

category, consisting of those who have not yet been classified as 'A', 'B' or 'C' or whose former classification is up for reconsideration; there is yet another category, 'F', whose precise definition has not been clarified.

#### PRISONERS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Thus, the prisons and detention camps are filled not only with communists but also with leaders and rank-and-file members of the host of mass organisations connected in some way with, or generally giving support to, the communist party. Many such people have been arrested merely because they had left their houses during the massacres that swept the country during the last months of 1965. Added to these, there are numerous prisoners who were arrested merely because of extremely tenuous or purely social relationships with persons who were known as, or thought to be, communists. A dispute between neighbours or a scheme to oust someone from position or home can now easily be resolved simply by one of the parties denouncing the other to the local military unit.

There are also persons arrested merely because they happened to be in a particular house when someone there was arrested, or persons who insisted on accompanying a spouse or relative just arrested, simply to know where they were being taken, only to discover that they too were placed under arrest.

Where detention is made on the responsibility of a local commander, where all legal formalities such as arrest warrants have been totally dispensed with, and where decisions about a detainee's future and his classification are taken by intelligence or interrogation officers, it is easy to understand how so many people who have little or no political connections now find themselves under detention as political prisoners, in many cases for years, deprived as they are, of any legal means to challenge their detention.

One extraordinary case is that of the youngest prisoner known to us on Buru island. When he was eleven, his father and mother were both arrested. Too young to survive alone, he accompanied his mother to prison. She died some time later and the boy was taken to the father in detention at Nusakambangan, the prison island in Central Java. The father was scheduled for transfer to Buru, but died before this happened. Nevertheless, the boy was sent to Buru camp, where he is now held as a 'B' prisoner, the category reserved for 'committed marxists and traitors'.

# five of the a

To give the reader some idea of the extremely varied composition of Indonesia's political prisoners, we are describing the cases of five prisoners, all adopted by Amnesty groups. The spectrum goes from a well-known communist member of Parliament to a girl who knew virtually nothing about political affairs when at 13 years old, she was thrown into prison.

## sitor situmorang

Age: 51 years  
Occupation: Writer and Poet  
Date of Arrest: 1967  
Charge: None  
Trial: None  
Place of detention: Salemba Prison, Jakarta.

Sitor was born of Christian parents, in Tapanuli, North Sumatra. After completing his education at Dutch schools before the Japanese occupation (1942), he became a reporter. After the establishment of the Republic, he worked in Yogyakarta, Central Java, where he was imprisoned at the time of the second Dutch action against the Republic.

He first came to prominence in Indonesian literary circles in 1949 with a work defending the life and attitudes of the recently deceased poet, Chairil Anwar. From 1950 to 1953, he was in Europe and he spent one year working as Cultural Attaché at the Indonesian Embassy in Paris.

Back in Indonesia, he established himself as a prolific writer. In 1956, he published a collection of plays and a collection of short stories; a number of his works have been translated into English.

In 1959, he became founding Chairman of the National Cultural Institute, the cultural organisation of the Indonesian National Party (PNI). This worked in collaboration, on certain issues, with similar organisations of the Nasakom\* forum, which brought him into contact with members of the left-wing cultural organisation, LEKRA.

He was the head of the Indonesian delegation to the Asian-African Writers Conference in Cairo in 1963, and visited China after the conference.

Following this visit, he published a volume of social-realist verse entitled 'Zaman Baru' or 'New Era'. He also published two collections of talks on literature from a socialist perspective. By this time, his ideas had shifted considerably from his former defence of the 'art for art's sake' idea. He also became a Member of Parliament, representing artists.

After the 1965 coup, he retained his links with the PNI though a wide-spread purge was carried out, both in the party and in its mass organisations, against all those considered to have been active supporters of the idea of Nasakom unity, or among the radical leadership. But neither his Institute nor his works were actually banned as had happened with LEKRA and its members.

He was arrested in 1967; the authorities claimed to have discovered in his possession writings "critical of the New Order". He is believed to be still in detention at Salemba Prison, Jakarta.

In 1971, the Amnesty adoption group in Germany learnt that Sitor was an 'A' prisoner and would shortly be committed for trial. A lawyer was appointed to act for him but has never been permitted to visit the prisoner.

\* President Sukarno's policy of a union between the three main streams in Indonesian society, nationalism, religion and communism.