

could be implemented, the abortive coup of 30 September erupted, bringing an end to the Sukarno-Army-PKI alliance.

THE 30 SEPTEMBER EVENTS

This coup, led by Lieut.-Col. Untung a senior officer in the President's Palace Guards, and other middle-ranking officers, was aimed at the leadership of the Army. Six top-ranking generals were kidnapped and assassinated at the Halim airfield just outside Jakarta. The coup leaders occupied several important buildings in the capital where they had the support of Central Java battalions stationed temporarily in the capital.

At the time, members of some of the pro-PKI mass organisations were being trained for confrontation with Malaysia at the Halim Airfield training ground, Lubang Buaya. The coup leaders had brought the PKI chairman, Aidit, to their base at Halim, together with other political leaders, asserting that this was for their personal safety. Furthermore, the PKI daily, *Harian Rakjat* published an editorial in its issue on 2nd October, just before it was banned, expressing the Party's official view that the Untung coup was "an internal affair of the Army". The Army leadership advanced a very different interpretation: they saw Untung as the chosen instrument of the PKI and the coup as a first step towards a communist government. Under General Suharto, the army moved rapidly to crush the coup attempt, claiming that the entire communist and left-wing movement had been implicated in it. Army raids and mass assaults were launched on communist party and left-wing mass organisation offices which retaliated only in isolated areas, and mass arrests of their leaders were soon under way. During the course of 1966, some of those who had been arrested were

investigation into the massacres, was forced to sign over his powers - though not yet his position - to General Suharto. A day after the order was signed, thirteen of Sukarno's Cabinet Ministers were placed under arrest and a new cabinet was formed. More arrests followed and this time the net was extended to cover "pro-Sukarno elements" both in the civil and military apparatus.

DEATH SENTENCES

During the first months of 1966 a communist leader, Njoto, was brought for trial and accused among other things of having organised the recruitment of members of pro-PKI mass organisations to support the coup at Halim. He denied the charges but was found guilty and sentenced to death. Later that year, other trials took place, notably that of Dr. Subandrio who had been President Sukarno's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He, too, was sentenced to death.

Meanwhile, the PKI and all its mass organisations had been declared illegal and those of its leaders who had escaped arrest went underground. During the last months of 1966 and the first months of 1967, a new wave of arrests was launched against PKI members who were working to revive the party. When the underground movement in Jakarta was effectively crushed, efforts were made to create a PKI base in Blitar, East Java. This, too, was suppressed, and in 1968 there followed yet another wave of arrests.

Whilst some of those arrested during the succeeding waves of arrests are alleged to have been involved in illegal activities a large number were detained simply because of their past membership of, or association with, the PKI or its mass organisations at a time when these organisations were still legal.

Today, seven years after the establishment of President Suharto's New Order, the arrest of political suspects remains a continuing feature of the Indonesian scene. Even now, after years of consolidation and after general elections in July 1971 have provided it with powerful Parliamentary support, the Indonesian Government still sees those in detention as a serious threat to its stability. Their number remains in excess of 50,000. Up to the end of 1972, only about three hundred political prisoners had been brought to court; the vast majority has never been tried and the governments has itself admitted that it has no intention of trying them.

released but the numbers under detention still remained very high. In March 1966, President Sukarno who had tried in earlier speeches to stem the tide of persecution and who had instituted an

While the problem of the *tapols* still remains unsolved, it is scarcely possible to accept the claims of the New Order that it upholds the principles of democracy, humanitarianism and justice.

indonesian attitudes

"Hartono, my husband's secretary, why should he have been detained up to six years. He is a minor figure. He is not a political figure. That's unfair."

Mrs. Subandrio, the wife of the former Foreign Minister (sentenced to death) in an interview with the (now closed) Indonesian newspaper *Proklamasi*, April 1972.



Basuki Effendi, film director and former member of the left-wing cultural organisation LEKRA, now detained in Buru.

"For the Indonesian nation we should truly feel ashamed that corrections have been made by foreigners who came to our country as visitors and all the more so if we are incapable of producing correct arguments to reject their opinions. ... The question of political prisoners in Indonesia is an internal affair, but since it is a question that concerns basic rights and human dignity which are universal in nature, the government should not regard it lightly. ... Why has Amnesty International Committee come to Indonesia twice? Certainly because the world still considers that basic rights are not being upheld in Indonesia and that human dignity is not being properly respected."

Taken from an editorial published in *Dwi Warna*, on 8th November 1970, commenting on the visit to Indonesia of Amnesty International Chairman, Sean MacBride.