

dopted prisoners

sugiyah

Age: 20 years
Occupation: Schoolgirl
Date of Arrest: October 1965
Charge: None
Trial: None
Place of detention: Plantungan women's detention camp, Central Java.



Picture taken from Dutch TV film, KRO, about the Plantungan women's detention camp.

Born in 1952, Sugiyah has the doubtful distinction of having been arrested at an earlier age than almost any other political prisoner. When she was detained in early October, 1965, she was thirteen. She has now spent more than one-third of her short life in prison.

Sugiyah was born in Jakarta of poor parents. She completed elementary school education but due to the circumstances of her family, she had little extra cultural activity and can now do little more than read and write. She was not involved in any political activity before September 1965, but when in the second half of 1965, a group of her friends was recruited for the campaign of Confrontation with Malaysia, she insisted on accompanying them,not because she supported - or indeed understood - confrontation, but as a spirited girl she did not want to be left behind. Volunteer training activities were being held all over the country by the various political parties and their respective mass organisations.

Pemuda Rakyat, the PKI youth organisation, was the strongest youth organisation in Sugiyah's **kampung**, and it recruited the training group that Sugiyah joined. It went to a training-ground in Lubang Buaya, near the Halim Air Force base, which became the headquarters of the coup leaders in October, 1965. This was the place to which the kidnapped generals were taken on that night, there to be murdered and hidden. Anyone at the training-ground on that particular night is, by implication, regarded as having been 'directly involved' in the coup. Sugiyah was there and the charges against her are therefore considered to be serious.

Soon after the coup was crushed, a nation-wide campaign was launched in the press, highlighting atrocities alleged to have been committed at Lubang Buaya, including sexual orgies on the night of the coup. The young girls there were said to have prostituted themselves and to have slashed the genitals and gouged the eyes of the coup victims. To check the truth of these accounts, President Sukarno requested an official medical report for each of the victims; the medical investigations revealed no signs of torture on the bodies of the victims. But the charges of torture and atrocities persisted and were used to whip up sentiment against the organisations whose members were said to have been responsible.

During interrogations, many of the young girls who had been at Lubang Buaya like Sugiyah were forced to sign confessions about sexual orgies and atrocities. Following this, they were believed to be classified as 'A' prisoners awaiting trial, but in mid-1971, many of them, including Sugiyah, were transported to the Plantungan women's detention camp in Central Java where they are being held in indefinite detention as 'hardcore communists' and 'security risks'.

When Sugiyah was first arrested, she wept continuously for her mother. She was kept isolated in a cell, away from older women who could have given her the sympathy, understanding and affection she needed. She was completely unaware of the political implications of the events with which she had become so tragically involved.