put forward: what to do in the absence of solid evidence, and why act against the generals if there is no solid evidence against them. Without such evidence one cannot surprise the president with a bunch of chained up generals with the message that solid evidence is absent but they were probably preparing a coup and he should interrogate them. In my opinion, the final decision by team member Colonel Latief to kill the generals was a radical but simple solution to the evidence problem and to the related problems of how to eliminate the risk of a generals’ coup, how to prevent a major embarrassment for the president in face of failing evidence, and to prevent a counter strike by the army.

The only man who according to Untung gave him concrete information about the Council of Generals and who became the main argument for the continued hunt on the Council of Generals, was Brigadier General Supardjo from the West Java based Siliwangi division. Since Supardjo was one of the president’s trustees, and stated he was a member of the Council of Generals and knew of their plan, Untung thought him to be the man to convince the president of the coup risk and lead the delegation that would report the arrest of the generals to the president. Supardjo also claimed to possess documentation of the coup plans (Perkara Untung: 164, 168, 193). In his self-defense speech, Untung stated that he heard General Supardjo was a member of the Council of Generals as early as August 1965, and found out it was true when he checked the information with Supardjo in September 1965 (Perkara Untung: 208). In the chapter “My Testimony about G30S” of his Memoirs, Subandrio states that when he asked Supardjo if there was a Council of Generals he answered “It is true. They are busy raising new ministers” (Subandrio: 16). It is conceivable that Untung sent Supardjo to Subandrio to discuss his knowledge, as he did with other informants. Untung admitted that Supardjo had provided him with the bulk of the information he managed to collect about the Council of Generals (Perkara Untung: 164).

Initially, during the trial sessions, Untung did not mention Supardjo as the provider of evidence. However at the end of his court interrogation, at the advice of his lawyer Gumuljo, Untung called witness Major Rudhito, member of the administration of General Nasution's SUAD VI command and head of a committee that supported Untung's action. He was one of Untung's infiltrators in General Nasution's office. Rudhito first talked about Supardjo's double role.

In his exposition about Supardjo's evaluation of the G30S action included in his book, Roosa does not mention Untung's and Rudhito's references to Supardjo's double role in the prologue of the G30S (Roosa: 88-94). This absence is curious since Roosa apparently did read the pages of Untung's minutes in which Supardjo's double role is mentioned and discussed, because he refers to other items mentioned in these pages. He also missed Untung's self-defense speech in which he talks about his knowledge of that double role.

Rudhito explained how in the period from 11 to 16 September, Mohammad Amir Achsan, member of the Muslim party Nahdatul Ulama NU, provided him with reports about the Council of Generals. On 26 September four people from the Nahdatul Ulama, among them Achsan, as well as people from the IPKI, approached Untung with detailed information about the Council of Generals. They presented a tape made on 21 September 1965 of the constituting meeting of the Council of Generals in the building of the Military Justice Academy (Akademi Hukum Militer; AHM). Untung had seen and heard the tape and in court listed the names mentioned on the recording. He also stated that Achsan had assured him that the reports about the meeting as well as copies of the tape had been forwarded to the president, to the Kotrar, the Committee for the Retooling of the Government Apparatus, and finally to the Ministry of the Prosecutor General (Perkara Untung: 162, 164, 165, 170-172). Here we see the collecting of evidence about the Council of Generals by civilians and reporting it to the authorities, a contribution called for in Subandrio's subversion alarm of June 6 1965.

In his Testimony about the G30S, Subandrio states that on 26 September he had a meeting about the tape with the same four NU and IPKI people that approached Untung earlier that day. Probably Untung sent the four to Subandrio. Subandrio listened to their story, took the tape and handed it over to President Sukarno. Both listened to it. Hence, Sukarno got the tape from several sides. Subandrio commented that the fact that 4 civilians leaked highly sensitive information to outsiders appeared suspicious and it might have been a fake and an indication of

something big (Subandrio: 16-17). In this case it is clear that both Subandrio and the President were informed about the danger of the Council of Generals. In light of the lack of response on earlier reports, the tape must have been meant as a final warning to the president that a coup was imminent. The president responded by keeping it silent and not making the accusations public. He invited Yani and Suparman for meetings on 1 and 3 October without mentioning what about. Latief and Sjam did not expect any disciplinary measures to come from this, and they decided to go ahead with the assassination of the generals in order to eliminate any risk of deception.

Rudhito's summary of what he heard from the tape is interesting in this perspective. According to Rudhito the generals discussed the foundation of a Council of Generals, an agenda of action, the composition of the junta cabinet, and the date of the coup, i.e. 5 October 1965, Armed Forces Day. However, the chair of the court meeting called for attention during Rudhito's testimony. He quoted a report by the ODANG Committee of investigation about the 21 September event. According to the chair it showed that the meeting was a Commander's Call Koplats, organized and attended by the commanders of the Military Training Centers with a role in implementing the educational program for the new Tri Ubaya Sakti doctrine. During that meeting General Yani gave a briefing about the doctrine and the program (Perkara Untung: 169). The evidence and the text read by the Prosecutor are missing from the minutes, i.e. neither the list of evidence for the indictment at the beginning of the Untung minutes mentions it, nor the page where the reading of the text itself is mentioned (Perkara Untung: 22, 165). The fact that the coup rumor was rooted in Aidit's accusation against the Tri Ubaya Sakti doctrine and that the tape identified the meeting of 21 September as the founding of the Council of Generals and the discussion of the coup plan, whereas the ODANG Committee states the meeting was about the implementation of the Tri Ubaya Sakti doctrine, is significant. Coincidences can be very informative. These facts were not detected by Crouch, nor by Roosa.

#### *Who informed Njono and the PKI about the Council of Generals and Untung?*

During his recall Njono conceded that he got his information about the Council of Generals, and the counter action by the so-called progressive officers, from discussions in the CC PKI Politbiro that took place in August 1965. In its turn, the Politbiro owed its information to PKI chair Aidit who got his information from Brigadier General of Police Sutarto, head of the BPI intelligence staff of Minister

Subandrio, as well as from other sources. According to Njono, Aidit deemed Sutarto's information about the Council of Generals and Untung's action to be the most reliable available (Perkara Njono: 256). The information indicated that the danger posed by the Council of Generals was real.

During his self-defense speech Njono explained his choice for supporting "the military" as follows, "I stick to the opinion that the Council of Generals was a political situation, not just vicious slander. The following considerations are important. ... I ask the attention of the Prosecutor and the Court for the statements of the Minister of Justice Astrawinata S.H, who repeatedly pressed the people to build up social control and provide "social support" for the investigations of (Police) and Justice. [Apparently Njono referred to Subandrio's subversion June 1965 alarm when he called on the people to help police and authorities trace subversives. Njono's reference to the function of that call - building up social control and social support by reporting to police and justice; in other words uniting the people and government together in the battle against Western subversion - is interesting.]

The information I talk about, I got from political key figures and competent government officials and not only from one source but from several sources, such as the BPI and from SUAD I (Yani's staff, C.H.). I was also informed by the Lubang Buaja group that the office of the Prosecutor General, in particular Brigadier General Sunarjo, Assistant Minister for the Prosecutor General, had received information about the Council of Generals. At the end of September 1965 these reports had been supplied based on information from SUAD I and had been received by Brigadier General Sunarjo ( ...). The nature of the information provided by the BPI was precise, detailed and mentioned date, hour, place, names, agenda and other things. I ask you, if the information that was forwarded by many sources and so precise may be called "inside information" and should be conceived as slanderous rumors? Is it not conceivable that such information constituted precisely the need of social control and social support that Minister of Justice Astrawinata called for (Perkara Njono: 275-276)?"

Njono's statement shows that there were leaks in the SUAD I office that informed other authorities and agencies about the Council of Generals, including the PKI and Njono. Untung's witness Rudhito was a leak in Nasution's office. Hence, a broad network of private and official security agencies was involved in tracing subversion and tracing the Council of Generals for that matter.

Njono felt backed up by all these authorities which led him to believe he was



doing the right thing by supporting “the military” and Sukatno’s request for extra civilian manpower. However, by doing this he ignored the CC PKI Politbiro’s decision to stay out of Untung’s action and leave the matter to the president (Perkara Njono: 50, 63, 65, 70, 73). When one of the judges asked whether as a PKI member, Njono was in a position to provide support to the “military” without official accord or order from above, Njono answered “that it could happen in Jakarta, as it happened elsewhere in Indonesia” (Perkara Njono: 62-3, 79, and 102). When asked about the party background of the labor outsourced to Sujono, Njono replied that they were not PKI but came from the mass organizations (Perkara Njono: 78). Njono thus indicated that the mass organizations had self-governance and that local PKI leaders had similar freedom. This casts doubts on the general view of the PKI as a highly centralized organization. Roosa concluded from his interviews with ex-members of the PKI’s executive board that Aidit was the boss and ran a rigid regime (Roosa 2006: 153). However, although that opinion might have existed within the PKI headquarters, it was not necessarily true for local PKI branches and for the mass organizations.

#### *Decision making by the CC PKI Politbiro*

Whereas the indictment against Njono mentions the PKI decision to organize the G30S, Njono’s reconstruction of the decision making process presents a fascinating but confusing picture of the difficult situation in which the CC PKI Politbiro operated. According to Njono, PKI leader Aidit was initially prepared to actively support the action. The action plan for regions, cities and towns was ready, and flyers had been printed. The Prosecutor showed these to Njono, who admitted that they were real. However, in the end the PKI did not take a stand regarding Untung’s action, and instead left it to the president to make a decision, in the hope that he would take proper measures and either stop the movement or fight it in another way (Perkara Njono: 65, 73). The president as well as the party members were to be informed about the danger of the Council of Generals, but not about Untung’s action. There was to be no discussion at all about the military action within the party and the mass organizations, since only the president was to take action. The cause of this change in attitude was that voting for or against support of “the military” stalled in the end. Subsequently, the Politbiro dispatched a letter of information to the president in which he was asked to take action on 28 August 1965. PNI leader Ali Sastroamidjojo, the Perti, Subandrio and other parties received copies of the letter. Njono does not mention the other parties but probably referred to members of the 10 parties that signed the Bogor Declaration

of 1964. Up to 1 October 1965, there was no reply from the president, nor were any measures taken against the Council of Generals. It meant that the biro remained inactive and was getting fed up. Njono even admitted that he as well as the Politbiro had no idea whether the president had received the letter; “we heard nothing about it” (Perkara Untung: 70, 73). Apparently, the Politbiro did not know about the president inviting Yani and Suparman for a meeting.

The Politbiro did nothing to support the military while waiting for the president’s reply. Njono stated there had been no consultations whatsoever with “the military”. The action against the Council of Generals was deemed to be an internal military affair that the PKI should not become involved in (Perkara Njono: 63-64, 69). Hence, Sjam’s intermediation between the PKI and the Untung-group as mentioned by Untung during his trial must have been a matter between Aidit and Sjam (Perkara Untung: 35, 54). This information escaped Roosa’s attention, who only focused on Sjam’s 1968 confession, in which he stated that the Untung team was part of the Special Bureau of the PKI. However, by constantly keeping Subandrio informed about Sjam and blocking Sjam and Major Sujono’s efforts of getting the communist mass organizations involved in the G30S, Untung’s behavior shows that he fell outside the command of the Special Bureau. He primarily acted on behalf of Subandrio and the president, and as will become clear, Suharto.

The intellectual discussions of the Politbiro took place during three meetings in August 1965 and focused on the possible outcomes of the confrontation between “the military” and the Council of Generals. They started a few days after Untung’s meeting with Ali Ebram and from the beginning focused on Untung’s team and his strike against the Council of Generals. Apparently Aidit was certain that such a strike would take place. Even before Untung had formed a command team, Aidit already planned to take over Untung’s effort. One week later he sent two of his security men to Untung to make sure the G30S would take place. Untung could do nothing to get rid of the two.

The Politbiro was of the opinion there were two ways to prevent the Council of Generals from acting. Either the military would take pre-emptive action and report to the president, or the Politbiro would inform the president about the danger of the Council of Generals and await his response. The first option was the one favored and eventually executed by Untung. However, the Politbiro decided that the second option was the proper course of action (Perkara Njono: 73). One

of the reasons for this decision might be that any measures by the president would free them from responsibility for Untung's actions.

Three options were discussed in regards to the outcome of an encounter between the military and the Council of Generals:

- (a) The generals win and install a cabinet formed by the Council of Generals;
- (b) Untung strikes first and wins and a cabinet is installed by the Revolutionary Council. This option was embraced by Sjam in the Untung team. He was in regular contact with PKI leader Aidit who consulted him and opted for preemptive military action, provided the president had not taken measures against the Council of Generals;
- (c) a Nasakom coalition cabinet would be installed, which had the PKI's preference.

The Politburo commented that without strong military support the option of the Revolutionary Council would remain a loose political coalition of people and groups that might cooperate and reject the Council of Generals. It would not be able to fight against a military coalition or coup. Thus, a Revolutionary Council would need a strong military foundation, which was a matter of "the military" as the Politburo called Untung's team. Moreover, any measures taken by the Revolutionary Council such as de-commissioning the current cabinet and organizing general elections for a new People's Congress should also be the task of "the military". When asked who would install the Revolutionary Council, Aidit replied "the military" (Perkara Njono: 74, 77).

In all these discussions, the strength of the military foundation of the action was considered to be a deal breaker. When the chair of the court asked why the Politburo was so interested in the military substructure and what it had to do with communism, Njono replied that "it was just one of the factors that would play a role in the setup of the Council of Generals. Only when there was strong military backing, the Revolutionary Council would have *raison d'être* in the existing political situation, and then it was OK for the party as well." As one of the judges concluded, "All depended on how brave the military were and how far they were prepared to go" (Perkara Njono: 50, 52, 53, 73, and 77). He must have implicitly referred to the murder of the generals and sneakily accused the Politburo of urging the military to show their guts.

From his interviews with surviving members of the party office about the August

discussions, Roosa concludes that the PKI discussed a two-part action, and deemed the political stage more important than the military one (Roosa 2006: 94-98). Njono's reconstruction corrects this view and is more plausible than Roosa's, since a political movement wanting to seize power needs a strong military basis. The Prosecutor brushed aside Njono's reconstruction, based on Njono's own comment that although the G30S was an internal army issue "we the people (Rakjat) believed that what the G30S did was saving the revolution and the people", and "the leaders and cadres of the PKI strived after an active role." He concluded that instead of representing the real PKI stance, the letter to the president represented the wish of the majority outside the Politburo to support the military's action (Perkara Njono: 117, 127). Apparently, the Prosecutor hinted at serious dissent within the communist camp which up to now has escaped the attention of G30S analysts. With this statement, Njono suggested that Aidit's initial preference for a pre-emptive strike fit the voice of all the people who preferred action.

As far as a risk calculation was involved, the CC PKI Politburo recognized the option of a junta cabinet but apparently did not take into account a debacle such as happened on 1 October 1965 with the murder of the generals and the subsequent massacre of the Left Wing. The Politburo focused on the continuity of the Sukarno regime and bet on the president's determination to support the G30S as a revolutionary asset. As to the question what moved the sympathizers of the Revolutionary Council option to support the G30S, the comment of the Prosecutor in the Untung trial regarding the suspicious Decree No. 1 comes to mind. He called it "a rag tag of old fashioned ideas regarding a return to the dualism and liberal democracy and general elections of the 1950s (Perkara Untung: 189)." It is conceivable that a strong vote for a return to parliamentary democracy existed in the mass organizations and regions. In the 1950s the PKI experienced its electoral gains and successes, and was still an independent political force.

Why should we take Njono's confession seriously? John Roosa called him a "loose cannon" in his book *Pretext for Mass Murder* of 2006, because he constantly changed his mind, i.e. recalled the initial testimony he made and signed after his arrest. The attorney felt the same and the court accused him of committing perjury. Roosa concluded "Hence, his scenario is best put aside" (Roosa 2006: 146)." However, whether the court was right or wrong, Roosa's position robs the readers from Njono's statements, in particular regarding the connection to Subandrio's BPI, the dissent in the communist camp, the decision making process,

the cutting contact with the “military”, and the letter to the president.

*External corroboration of the Subandrio link*

Njono’s reference to the role of Minister Subandrio and his BPI office in informing the PKI about Untung’s action was corroborated by four authoritative sources. First there is Subandrio’s remark in his Memoirs that Untung told him Sjam often visited local internal army meetings about which he did not inform the team, and that Untung did not trust him. In hindsight, Subandrio commented that he suspected Sjam was a local CIA agent. This is the first instance we have of a clear external indication about dissent between Untung and Sjam within the team, and moreover shows that a report relation existed between Untung and Subandrio. Subandrio did not trust Sjam because of his double position as informant of the garrison intelligence and member of the PKI. According to Subandrio, Sjam delivered his country to the neo-colonial Nekolim forces (Subandrio 2001: 20-21). With this position he echoes Wertheim’s view of Sjam as a double agent.

Subandrio’s reference to his contact with the Untung team is corroborated by three unexpected sides. The first corroboration came from the American Director of the Far Eastern Region of ISA, Rear Admiral Blouin. On 4 October 1965 he wrote a Memorandum to Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs McNaughton, stating, “Sukarno knew what was happening all along and was lying low until he could see what was going to come on top. (Presumably, he (Sukarno, C.H.) hoped the Untung-Subandrio-Dani coup would succeed and the Army high command would no longer be a threat to his pro-Peking policy (Foreign Relations, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI: 305).” “Dani” refers to Air Force Marshall Omar Dani who despised General Yani. The Pro-Peking policy reference is to Subandrio’s flirtation with Communist China, aimed at getting Chinese support against the Western subversion threat. Air Force Marshall Omar Dani’s relation to Untung has been unclear up until now, since the Untung and Njono minutes only provide faint information and Dani himself remained silent about it in his trial as well in his Evaluation which is included in Roosa’s *Pretexts for Mass Murder of 2006*. Moreover, Crouch’s book *The Army and Politics in Indonesia (1978)* about the Subandrio trial, does not touch on this issue either; neither do Subandrio’s Memoirs. Interestingly, Subandrio admits in his memoirs that Dani’s trial did not regard the G30S (Subandrio 2001: 14). Most likely, Suharto ordered this change in the trial to prevent sensitive information about the BPI’s role in the hunt on the Council of Generals from becoming public knowledge since it would spoil the

attack on the PKI.

The second independent source corroborating Njono's reference to Subandrio is former RPKAD commander General Kemal Idris. In an interview in 1993, he talked about the so-called Supersemar event of 11 March 1966 which gave Suharto the opportunity to seize power. On that day, Idris and RPKAD troops took to the palace in Jakarta where the cabinet was meeting. He explained he was not after the president that day, but after Subandrio because "I believed him to be the man behind the G30S (Wawancara, in Forum Keadilan, No. 7, Tahun II, 22 Juli 1993: 34)."

This statement is corroborated in one of my interviews with general Nasution from 1993. He was one of the main targets of Untung's action, but managed to escape and survive. In that interview, he told me what happened a few days after 1 October, during a change-of-command ceremony that Subandrio attended as Inspector General of the Armed Forces. Whereas Subandrio usually arrived at such events in a fancy car from his ministry, this time he arrived in a Bren-carrier manned by heavily armed soldiers, probably Tjakrabirawa Lapis Baja soldiers who usually protected the president's transports. None of the attending commanders shook hands with him. They simply ignored his presence because they saw him as the man behind the G30S. Nasution felt sad for the man. Nasution's statement is remarkable since he had a long history of hating and mistrusting the PKI and Subandrio as treacherous partners in the Indonesian revolution.

Why should we believe statements from an American Rear Admiral and two outspoken Indonesian PKI opponents like General Nasution and General Kemal Idris, all pointing not to the PKI but to a completely different external driving agent? The answer is simple, because as PKI opponents they had no reason to spare that party. Then again, Subandrio was hated like hell in army circles because of his recent advances to the PKI which he saw as the anchor of Indonesia's future, as indicated by a CIA Memorandum of December 1965 (Crouch 1978). It is conceivable that these generals viewed Subandrio as a PKI ally and thus as a man who would deliver Indonesia to the PKI. However, it is equally conceivable that the connection between Untung's team and Subandrio and the authorities was widely known, as Blouin's Memorandum about the Untung-Subandrio-Omar Dani coup indicates, making the three judgments common sense.

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

September Movement As Seen By The Perpetrators. Between Registered Facts  
And Authoritative Opinions - Part Three