

GESTAPU:

**Indonesian Short Stories
on the Abortive Communist Coup
of 30th September 1965**

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by
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INTRODUCTION

As Richard Hoggart has written: "Literature ... is a bearer of the meanings within a culture. It helps to recreate what it felt like to believe those things, to assume that experience carried and demanded those kinds of value. It dramatizes how it feels on the pulses to live out those kinds of value and, in particular, what stresses and tensions come from that living out"¹. The ten short stories collected and translated here deal with one of the major events in contemporary Indonesian history: Gestapu, the abortive coup of the 30th September 1965 and its aftermath, the destruction of the Communist Party of Indonesia, the Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI.²

The exact pattern of what happened and for what reasons is confused and, in many places, contradictory. The description below is intended merely to give a setting for the stories to those who are unfamiliar with the background. Scholars of politics and sociology will, I hope, find nuances in the stories themselves which will add to their already detailed understanding of "the abortive Communist coup."

One hour and ten minutes into his speech to the Association of Indonesian Technicians, President Sukarno, Great Leader of the Revolution, faltered and left the rostrum. Fears that the President was seriously ill were allayed when he returned and completed the speech. He finished with the story of Arjuna, hero of the wayang shadow theatre:

...How could he kill his own brothers?

How could he kill his own friends?

How could he kill his own teachers?

How could he kill his own brother, Suryoputro, who was given birth to by the same mother as he?

Arjuna felt weak. Krishna reminded him: Arjuna, Arjuna, Arjuna, you are a warrior. The duty of a warrior is to fight. The duty of a warrior is to wage war, when it is called for. It is the duty of a warrior to safeguard, defend his country. This is the task of a warrior. It is true, they are your brothers on the other side. Your own teacher. They will destroy the state of Pandawa. Strike back at them.

This is your task and your duty.

Carry out your task without regard to the consequences.³

That night six members of the alleged Council of Generals were killed by members of the palace guard, the Tjakrabirawa, under the command of Lt. Col. Untung.⁴

Three of the generals were taken alive to Halim airbase, outside Jakarta: Major General Parman, Major General Suprpto and Brigadier General Sujoto. Three were taken there dead: Brigadier General Pandjaitan, Major General Harjono and Lieutenant General Achmad Yani. A seventh, General Nasution, escaped, although his young daughter subsequently died of gun wounds. An eighth, Major General Suharto, was not at home.

At Halim, the living generals were killed in a particularly brutal fashion, in the presence of members of the communist women's organization, Gerwani, and the communist youth movement, Pemuda

Rakjat. The bodies were beaten, shot and stabbed. All six were allegedly mutilated through the gouging out of eyes and the cutting off of genital organs. One of the Gerwani who took part in what was supposed to have happened later confessed to the Djakarta Daily Mail:

Small knives and razor blades were distributed. I only got a razor blade. From afar we saw a thickset man wearing sleeping clothes, hands bound with red cloth and eyes also covered with red cloth. The platoon leader commanded us to beat up that person, then to cut his private parts. The first to start the beating and cutting we saw to be S and Mrs. Satro, leaders of the Tandjung Priok branch of Gerwani. Then followed other comrades Finally I myself joined in the torture. All the hundred women did likewise and were witnesses⁵

As Tarzie Vittachi has written: "Whether these stories are true or not is not important. What is important is that true, or only partially true, or false, they were believed by millions of people and by the Army. This was one of the major causes of revulsion against the PKI. ..."⁶

The bodies were finally dropped into a hole, thirty-six meters deep and one meter wide⁷ called Lubang Buaya, or the Crocodile Hole.

Members of the Tjakrabirawa had captured the radio station and the postal exchange. On the morning of the 1st of October, and repeatedly throughout the day, "The Movement of the 30th September" broadcast its communique "explaining latest developments taking place in the country. The statement said that on Thursday, September 30,

1965, a military movement among the Army took place in Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia, which was aided by other units of the other branches of the Armed Forces." An "Indonesian Revolutionary Council" was also announced, under the leadership of Untung, later in the day. Sukarno, although announced as being "safe under (our) protection" was not a member of the Council, nor was D. N. Aidit, Chairman of the PKI.⁸

The editorial of the PKI daily Harian Rakjat, written on the 1st of October, for the next day, described the Movement's actions as "patriotic and revolutionary," and condemned the Council of Generals for plotting a "counter-revolutionary" coup. The event was, however, described as "an internal Army affair." In the opinion of Arnold Brackman: "The editorial signed the Communist Party's death warrant."⁹

Sukarno had been awakened in the early hours of the 1st, and told of the shootings and the disturbances in Jakarta during the night. Hearing of troops near the Presidential Palace, he turned away and went first to the house of his fourth wife, then to Halim. There he met Air Vice-Marshal Omar, who was in command of the Air Force, Aidit, Colonel Latief and General Supardjo. Supardjo reported to Sukarno what had happened during the night, and Sukarno was reported (by Dhani) to have patted him on the back approvingly and said: "Good. Very good ... Now ... I do not want any more bloodshed." (Supardjo himself claimed that the President was congratulating him for promising that he would prevent further bloodshed, a rather different matter.¹⁰) By being at Halim, Sukarno had, as it were, chosen sides.

Suharto and Nasution at Army Headquarters took quiet and decisive action against the plotters. The troops gathered at key points in Jakarta - the 454th Battalion from Central Java and the 530th Battalion from East Java - were contacted and informed of "the correct situation." The radio station was quickly recaptured. By evening the rebellious battalions had surrendered. The city was in Suharto's hands. Sukarno, who had negotiated with various advisers and political and military leaders (although not with Untung or Aidit), had not come out clearly in favor of the Coup. At ten o'clock that night, he left for the palace at Bogor. Aidit had commandeered an Air Force plane and flown to Yogyakarta, "where he successfully attempted to prevent any large scale PKI uprising."¹¹ Dhani had left for East Java. By dawn of the 2nd of October Suharto's troops had occupied Halim.

Almost simultaneously with the establishment of Untung's Revolutionary Council, a revolutionary council was announced in Solo by Utomo Ramelan, mayor of Solo and a prominent PKI member.¹² Central and East Java were the heartland of the communist movement. It was in Madiun, East Java, in 1948 that the communist movement had chosen to attack the young republic with tragic consequences: "a bitter, bloody civil war between orthodox Muslims and syncreticist Javanese,"¹³ the santri and the abangan.¹⁴ Those who were partisans on the left "struck with extraordinary viciousness in the towns and across the countryside against influential Muslim orthodox persons, especially religious teachers and their students. Orthodox groups struck back, not simply at Communist partisans but also at anyone believed to be a Communist collaborator or sympathizer. This often turned out to be any strongly non-orthodox person."¹⁵

To many people, the 30th September 1965 was Madiun come again. The PKI had been agitating since 1963 for implementation of new land-reform laws. Sustained attempts had been made during 1964 and 1965 to mobilize peasant and share-crop farmers to claim their rights in a series of "unilateral declarations" (aksi sefihak). Much of Central and East Java is extremely poor. The South Coast areas cannot, in general, supply their own rice needs. There was much here for rural discontent to feed on. Further, with a decline in communal land ownership and an increase in landlessness and economic differentiation, there was also severe social dislocation, which particularly affected the youth, many of whom had been uprooted from village life but not fitted to find employment outside.¹⁶ Finally it must be noted that the relatively larger landholdings, particularly in East Java, are often owned by kyai or Muslim religious scholars. The campaigns of 1964 and 1965 seemed to many an attack on santri property.¹⁷ The land campaign had also been strong in Bali, where "confrontation between (the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party) was so tense that armed clashes had become a frequent occurrence,"¹⁸ and in North Sumatra.

For nearly a week after the beginning of October there was hard, if intermittent fighting around Yogyakarta and Solo, as Pemuda Rakyat and some mutinous Diponegoro battalion (Central Java) forces assembled in the Merapi-Merbabu area for guerrilla resistance. Insurgents briefly seized control in Semarang and there were also clashes here. Two battalions of Army Para-Commandos, RPKAD, were sent to Central Java by Suharto to reassert Jakarta's control over those who were in favor of the Movement. Aidit was captured near Solo at the end of November and shot. By the end of December the

"Red Berets" were withdrawn from central Java. The minimal resistance had been crushed.

With the Army's attitude to the PKI clearly established, the anti-communist initiative passed to civilian groups, particularly to santri-youth, who "brought to their work the enthusiasm of a holy war."¹⁹ Mass killings took place in Sumatra, largely in Aceh, and in Central and East Java-in both of these areas, santri youths were the chief civilian participants-and in Hindu Bali, where the leading figures were members of the PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party.²⁰ Estimates of the numbers killed have varied from 78,000 to one million.²¹ Occasional resistance, such as in the Klaten-Boyolali area, central Java, only whipped the counter-terrorists to greater fury.²²

At the beginning of 1965, the PKI claimed membership of more than three million members. To quote Aidit's figures, it had also a youth organization, Pemuda Rakjat, of five million members; a federation of trade unions, Sobsi, of three and a half million; a peasant organization, the BTI, of nine million; a woman's organization, Gerwani, of three million; a cultural organization of half a million; and a minor student movement, CGMI, of more than 70,000 members.²³ Because the party had been legal, and membership easy, the lack of resistance as the party waited for Sukarno to help it ride out the storm led to what J. D. Legge has described as "in any assessment...one of the bloodiest massacres in human history."²⁴ But many people said, "They would have done it to us, if we hadn't have got in first."

The final resignation of Sukarno, the restructuring of the party system and national policy, and the succession of Suharto of the Presidentship all lay outside the range of these stories.

Many of the stories in the pages that follow are told in the first person, by Muslim young men. There can be no doubting the genuineness of the personal anguish felt at the necessity to kill other human beings, despite the certitude that such things were necessary. There is a deep compassion for the widows and children, and a concern for the bitterness that they may eventually feel and the possible social consequences. Death is the dominant note; in many places the stories are grim, brutal, even sadistic. Underneath, however, is a deep humanitarianism. To read these stories is to understand a little better the agony that was Indonesia's in 1965.

Harry Aveling,

Penang, 17 May 1974.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Contemporary Cultural Studies: An Approach to the Study of Literature and Society", in (ed.) M. Bradbury and D. Palmer: Contemporary Criticism (Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 12, Edward Arnold, London 1970), p. 162.
2. "The press did not dare to report these events in detail for fear that they might affect public feelings," Sinar Harapan, 3rd February 1966 (quoted in A. Brackman: The Communist Collapse in Indonesia, Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, Singapore 1970, p. 125). The stories here were published in the two literary magazines, Horison and Sastra. In Horison: Satyagraha Hoerip, "Pada Titik Kulminasi", September 1966; Gerson Poyk, "Perempuan dan Anak-anaknya", November 1966; Zulidahlan, "Maka Sempurnalah penderitaan saya di muka bumi", March 1967; Sosiawan Nugroho, "Sebuah perjuangan kecil", October 1967; Usamah, "Perang, dan manusia", August 1969; Martin Aleida, "Malam kelabu", February 1970. In Sastra: Kipandjikusmin, "Bintang maut", November 1967, and "Domba kain", May 1968; H. G. Ugati, "Ancaman", July 1969; Mohammad Sjoekoer, "Maut", October 1969. Two further stories are not included here: Umar Kayam, "Bawuk", Horison, January 1970, and "Musim gugur kembali di Connecticut", October 1969, but are translated in my Indonesian Short Stories, forthcoming from Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), Hong Kong. A further story by Kayam, "Kimono Biru Buat Isteri", Horison, February 1974, and two others also on the Coup, will appear in a separate volume of translations of short stories by Umar Kayam. This list of short stories on the coup originally appeared in the article by Satyagraha Hoerip: "Pembrontakan Gestapu/PKI dalam Gerpen-cerpen Indonesia", Budaya Jaya, February 1972.
3. Brackman: The Communist Collapse in Indonesia, p. 71.
4. On the so-ca-led Council of Generals see Brackman: ibid, pp. 40-42.
5. Tarzie Vittachie: The Fall of Sukarno (Andre Deutsch, London 1967), p. 80. Compare John Hughes: Indonesian Upheaval (David McKay Company, New York 1967), p. 44.
6. The Fall of Sukarno, pp. 79-80. (Italics in original text.)
7. Ibid., p. 110.
8. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
9. The Communist Collapse in Indonesia, p. 82.
10. Ibid., p. 87.
11. J. D. Legge: Sukarno, A Political Biography (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1973), p. 390.
12. J. M. van der Kroef: Indonesia since Sukarno (Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, Singapore 1971), p. 8.

13. Robert R. Jay: Javanese Villagers, Social Relations in Rural Modjokuto (The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1969) p. 279 (slightly altered).
14. On the distinction between socio-cultural groups in Java emphasizing Islam (the santri) or syncreticist Javanese belief (abangan), see Clifford Geertz: The Religion of Java (Free Press, Glencoe 1960), and Robert R. Jay: Religion and Politics in Rural Central Java (New Haven: Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1963: Cultural Report Series No. 12). On the political implications of being "either self-consciously santri or self-consciously abangan", see Herbert Feith: The Indonesian Elections of 1955 (Interim Report Series, Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University 1957); and Robert R. Jay: Javanese Villagers, p. 279 - "Social intercourse and communications between villages with opposed orientations broke down; elections and public meetings in these villages became excuses for political feuding, and charges and countercharges were exchanged among village mates at these meetings in language highly offensive to Javanese notions of propriety. All this was deeply distressing to the bulk of the villagers."
15. Robert R. Jay, "History and Personal Experience: Religious and Political Conflict in Java", in (ed.) R. F. Spencer: Religion and Change in Contemporary Asia (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, and Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1971), p. 155.
16. Herbert Feith: The Indonesian Elections of 1955, p. 84.
17. Donald Hindley: "Alirans and the Fall of the Old Order", Indonesia 9, April 1970, p. 32n.
18. J. Elisco Rocamora: "The Partai Nasional Indonesia, 1963-65," Indonesia 10, October 1970, p. 163.
19. Hindley: "Alirans and the Fall of the Old Order", p. 39.
20. Ibid., p. 39; J. M. van der Kroef: Indonesia since Sukarno, p. 14.
21. Legge: Sukarno, A Political Biography, p. 398: Legge gives 200,00 to 250,000 as a "widely agreed upon" figure.
22. Brackman: The Communist Collapse in Indonesia, p. 109; J. M. van der Kroef: Indonesia Since Sukarno, p. 15.
23. Brackman: The Communist Collapse in Indonesia, p. 29, from Harian Rakjat, 20th August 1965. On the various organizations affiliated to the PKI, see Donald Hindley: The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951-1963 (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966), Part Four.
24. Sukarno, A Political Biography, p. 99.

CAIN'S LAMB

by Kipandjikusmin.

Karno shot himself through the head and died. Petrus the regent, on the other hand, was not seriously wounded and had time to think while he was in the hospital.

How easily, willingly, we sacrifice others - and ourselves - for nothing.

There is a story in the Old Testament. Cain, Adam's evil son, sacrificed a lamb. He slaughtered it, divided and burned it. For nothing. God hated Cain's evil and would have nothing to do with his offering.

We, the children of Cain, do as our ancestors did. Karno was no better than Cain's lamb. Human hands had robbed him of his simplicity, his beliefs, his reasons for living and his future.

No wonder he didn't want to live. No wonder he let life go so easily. It was so sad and futile. Cain's lamb.

Almost three weeks ago Karno had risen too late to hear the harbor sirens blare their welcome. The word spread from mouth to mouth: "The Kartika and the Mengkara have dropped anchor in Singapore."

Everyone in the small Buginese village where Karno had hidden the last seven months knew.

The English patrol boats had recently begun to be careless. In Singapore people were bored with "Confrontation" and dismissed it as "a paper tiger." As he walked along the beach Karno was stunned to see the Indonesian flag flying proudly on the two white ships.

"Confrontation is over, my son," Daeng Sambara called from his

front door.

"Over? Just like that? Was all this suffering for nothing?"

Without a word Karno went and threw himself on the bed. Then he stood and looked at his face in the mirror. He ran his hand over the white scar tissue and smashed the mirror to the ground. Daeng watched, with the reserve proper to an old man.

Poor Karno. His regiment had taken off their commando badges and been parachuted into Sarawak a year ago under the insignificant title of guerrilla.

The Indonesian government had decided to help the PGRS (Sarawak People's Liberation Army) - an unprincipled, ambitious group of Chinese communists - to destroy Malaysia. After many days of hunger in the thick jungle they finally made contact with the enemy they had searched so laboriously for: the British Raiders. He couldn't remember how it had begun because he panicked when the napalm fell on their ambush. He had been separated from the others by the burning forest. When he recovered consciousness almost his entire body was covered with burns. The pain seemed to sear through to the marrow of his bones. Eventually he learned that he was in a prison camp north of Kuching.

The slaughter began. Gurkha soldiers, children of Cain, sacrificed the diseased animals to God. Their god was the sadistic delight of torturing those who could not help themselves. For some reason Karno stubbornly insisted that he was not a member of the Indonesian Army. Despite his weakened condition, his lies allowed them to be more vicious. They tied his feet together and lifted him into the air from a helicopter. Further acts of cruelty were postponed to tomorrow as he saw healthier friends disembowelled through the anus.

Suddenly he heard that a cease-fire had been proclaimed. The

camp changed completely. The Gurkhas were now the friendliest men in the world. The forced labor on the emergency landing strip stopped. No one shouted at him anymore. It was just a matter of waiting until peace was announced. The Chinese communists tried to sabotage the whole thing. Because Karno was completely paralyzed, they sent him to a psychiatric hospital in Singapore. Careful nursing restored him to health but he still hated the vicious nekolim, neo-colonialist imperialists, for themselves.

The cease-fire was cancelled. On the night before he was to return to Sarawak, he strangled the guard and swam determinedly away from the beach behind the hospital.

The current carried him south and in his delight at being free he ignored the rough waves and the cold wind. He swam without even knowing which direction he was heading for, determined to drown rather than be recaptured.

As dawn came, his half-conscious body was lifted onto a prau. He could smell fish. The hurricane lamp was extinguished. Buginese voices and the sound of the waves played dully on his senses.

The coral island surrounded by mangrove trees was a world all of its own. Five fisher families and a number of smugglers lived in houses on the beach. In the distance one could see Singapore. Their ancestors had lived on the island for at least three centuries but they were still Indonesian.

The English patrols never found anyone. The sailors were used to running away and hiding. Karno was not the first guerrilla that they had helped.

Even when he was most in pain there were hands to help him. He

had dived twenty meters down from the hospital: his head often hurt and he regularly wanted to vomit. Pain made him weak and awkward. He was impotent. His general coordination was poor and his mind was so numb that he laughed at himself.

Yet he accepted his betterness willingly. It was for something. "No sacrifice is ever wasted," General Yani had once said, somewhere.

Daeng Sambara began to teach him about God. He prayed and learned to recite the Koran. But once the mirror was smashed he began to change. His paralysis vanished and he became more solitary, although unaware of his surroundings.

Confrontation had not ended as it should have. The Great Leader's vow that he would land twenty-one million volunteers in Malaysia was obscene nonsense.

"You look sad, my son," Daeng said as Karno stared at the red and white flag flying on the Mengkara.

"You know how disappointed I am sir."

"It was God's will. Surrender to Him."

"I can't understand why God wants it this way. My face is ruined. I'm impotent. I can't think. I'll probably die soon. All for nothing!" Karno spat on the sand.

"It wasn't wasted. God opened our eyes."

"What do you mean?"

"He wanted to stop us bowing down to stupidity. Confrontation was stupid. The nation is poor. We're in debt. The masses are starving. Every bullet we fired came from America or Russia. Is that how we prepare to win a war?" The old man stopped and gazed into the distance.

"The generals promised bombs. The only weapons they had were empty words."

"Was my suffering empty words?"

"You were victim of the nonsense and stupidity that we worshiped for so long."

Karno listened respectfully and was somewhat consoled.

"The stupidity is over, my son." Daeng left Karno to himself and Karno wondered what he would do. He could stay on the island but that would be dangerous for the rest of them. He was a murderer. He decided to return to Headquarters, Jakarta.

Daeng Sambara and the captain of the Mengkara were old friends. Ten years ago the captain had been in the coast guard. Daeng's smuggling always seemed to escape his attention. Because he was busy looking after the idiotic requests of his rich passengers, he readily granted the old man's request.

Daeng felt strange when Karno left. Life was too hard for the old man to be moved by something as simple as another man's going, yet Karno reminded him of himself. Twenty-five years ago he had killed a Dutch officer in a fight on a KPM vessel. After seven days in the brig, the boat had been bombed by the Japanese and he had reached Riau. He stayed there six months then made his way to Singapore. Like Karno he promised to return. He never did, nor did he expect Karno to.

Three days later the Mengkara sailed into the tranquil Koja Canal leading to Tanjung Priok harbor, Jakarta.

As the customs officers snapped orders and begged for goods from Singapore Karno slipped ashore. At Ular market near the warehouses of Koja he sold the watch Daeng had given him for ten one-hundred rupiah bills, the first he had ever seen. At the Jakarta bypass he caught a bus in the direction of his barracks.

When he reached Ch. it was dark. That confused him a little. The barracks had scarcely changed except that the roads were asphalted and there were bright neon lights. He heard someone coming and hid. It was a pregnant woman, Sgt. Major Karim's wife.

"She's well dressed. Just been shopping, I'd say," he decided. Suddenly he wondered why he was hiding. Was it because of his face? He laughed at his own foolishness. When the woman's shadow had gone, he stood and walked toward the bachelor quarters (Room B-37), where he had left his things.

As he passed house after house he quickened his step. He could hear the voices of women, children and babies from the married quarters, and a radio in the last house. Tomorrow was Heroes' Day. The day was being celebrated with due solemnity.

There was no one at the bachelor quarters. Before the young men had disregarded the vigil. He sat in a chair in the lounge, the same chair he had sat in to talk or play chess with friends. There was someone else's name on his door. A private. The name was unfamiliar.

Looking through the window he could see a photograph of a man with his hands on his hips standing over a squatting communist official, who was begging for his life. To the right of the clothes cupboard Karno was amazed to see a Vespa scooter. Suddenly he saw his face in the window and turned and walked towards the parade ground, to the marble monument which bore the names of those members of the regiment who had fallen in battle. He found his own name and shivered. "12 Dec. 1964. Cpl. Soekarno, lost in Sarawak. Declared dead on the evidence of the records of Operation Sky Hawk, IV Squadron, R.A.F."

He sat dazed, as though he had just woken from a dream. As he stood the questions crowded back into his head. What should he do?

The report was wrong. Should he plead he was still alive? That would destroy the last remnants of his pride in being a commando. No matter how battered that pride was, he wanted to retain it.

So, as far as his family and friends were concerned, he was a hero. If they knew he was still alive that admiration would change to pity, or even to mockery. He was a living memory of the sacrifices demanded by Confrontation. A victim of stupidity and idle chatter, as Daeng had said.

Three days later, Major Suyatman was talking to Piet Sujono, lawyer and regent, in the military command office in P. Piet was protesting that army brutality was leading to ordinary citizens being regarded as communists. The officer was patiently explaining that it was understandable that his men were a little "enthusiastic." Next to the major sat his new Chief of Staff, Lt. Bustomi, and his pretty secretary, Tiwi, recording the discussion. Suddenly Karno burst in, waving a tommy gun.

They stood. The room filled with the stink of alcohol and the presence of death.

"Where's the Commander?" Karno snapped. His aggressive attitude silenced Bustomi.

Staring fiercely at Suyatman Karno shouted: "Is it you? Did you let those bastards kill my family?"

"Who are you? What's your regiment?" the major replied coldly.

"Don't ask me questions. I'll kill you all." He pointed the weapon at Suyatman and a malicious expression covered his disfigured face.

Tense wires coiled around their hearts. They were speechless.

"I'm going to finish this fool of an officer first. The rest of

you shut up and stay where you are!" He advanced and held his bloody commando's knife to the officer's chest. "Tell me! How could you let them kill my father and the kids? Tell me, you swine!"

The regent suddenly jerked as though he had been punched. He recognised the voice. "Karno - is it you, my son? You couldn't have forgotten your Uncle Peter." The old man moved forward.

"Get back! To hell with your Uncle Peter!"

The old man moved back.

"Tell me, you devil, or I'll do you in with my knife and you'll never say another thing." Karno put the knife back in his belt. "I'll give you just five minutes. It's so inhuman. How could you have let it happen?"

The room was silent. A gust of wind blew the commander's pencil to the floor. Bustomi looked towards the drawer where the pistol was kept and decided that a staff position had effected his speed and accuracy. He prayed. Suyatman was a follower of the mystic Mbah Suro. Calmly he waited for the drunken young man to be covered by his inner strength.

"Why don't you say something, commander?" Karno exploded.

"Have you been drinking, Karno?" Piet asked softly. "How many bottles. We can drink together next time. All right? Go and wash. Have a sleep, then we'll talk. All right?"

"No! I'm not drunk. A little tipsy perhaps." Karno turned and his eyes momentarily dulled.

"Regent, you were a good neighbor of ours." His anxiety rose again. "I didn't think you'd be on the same side as these bastards. You're no better than the rest of them. Did you hear them scream as they died? Did it sound pleasant?"

Piet shook his head.

"I was out of town. I couldn't do a thing to stop it. The revolution goes on. It demands sacrifice."

"It's a cat-shit revolution. Only a fool could talk about revolution when things are this bad," Karno shouted. Piet realised he had said the wrong thing.

"Karno, do you remember Wiwied, the little fat boy?" He laughed trying to stir up enough of the old friendship to distract Karno. Karno ignored him.

Bustomi tried to think of a way to stall for time. The sentries were devout Muslims. Private Ahmad had taken the squad to the mosque for Friday prayers and left a civil guardsman on duty. As he looked at the knife he wondered whether it would be any use screaming when Karno attacked him.

The alcohol haze began to fade in Karno's head, leaving a precipitate of grief cruelly crystallizing in his heart.

"Don't try and lead me on, Uncle. I'm not the soldier who used to listen to your nonsense." He pointed at his face. "The English changed me. You people are no better than they are. You all like to see others suffering."

He stopped, his face a stiff wooden mask.

"I was glad to be back. I had suffered. I'd known what it was to be disappointed. I thought I'd find peace. The town has beaten me. I wanted to find my family." His grief stuck in his throat. "They would have been glad to know I was alive, even if I do look like this."

Suddenly he began to cry hysterically. The world seemed barren. The words began to pour out. "Instead I found a hell. The whole

family dead. The house reduced to rubble. Why did you do it? All right, so my father had a position in the Communist Party. Only this town could kill a whole family and burn its house down as well. And the rest of you just stood by and watched."

Piet raised his head in sympathy.

"I'm not the Karno you used to know. You'll find that out, you murdering bastards." He swore vilely as though the devil had taken control of his tongue. "I waited until they all went to the mosque. I took one of their guns. I showed them." He cackled. "It was so funny. They screamed for mercy. First they started falling down one at a time. Then they all went, like beetles jumping out of a frying pan." He smiled at the regent. "Just like my family. I've got my revenge." Obscene laughter rattled in his dry throat.

Noticing the arrogance in Suyatman's eyes, his face darkened. He had been patient too long. "It wouldn't have happened if you'd done your duty, commander. You should have been more responsible."

"I am, to the best of my ability." The officer was stung by the insult to his rank and age. "Stop trying to show us how brave you are. I think you're a brainless coward. Come on, shoot me. What are you waiting for? Only a bandit menaces an unarmed man," he mocked.

Angrily Karno took aim at him.

The major waited calmly. Before Bustomi could throw himself at Karno, Piet shouted "Karno!". Karno appeared not to have heard him. "For God's sake stop it, my son!" the old man appealed. "Remember your Creator!"

As Karno fired Piet ran in front of the weapon. Blood poured through his fingers from his shoulders as he stood and looked sadly

at the young man. The look changed to the sort of smile one shows a naughty child.

Karno was overcome with remorse. He had killed so many: thirty soldiers on their way back from the mosque, the civil guardsman at the gate. And now Piet the regent, the man he had admired for so many years. He wondered what they had done wrong.

The tears stuck in his throat and turned into the scream of a lunatic. He ran outside and they heard shots. Only when Piet fell to the floor under the chair did they realize what had happened.

Kebun Kosong,

Heroes Day, November 1966.

WAR AND HUMANITY

by Usamah.

Utomo Ramelan, the former mayor of Solo, was one of those who took part in planning the aggressive actions connected with the 30th September Movement. Unknown to all except eighteen people who had been carefully watching him and the way he organized his forces, he moved his offices to the court of Baluwati.

Two days after the Revolutionary Council was announced, the Communist Youth Corps, Pemuda Rakyat, left their bases in Semanggi, Kampung Sewu and Mejo, and jostled through the streets of Pasar Kliwon, Gading, down to Purwosari. They acted like braves who had just won the war. From time to time they shouted: "Down with the Council of Generals!" Although most of them were still boys, they carried Chinese guns marked "Chung" (peace) and this gave them an arrogant expression. Protected by their weapons, they launched a paper offensive.

I had organized my friends to listen to the broadcasts from Jakarta. It soon became clear that the communists had taken a leading role in the murder of the generals. Immediately after the coup, as we talked in small groups of politically like-minded friends, we had decided that what we had feared for the last five years had finally taken place. I was frightened.

The Armed Forces would no doubt regard Solo as one of the PKI strongholds. For five or six days we wondered whether members of the Silwangi division were being brought in quietly, because of their experience in fighting communists. At first I thought they were. But after we had provoked a few quarrels by tearing down the PR posters

and putting up our own to give the other side of the story, we learned that the rumours were untrue. Not one bullet was fired. The Army did not support us. They were busy elsewhere. We became reckless. The PR sent two special agents to my house. The third time they came, I met them and they asked me where Usamah was. I told them that he had gone home to his parents in Pekalongan.

I began to suspect everyone I met and decided to move from my aunt's house to the campus of Saraswati University. I was set on taking an active part in crushing the Communist Party.

A lot of things happened very quickly. There was a fight with several PR boys and some soldiers from the motor pool on my way to borrow weapons from Major Sdn of the Military Police. I wrote graffiti implicating Sukarno and Subandrio in the coup. The city police chief, Salopo, abused me, and I was locked in a cell behind the Wetan Pagelaran police station for saying that Sukarno masterminded the Coup. He was still His Excellency, Great Leader of the Revolution.

I set up a network in the kampung where the Communist Party was strong. Several members of the Anti-Communist Front brought useful information, which was very important when the Army Para-Commandos began looking for evidence to arrest people. We had the most complete intelligence service around.

II

At the beginning of November 1965, an interrogation team from the Action Command to Crush Gestapu was established in Solo. I represented Pasar Kliwon Command. The city office was set up in the town hall. I was first a typist, then an informant, and finally an

intelligence assistant. My duties were to check the accuracy of the reports we were given. It involved a lot of work.

There were other, unpleasant aspects. One had to interrogate prisoners, for example. I had not realized before that my life could be in danger; many of the prisoners swore silently to get me one day as well. I knew some of the prisoners and had twice to interrogate my own friends.

III

Mrs. Y taught civics in a Solo High School. We had often met at a friend's house, and had even met a few days before the Coup. We were interested in the same sort of things, and found it easy to talk. She was a member of a communist-dominated Teachers' Union. She told me that my friend's family disliked him.

She was very surprised to see me at the headquarters of the interrogation team. All along the corridors to the office she had chatted away. Now she was suddenly silent. She refused to accept what we were doing and threatened to report us to her brother, a colonel in Jakarta. "You cannot arrest me without telling me why!"

"There are a lot of reasons, Mrs. Y," I replied stiffly. She looked me over from head to foot. "Your brother is not a colonel. I know that. Don't lie, please. He's Tjugito." Tjugito was a member of the Central Committee of the PKI, and was later shown to have been present at the early meetings to organize the Coup.

Her eyes were as big as a large goldfish's. She did not look at me again. Although I had not meant to be, I had been rude. She had spoken proudly outside but I had stopped that. She was silent. The

rest of her answers were short and pertinent. There were not many questions that she refused to answer, and she did not argue with me. The interrogation went smoothly. The only accusation she denied was being at the office of the PKI City Committee when "the failure of the Council of Generals" had been announced. She tried to tell us that she had been out of town for a few hours. When a guard put a pencil between her fingers and began to press her middle finger down, she confessed that she had been in Solo but not at the PKI office.

"Where were you?" I demanded.

"I swear, dik Us, I was at home."

Her familiar reference scared me. The others must have heard it. Everyone in Solo suspected everyone else, even those on the interrogation team. Several days ago, one team member had been silenced because he knew a number of prisoners and had used his position to help them.

Anxiously I reminded her sternly that I was not the Usamah she had known before but she ignored me. Several of the guards were suspicious. I was forced to order them to "torture the bitch," and left quickly so that she would not say my name again.

She was sent to the operating room. I was ordered by the commandant to continue interrogating her while she was being softened up. I was stunned. Her skin was striped like a zebra. She was thinner than before and her ribs stuck out under her breasts like the keys of a piano.

It ended in the usual way. She confessed. I suspected that she could take no more and distrusted the confession. She was put with the other women prisoners in the Second Camp, behind the Town Hall.

IV

My experience with Dr. X was different. He was my aunt's family doctor and had attended my aunt, my cousins and even myself. I still had to go back to his hospital for more injections. He greeted me by reminding me of this. He was the friendliest doctor I had ever known. But he was also a leading figure in the Indonesian Scholar Association, H.S.I., of the Chinese Baperki University, a generous donor to PKI funds, a member of the Surakarta Revolutionary Council, and he had said that "the generals deserved to die" because they were "corrupt." His friendly smile upset my routine. I offered him a Menora cigarette. I regret that I could no longer consult him.

The evidence was clear and conclusive. There were transcripts of his telephone conversations with Utomo Ramelan, which showed that the latter intended to murder local anti-communists. There were photocopies of letters and memorandums he had sent to various members of the PKI and the Chinese political organization, Baperki, in Jakarta. There was a transcript of his address to the Academic Community of Baperki University, and pictures of the audience, including leading members of the Communist Party. It was complete. I had only to show it to him and ask him to sign the papers.

The team commander asked me to go over it all once more, in case I could find any new leads.

It was not as easy interrogating Dr. X as it had been with the others. The answers did not change, but his attitude was impossible. He denied every accusation, without giving any explanation. I was angry but found it hard to express my anger. I wanted to be unsentimental, but he was the family doctor, he had cured my aunt's chronic asthma, I had been

to him and needed his care. If he was anyone else he would have been softened up long ago. I was that irritated I even wanted to do it myself. But I found it difficult to play my role calmly. I suggested to my superior that he appoint someone more scientific-minded to work on the doctor. The commander misunderstood me and sent a torturer. I watched the familiar gangland scene, without being able to do anything to stop it. He screamed for mercy as the belt buckle rained blows down upon him. I suddenly wanted to vomit. Not from pity or because torture was unnecessary, but because I disliked watching the infliction of pain. I shivered as though with malaria.

The Smersh-like unpleasantness of it all upset me and my stomach started playing up again. I had to get out. I pretended that I wanted to piss and was sick in the washroom. I was terrified that if the doctor persisted he would have to be executed.

When I returned I learned in the corridor that the doctor had been taken somewhere quieter to be tranquilized. It was the first time I had heard the expression and to this day I do not really know what it means.

V

Bitter experiences such as these forced me to ask for a different position in the team. My request was granted. I was moved to the back of the Prison Administration Section at the back of the offices. The work seemed not too bad, although I had to suffer silently in another way and, to exaggerate, leave my conscience to self-destruct as best it could.

The Army had been angered by Sukarno's amused defense of the communist women's movement, Gerwani, as "good but unimportant" and "innocent." In his speech over Radio Indonesia he denied their involvement, for the most part, in what took place at Lubang Buaya. Many soldiers believed otherwise, and his "Mother's Day" speech led to the death of Sri and Mrs. Y. Poor Sri, victim of Sukarno's oratory.

VI

Sri was my classmate. She was a member of the communist student movement, CGMI, although I did not know this because there were no extracurricular activities at school. I didn't have much to do with her anyway. At twenty-four she was probably not one of the CGMI inner circle. I knew her mainly for her dancing of Arimbi in traditional wayang dance performances. I was amazed by the Interrogation Team's report that she had been at Lubang Buaya. I had seen her before the Coup, and about ten days later at the university anniversary celebrations with her boyfriend. That was irrelevant. Sri had to die.

At first she was pushed into the Second Camp and as I had recently taken over, I met her there and talked to her behind the bamboo gate. She cried and asked me to tell her boyfriend in Mertodranan what had happened to her. Deceitfully, or hypocritically, I agreed. He was no longer in Mertodranan, having been captured, and was in fact quite nearby, although she didn't know that. Both their positions were serious. So as not to upset her, I told her later in the afternoon that I had met him and that he was well. It was not an unusual thing to say, but she was suspicious and asked: "Is that all?" "Yes," I replied. "Thank God," she said and moved away from the fence because

a guard was watching us. I could see from her eyes that she did not believe me, and I wondered whether my lies had helped her or made her more worried.

The next day I was on guard duty. Solo radio relayed Jakarta's rebroadcast of Sukarno's speech. He cared nothing for what was happening in the real world, nor for the fact that Solo was in an unofficial state of war.

I can still remember how the soldiers reacted. They had probably seen the mutilated corpses. Several of them came to the town hall in a truck, shooting into the air and yelling cynically: "Long live Bung Karno and the Gerwani! Long live Bung Karno and the Gerwani!" I was startled by the noise and even more surprised when they crowded into the guard house shouting "Good night!" My anxiety gradually diminished when I realized that it was the army.

They asked for the usual thing: a list of names, information about the prisoners. They had to ask me twice before I gave it to them. Out of the A and B categories they chose various names, including Sri. As usual I went to the First and Second Camps and called them. The prisoners seem drugged by the shots. I was even more certain that this was war.

Some of the soldiers went with me. I had only to call the names, like a teacher calling pupils out of a classroom. It was not hard to call those whom I did not know. But in the Second Camp I panicked: Sri and Mrs. Y were on the list. I thought of cheating the soldiers by substituting other women but I was scared because they were checking the list by asking the prisoners their names. Finally I forced myself to call the two women last of all.

Mrs. Y bowed and passed me in silence. Sri said in Javanese: "How could you do this, Us? You don't even know whether I'm guilty or not."

I felt very weak. Her voice was very controlled. She knew where they were taking her. I said nothing. She probably thought that I was very cruel. Fortunately the soldiers hadn't heard her. What could I say? There wasn't time: I was only a sentry doing his duty. No doubt she felt bitter. I wanted to shout out and tell her that I wanted to call Kijem, the prostitute, and Gerwani, instead of her. But the soldiers were watching me. I was scared. Perhaps they would think I was in cahoots with her. Perhaps I did shout but no one heard me. I didn't dare. I couldn't bear picking out my friends so they could be executed.

My "friends" wanted to kill fourteen prisoners. It was a fait accompli. I was surrounded by soldiers as the truckload of fourteen future corpses drove away. In Mojo, a village in the west of Solo, we stopped briefly. Some of the soldiers were drunk. They shouted abuse at the women and made speeches in the Sukarno style. They were genuinely angry at his violation of their mourning. These things happen in war, morality had nothing to do with it. Their shouts grew more hysterical and reverberated throughout the village as the fourteen prisoners walked slowly to the river's edge.

Sri cried as soon as she was taken off the truck. Mrs. Y was calm, although her face was as bitter as a dry lemon.

They were lined up in rows at the steep bank of the river. I can still hear them weeping. Then I hear nothing. The world seemed to spin under my eyelids and I felt either sleepy or dizzy, God only knows which.

At one o'clock I was returned to my post and I telephoned my report to the commandant. He was apparently used to such things, for he merely asked me to send him a statement in writing.

That was the end, I couldn't take any more. It was war, and had the PKI won, what happened to Sri might have happened to me. Such things may have been necessary and common, but I couldn't watch them happen. No one was to blame. Throughout these notes I have deliberately altered names. Without the commandant, the team, the soldiers who taught the communists the same lesson they taught Sri, Mrs. Y and Dr. X, we might still be fighting the 30th September Movement. Solo in particular, and central Java in general, could have become another Da Nang and Vietnam. If all men behaved as I did, the situation might have been reversed. The communists could have taken the initiative. I decided to leave. I had to get out of Solo.

For five hours I tried to draw up a report showing why what had happened was necessary. I couldn't. I couldn't put the blame on Mrs. Y and Sri, nor could I objectively report that Sri had been imprisoned and executed without even being interrogated first. I decided to absent myself from further duties, without informing the commandant. The report was never finished; I never saw the commandant again.

My aunt was the only person I told that I was going back to Pekalongan. On the night bus I felt that I was leaving all my cares far behind me. I didn't give a damn what anyone might think or do. I was bored and I couldn't lie to myself any longer.

None of my friends knew that I was going. Was I running away? Yes, I was. They would talk about me and say that I was a coward, although they had no right to do so. I didn't care, I had to rest.

Perhaps I was trying to answer Sri. I hadn't wanted her to die mistrusting and hating me, as she probably did. Her death depressed me. I swear to God I couldn't have watched it.

Jakarta,

21 - iii - 1969.

DEATH

by Mohammad Sjoekoer.

The jeep stopped in the curve in the middle of the clearing, followed by two trucks. We leaped off the last truck, our hearts beating wildly as we tried to control our emotions in various ways. The heavy afternoon rain had muddied the earth, but the sky was clear and the air crisp. The sickle moon of the seventh day of the Muslim month of Shawal had long ago sunk in the west. It was a very quiet night.

We stood in groups around the truck, waiting for further instructions from the commandant. He was busy talking to his subordinates, behind the jeep. The middle truck was fifteen meters away and seemed fierce, stiff and mysterious. Although it carried twenty people, no one but the driver had descended. They had to wait for us. And we had to wait for the order.

Of the eighteen of us, only Gumun was not afraid or anxious. His tall, thin body towered proudly above our frightened bodies. Malabar, a brave, open man, was trying to hide his fear behind a facile but false smile. The others, like myself, felt hot and cold.

"You're shaking, aren't you?" Malabar whispered. His voice sounded strained.

I nodded. The others were smoking. I knew they all felt as I did, except Gumun. They were afraid. No doubt anyone would have been. We were about to see something we had never seen before, nor would probably ever see again. Malabar had no need to lie. Perhaps he was afraid because Gumun showed absolutely no fear at all. But he felt

that he had to say something impressive.

"Huh! You're all a lot of stupid fairies. We should be grateful that it's not us there. They failed. They could have taken over, then we'd be the ones to suffer. Maybe something even worse."

He smiled, like a man skilled at analysis, but the cowardly tone of his voice betrayed him. "They've sinned. They beat and fought everyone who wasn't on their side. Their teachings changed them into a pack of wild animals, ready to take power any way they could. And they tried to. But God is merciful. Truth and justice will always prevail at the right time. Tonight is the right time."

I leaned against a mahogany tree and lit a cigarette. Malabar's lecture made no impression on me. Everyone is born and raised with difficulty, and lives and fights the same way. The communists didn't look vicious. God had created them too.

I regretted having come. The military commandant of the city lived in our subdistrict. We were on good terms; he insisted that I come. "It'll be good experience, friend."

I could still have refused, but several of my friends had been on other nights and I felt left out. Ali had insisted, I was frightened but wanted to go. Now I was in agony. It was even worse when Tuhri, one of my companions, came and told me that Baidi was on the other truck.

"Stop that row!" a policeman snapped.

Baidi had been in my class at school. He always failed arithmetic and geography. We studied chanting together at Kyai Kamdani's surau.

There wasn't much time to be sad. We were quickly ordered to get the prisoners down one by one and take them to a certain place about fifty meters from the road.

"Don't be worried: They're tied up and they've got sticking plaster

over their eyes," the commandant said. He was a small man, whose voice was heavy with authority. He looked rather smart in his badly cut lieutenant's uniform. He left us. A few of us looked at each other for emotional reassurance.

"Don't feel so bad. Imagine it's a wild bull you're getting rid of. Let's drag them there," Malabar said.

Finally we did as we were ordered: took them down one by one and led them into the rice field. There were two large holes there. I looked for Baidi but it was too dark to see him.

Tuhri and I led a tall man dressed in a sarong and pyjama top. We held his arms tightly. I wanted to do the decent thing and ask him his name and where he came from, but repressed the thought at once. The answer would have made me sentimental. I doubted if they knew what next lay in store for them. Suddenly he asked softly: "Where are you taking me, sirs?"

I looked at Tuhri and wondered what to do. For a moment Tuhri was silent. Then he said: "We're taking you to another prison, father."

"Why is the ground so muddy?"

There was nothing we could say. We felt sorry for him.

At last they were ready. Each hole was about one and a half meters deep. We lined ten men up at each hole and sat them with their feet inside. A squad of soldiers in camouflage jackets and five policemen from our subdistrict stood about twelve paces behind them.

"Ready!" the commandant shouted, snatching his pistol and pointing it into the air.

I shivered. The wind seemed to flow over my body and the presence of death was very real. We clenched our fists and held our breath;

everyone was very hot. I was still looking for Baidi. The pistol shot was followed immediately by a loud volley and a bright flash of rifle fire. Twenty human beings screamed and fell into the holes. It was horrible. I shivered again, aware that if I didn't try to control myself I would faint. I had never seen men kill each other before, nor so many dead all at the one time.

I concentrated on remaining conscious. Several of my friends stood as though bewitched.

A second volley of shots into the two holes soon stopped the pathetic screaming and crying. Then everything was very quiet.

I fell down and sat under a coconut palm. What I had seen seemed suddenly like part of a play or a movie, and not an actual execution at all.

The others gathered and waited for the hoes to fill the holes, but I stayed where I was. They had died so easily, so pointlessly, futilely, and were buried like animals.

Later, when I returned home, I couldn't sleep.

Yogyakarta,

January 1969.

STAR OF DEATH

by Kipandjikusmin.

Ktut Geria felt the cold morning wind as soon as he stepped onto the Madurese prau. In the distant dawn darkness he could just make out Gilimanuk beach. Something inside him made him shiver.

He sighed and lay down on the deck. Although he was tired because he had not slept the previous night, his eyes would not close. He was as confused and tormented as the nation itself. The sailors, true sons of Madura, did not interest him. The whisper of the waves on the walls of the boat scarcely touched him. A flicker of weariness passed over his face and vanished with the wind. So he was finally leaving Java. It had been his first visit and the island represented a collage of proud and horrifying dreams.

The student movement, CGMI, congress in Jakarta. The fierce rallies in Senayan stadium. The secret meetings and the military training at Lubang Buaya. The climactic assault on the generals. When the RPKAD para-commando troops smashed the movement, he had been lucky enough to escape to central Java, walking most of the way, day after day. The caretaker leadership sent him instructions through a number of couriers to form bases in Bali for the counterattack.

It was a death sentence. The public attitude to communism was extreme. A communist was the lowest form of human filth, fit only for extermination. It was proclaimed throughout the land that those who did not believe in God should die.

As a communist, Geria's future could have been brilliant. Although his colleagues at the university agreed that he was very capable in his

field, his assistant lectureship for the past two years had been the result of party influence.

He had always been clever. During the fifties he was a legendary figure among the wandering gangs of boys. Because the older boys liked him, they taught him to read and write.

It was rumored that he was the son of the banished king of Tabanan and he had never denied this. His fine skin and handsome features made it possible.

He had been destined to be the sort of person he was. His parents who lived in a village on the slopes of Mount Agung, had been killed in a landslide. Almost everyone else in the village died. Ktut escaped miraculously. He became bitter. Life was hard. Until he was twelve he hung around the Bali Hotel in Den Pasar. He could do anything: shine shoes, steal, find prostitutes for foreign tourists or even suitable young men for homosexuals.

A local PKI leader found him reading in a temple and they became friends. The bitterness in his eyes turned to a strong determination to fight everything he regarded as unjust. He had been trained to be evil, and the gradual communist poison fed him by the leader suited him. The man eventually adopted Geria as his own son.

Despite his age, he became one of the leading communists in the area. The task he had been given showed the high regard the Politburo held him in. He was proud of that trust.

Gradually the boat approached Gilimanuk. It was afternoon. His false travel documents helped him past the harbor officials, as usual.

He wandered down the broken roads in the eastern part of the city, and decided not to go back to Den Pasar for the moment. Singaraja

would be safer: no one knew him in the north. He needed freedom to formulate his plans before he took action.

A visit to a shop where cart drivers drank the intoxicating brem earned him an easy ride.

As they travelled he saw how calm things were and was disappointed. He had expected things to be worse; it would have been easier to stir up trouble.

The cartman watched him as he was deep in thought. Those from Java always had exciting things to tell: he wanted to talk. Ktut's attitude made this impossible.

They stopped the night in a temple in the jungle. Wayan, the driver, freed his oxen and let them graze in the courtyard. Then he made fires on the right and left of the cart and lay down next to Geria. The old man began to sing. His voice echoed through the trees of the forest and blended with the screams of the monkeys.

Pretending to be asleep, Ktut listened to the words of the old man's song. The tune was traditional, the words were not.

He listened, suddenly anxious, startled by the song.

"Thank you, Lady Durga, for your mercy

You have conquered the cruelty of Yama,

Bearer of hell-fire to heaven,

Whose tale spread death.

Those who saw him were appalled.

Yama ordered those in your palace,

Widows and orphans, to weep . . . "

When Wayan saw that Ktut was interested, he began the narrative.

He had never seen the Balinese as angry as they were with the PKI for what had happened in Jakarta. Many of those considered "reds" were kidnapped at night. Their headless bodies were found in the morning.

"It was awful, my son. They killed women too. It was said that the Gerwani had been involved in Lubang Buaya: The people showed them no mercy. I found some of their bodies on the side of the river south of Kuta. Their guts hung out; their backs were full of knife wounds, carvings of open-mouthed crocodiles." Wayan shook his head and dragged on his palm-leaf cigarette.

"By all the gods. The Red Berets came and calmed things down. The gods are angry with us. How were things on Java?"

Ktut answered offhandedly and was silent, stunned by the story he had just heard. He wondered about various friends.

How could the shattered ruins of the party ever come together again?

He clenched his fists. His eyes were filled with tears.

"Damn!" he swore, "I'm so weak." He had known many of the members of Gerwani.

Six months ago he had sent the Gerwani cadres home for refusing to indulge in free love after the night parades at Lubang Buaya. They were still dominated by bourgeois moral principles and not completely revolutionary in outlook. He wondered who was still alive and the question added to his gloom.

"Why did it happen, sir?" he asked pointlessly.

"Perhaps it's the old story, my son. The holy war of Puputan, sixty years ago, was preceded by the sighting of a comet. So was the great war at Klungkung. The priests said that Yama, god of death, was angry: men had sinned. Many people saw the star before the PKI revolted.

Those who saw it tasted death. They felt threatened: they had to kill before others killed them, and they became fierce, cruel, ruthless, unthinking and suspicious. Blood flowed. Finally they were killed. What do you think?"

Ktut said nothing. His forced smile hid the mockery he felt, although he remembered Ikeyan Saki, the comet, had passed by on the day that the party was destroyed. Marxism, of course, explained the difference between coincidence and causality. Ktut pulled his sarong around himself, wanting to catch up on his lost sleep.

As soon as he dozed off he heard women weeping piteously, then terrible screams. He started. The voices seemed to move around the sky. Falling more deeply asleep, he saw an orange light stretched out in the black sky, with fire blazing from its tail. The snake slowly advanced towards him and stopped over his head. In the light, the fire formed dim groups of hundreds, thousands, of deformed people who had been tortured. In his terror, he recognized some of them. The supreme leader of the party stood with his head almost completely severed from his body.

Their eyes stared jealously, vaguely at him. He shivered, revolted. Then, suddenly, they all pointed and waved in his direction. Never before had he been so terrified or afraid. A month ago, the Muslim youth league, Banser, had trapped him on Porong bridge. His self-control had enabled him to escape.

When the eyes suddenly faded, he felt cold and damp. It was raining heavily. Thunder and lightning slashed like fighting cocks. The oxen snorted next to the cart. Wayan was busy putting an old tarpaulin up to keep the rain off.

"Did you see the death star, sir?" Ktut asked anxiously, his voice lost in the splashing of the rain. The old man looked at him, pitifully.

"You must have been dreaming. The star never shows itself to good folks," he said firmly. Striking a flint, he relit his cigarette. Ktut calmed, almost ashamed by his nervousness.

"I'm tired. The old man's superstitions must be affecting me. I must fight that," he whispered to himself.

"According to the old people, Yama is afraid of red. It represents the majesty of Durga. The troops of the grandson of the King of Karangasem went into battle behind red flags. They forced the Dutch back and regained the palace. The Dutch left the people alone after that. What did I tell you, hey? History does repeat itself. The Red Berets got us our island back, didn't they?"

"Hem," Geria grunted. He now knew why all the carts in Gilimanuk carried red tassels.

He yawned, nodded, and was tired. Wayan talked on, increasingly more vigorously, unaware that his companion was only vaguely listening.

The rain eased off. Ktut began to snore; the cartman fell silent.

For a week Ktut stayed in the old man's house. It was a peaceful village: no one had belonged to the PKI. The northern Balinese are very open. He was well received and mixed with everyone. No one suspected him.

One night, on his way home from looking after Rimbat's child, he suddenly remembered that Wayan had told him his youngest nephew would be coming from Den Pasar. He wished he had asked the nephew's name. Anyone from the south was dangerous. It was time to move.

Turning the corner he stopped: the oil lamp in the front room was alight. He had left Wayan gambling. Had the nephew come? He wasn't supposed to for another four days. Ktut whistled and entered the house.

At the doorway of his room, his heart suddenly stopped beating. Gde N, his enemy, the boy he had had kicked out of school as anti-Manipol*, was going through the contents of his bag. The pamphlets and instructions for the regional committee were torn from the lining of the case and scattered all over the floor. The several hundred thousand rupiah from the Politburo for the underground army were stacked on the bed.

Gde looked up and laughed mockingly.

"The last person you wanted to meet . . ." He stood with his hands on his hips. A tight smile crossed Ktut's blue face and his lips trembled.

"I . . ." He stopped. He had nothing to say.

"What a pity it's taken us so long to get together again. Still, better late than never." He stared at Ktut's rigid body. "No one would have thought of finding you here. Just as well I found you first. If anyone else had discovered you, they would have killed my uncle as well!" Gde Naya stepped closer. "A lot of people would like to taste your blood, comrade. They'd like to do to you what they did to the others!"

Silence. Finally Ktut asked: "What do you want, Naya?"

"I'll take you to the regional military command. That'll be best."

*Sukarno's "Political Manifesto" of 1959.

"All right," Ktut whispered. "I'll change first."

"That won't be necessary, comrade. It'll only waste time."

Ktut remembered Wayan's stories. Anger colored his pale, frightened face. Hatred shone in his yeys, but he lacked the cockiness he had had when he got rid of Geria. He turned and suddenly looked out of the half-open window. The leaves of the sugar cane trembled. The oil lamp flickered and almost died, the window played with the shutters. A bright light shone in the sky.

"The comet," he whispered. Gde Naya turned and looked out of the window. When he saw the knife swing towards his heart, it was too late.

His screams reverberated through the house and startled the neighbors.

Ktut seemed suddenly to wake from a dream. He felt Naya's body fall into his arms, and the warm blood wash over his body and onto the money on the bed.

Feet pounded around the house like sledgehammers. Geria quickly pushed the body under the bed and leaped out the window.

Blinded by panic, he ran through the village like a mad dog, wounding anyone who dared to stand in his way. Fierce shouts, crying children and barking dogs added to the noise. Torches were lit in every corner of the village and the danger-gong beaten without ceasing. The darkness helped him. Seven newly trained civil-defense officers chased him, determined to take him dead or alive.

Outside the village he was suddenly aware that he was running in the wrong direction. In front of him was a ravine where animals were sacrificed on feast days. The men were getting closer. Ktut

slowly skirted the steep bank of the ravine. He decided to surrender, then realized he had little chance of survival if the villagers caught him. What was there to live for, anyway?

Madness overcame him.

The earth began to give way with a loud roar. Many blinded animals had been driven there before, now it was the turn of a man: Ktut Geria.

The men stopped as soon as they heard the rumble and his scream. They stood there stunned, not knowing what to do until the snapping of soil and stone died away. The dust rose in the gray light. Suddenly one man whispered to another. The whispers formed a chain. They were terrified.

None wanted to be the last to leave. All swore to tell their wives to bring a plate of food to the village temple to ask forgiveness for their having set foot on the holy ground of Shiva, the supreme destroyer.

Kebun Kosong,

11 March 1966.

THE CLIMAX

by Satyagraha Hoerip.

I

It was probably the hand of God which stopped me becoming a murderer. I could have done it; I was ready enough.

If I have to lay all my cards on the table, I admit it. I was ready. I had thought about it for a long time. It upset me. I didn't care what people might have thought. The conflict was there: I couldn't pretend it wasn't, nor could I hide it - it is not easy to decide to kill a man.

I am not easily frightened, nor am I a coward. But no man accepts murder easily, especially when he is to be the murderer. When I was a child I used to walk by myself at night. I used to fight bigger boys. I wasn't a hero, I never thought that I was. Anyway I was neither physically or psychologically capable of being one. An ordinary person, of ordinary courage. The same as any other man. I had already shown that, several times. As a "leading figure," I had, of necessity, taken firm action in a number of social and political situations when it was quite possible that I would be either abused or assaulted by my enemies.

Even so, there is no need to discuss whether I am a brave man or a coward. Not as far as I am concerned, at any rate. This was an entirely different situation: murder, the death of my sister's husband. It had nothing to do with courage or cowardice, past or future.

It was an existential problem, not the simple mathematical effort of two plus three take away four. And not a literary one, where the plot can be changed to accomodate real life. Which was why I was so tense.

II

It was very hot. The morning wind was blowing faster than usual and dust scattered. I had seen several ill-fitting hats rolling down the street. Children's kites flew in circles. It was hotter and windier than usual.

I bought a drink and ate a packet of peanuts, then bought three buns for my children. I paid and got ready to ride home on my bicycle. Then I saw Wimbadi pedalling towards me quickly, staring and waving to me to wait for him. He rode across the grass of the town square and stopped breathlessly next to me.

"Success," I told him. "It looks as though we can stir up the place a bit." I was delighted. Hari Sumarjo was ready to pay for our presentation of Camus' Caligula. "You can have the lead role. I kill you, but pay for it!" I laughed.

He was silent. Perhaps he heard what I said but he showed no sign of emotion. Panting heavily he said: "Kuslan's here. The kids saw him in his house at two o'clock this morning. I bet he's still there." His eyes shone like headlights.

I said nothing. I wanted neither to keep talking nor to go home. I knew what he was leading up to. We looked at each other, like two fighters sizing each other up.

"Go on," I said pointlessly.

"Don't worry. The kids have surrounded his house. Jono, Moel, Edi, Peno, Koen, Samsul, and a lot of others. Danarto's even called the Muslim Youth to help us."

"Can we talk about this at home?" I asked. I was beginning to understand him better. I wanted to give the buns to my children. I was beginning to get nervous.

"All right. If it's just to take the buns home." The buns were hanging on my handlebar. "But we can't be long. It's time to do something!" He looked around the square angrily. Finally he looked at me and said: "We wanted to ask you to help us. Come on!" The call was like a knife in my heart.

Wimbadi was well built. He was a third year fine arts student. He had read my things and liked them. One day he came to the house. We became close friends.

When we put on a play, he was always the director or the lead. When I went out of town, before our writer's group was smashed, he used to read poetry in my radio session for me. Before CGMI and the communist literary front, Lekra, attacked him for being the cultural officer of the student council, he had spoken three times on topics which other cultural associations would no longer touch. He had almost been kicked out of college as a result.

He used to come to my house, talk, muck about, borrow my books and sometimes my money, although mainly we just talked. My wife and I liked him: he was like one of the family, a younger brother.

"Let's decide that later," I replied, starting to pedal. "first we'll go home. I can't think here."

"No. There isn't much to talk about. We have to act - quickly."

He slid off the bar of his bike and onto the seat.

Suddenly I felt dizzy. A whole number of things had finally come together. I ignored him and rode, ignoring the wind, the heat and even the bread. I had just put new tires on my bike, but didn't even notice when I drove through a large pothole.

Kuslan, by brother-in-law, had just returned from a year overseas, sent by his organization. I knew what lay in store for him. Over the last three weeks, hundreds of other members had suffered at the hands of the masses. He was an important man in the district. Even those with only minimal connections had been killed. Others were given to the authorities, then taken back at night and taken out of town. Only their names came back. Any possessions left were taken to their houses. Visiting relatives were told not to come again.

He must have known. How could he not? He had been in Indonesia before coming here. How could he be so stupid?

I could understand even less why my young friends were waiting for me. Why couldn't they arrange things themselves? I said nothing until I sat with Wimbadi at the well. So that my wife and children couldn't hear, I whispered.

"Just think," he replied quickly because he wanted to leave, "who, of all the people in the world--in the world, not just in this town--has he most often, and most viciously, betrayed? Ridiculed in public? You. Politically and ideologically he's our enemy. But you're his own family."

I frowned. He realized that I did not entirely approve. I snapped at the children to take their buns and go back to their mother who was darning shirts in the front room. I told her not to

prepare us anything.

"You can't deny the facts. It's only right. He lived off you for a long time. You didn't have much but you shared what you had with him and his family. As soon as he got political backing and a bit of status, look how he paid you back." He became more vigorous. "Kuslan was the main person involved in the attacks which led to your losing your job. People came to your house and shouted obscenities at you. Kuslan was behind every political attack in this town. Why? Where did his money come from, and how?"

I looked at him. He continued: "We killed Dinan and he was only a sweeper at the picture theatre. But he took part in the Campaign against Imperialist Culture. How can we let someone like Kuslan go?"

"All right, all right," I said slowly. "But I'm not convinced. I looked after him because his wife is my sister. Their children are my nieces and nephews. As long as I could do something to help them, I wasn't prepared to stand by and do nothing. It wasn't just Kuslan. He had to attack me; his position required it. He was fairly doubtful about communism, although in public he always said he was getting more and more certain." Wimbadi said nothing. "It's up to you," I continued. "If you want to kill him, I have no objection. But I won't help."

His face was covered with disgust, and I could hear his teeth grinding. He clenched his right hand in his lap and scowled.

"I'm sorry," he spat out. "I didn't realize that our great and mighty cultural leader was a coward. What about 'the light of God', which you said we should always defend? The 'light of God' is not just pity and meekness: it demands all we have. I don't care

about why you did what you did. You shouldn't just think and write about the light. We have to act courageously on its behalf. Or should we debate the matter at greater length?"

He was angry; his face was dark red. The veins in his arms were tightly knotted. Without a word to my wife or myself, he left. I ran after him. At the guava tree, he promised to come back again after the evening prayer hour. His face showed how much he loathed me. I knew what that could mean these days. Anything was possible.

I threw away my cigarette and locked myself in my study, having first told my wife that I wanted no lunch and ignored the rest of her questions.

The small, cramped room tortured me. I put on my shirt again and went to meet Hari, to find out what he thought. He was older than Wimbadi and the others; his judgment would be sounder.

"I'm going out," I called to my wife. She didn't come out. The children called: "Bye-bye, daddy, bye-bye . . ." I ignored them. I . . .

III

My thoughts were in a whirl as I walked. My veins were telegraph poles. I talked to myself, vulgarly cursing the molecules on the roads. I had encouraged mother to accept Kuslan's request for the hand of Yayuk, although she only loved him because her former boyfriend, a pilot, had married a Russian girl while studying overseas.

Yayuk was only twenty-one. She didn't have to accept the first man that proposed. She might have met the right man in time. Now the children she had borne him would be fatherless. It was my fault.

How could I explain that to anyone, even my wife? My mother had stayed with Yayuk to help with the children while Kuslan was away. She would know that I could have saved Kuslan and I did nothing. I dreaded that.

I remembered the expression on Wimbadi's face. I could imagine the others, Moel, Jono, Edi, and the rest, waiting for me to come. I was very upset. I cursed Kuslan for coming back without realizing that he could have been killed in front of his own wife and children. My only sister would be a widow, her children "orphans." What a fool. He had become a communist for the sake of his belly. Gradually his mind and soul got involved too. Couldn't he see that the party's ideology of atheistic materialism conflicted with his own belief in the glory of God? Not to mention the rest.

It was, of course, not impossible that God wanted him to die, and that He wanted me to kill him. Who could say. But why me, and not one of the others? They could have told me afterwards.

I would have fought against my own death vigorously, unless it became clear that this was the will of God. Then I would have done nothing but submit quietly. One ought to die pure. I wanted to live in innocence and happiness and to die the same way. No matter how afraid I would be at first, how much I refused, when the time came, I wanted to die willingly, gratefully, and with a smile on my lips. That would be best for those who survived me, and for myself. I hoped I would be able to praise His greatness, to thank Him for His mercy, and to ask Him for His forgiveness.

"Long live Mr. Soesetio!" some of my former students called out. "Down with Lekra! Hang Aidit! Long live the Armed Forces and the People!"

I waved back at them and forced myself to smile. I had never expected to feel this way about proving what I believed. This was worse than being victimized, losing my position, or being vilified by some of my own pupils. To become a murderer, to kill one's brother-in-law . . .

I was confused and sad. Not even my own father's death had affected me like this. His death had been natural. Murder, especially the murder of a kinsman, was unnatural. I cursed the molecules on the road and various people: Aidit, Untung, Kuslan, the young men still waiting for me, myself . . .

Hari was out. His wife said that he would be back soon. I decided to wait. I told her that there was no need to get me any refreshments and I would be quite happy to sit in the front room alone and wait. His wife was a champion gossip and, things being the way they were, her stories would have made me even more miserable.

Again I thought of Wimbadi. His face seemed to be there, wherever I looked, waiting for me to decide: was I really going to act against Kuslan, or was I only talk. I agreed fully that the light of God was more than pity and meekness, that it had to be manifested through action. And yet it was hard to act when that meant killing my brother-in-law. Kuslan falling, full of wounds. In a story, my hero would suffer doubt, then act, no matter how intense his struggle had been. That was what happened in the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna was broken because he had to kill members of his own family, and his guru. Krishna instructed him. He fought bravely. In the Koran God insists that the apostate be paid back fully. Caesar loved and trusted Brutus, but for the sake of truth and justice, Brutus killed him. I knew all that.

But this was real.

I thought of the others - Jono, Moel, Edi, Ristam, Danarto, and the rest - hidden or obvious around Yayuk's house, waiting for me. They were teenagers: emotion was more important to them than reason. Complicated things confused them. The only thing that interested them about people was how many died each day. For them an individual's maturity and worth rested not on knowledge or action, but on his readiness to kill. Was he ready, for the sake of "humanity," to kill another human being. They wanted action. That meant killing.

I had only a few Kansas cigarettes left. My stomach suddenly hurt. Hari had still not returned and I wondered if he told his wife he would only be out a little while, as I had, while intending to be out all day. My stomach tightened. I went to the toilet so quickly that his wife laughed.

Short, fierce fragments of an imaginary film ran through my head. I saw real men mixed with characters from literature: Arjuna, Aidit, Brutus, Untung, Wimbadi, the communist rebellion in 1948, Iqbal, Sastro, Kuslan, Yayuk, Camus, my children, Yayuk's, our mother. The figures merged into each other.

Our political struggle should have led to a fight for human justice for all men; instead it had led to internal dissension and self-seeking fanaticism. We had compartmentalized our lives and destroyed any dignified totality. Men had hated and killed in the name of humanity. Politics was a means to an end and had been forced on every segment of life.

I shuddered and wondered what my pupils would think if they found out what their "Mr. Soesetia" was really like. The washbasin was full

of water, but the dipper was nowhere to be seen. It didn't matter; that was the least of my problems.

"Give up," I half-surrendered. "At least wait until Hari comes."

IV

When I came out, Hari Sumarjo was waiting in the front room. He looked older than usual, in his sarong and fez, but perhaps he was just calmer than I was. His gentle eyes welcomed me. His two arms were stretched along the back of the sofa. He was still sweating after his walk.

"Do you need more money?" he asked with a smile. "The performance isn't for a long time yet, is it?"

"Good lord, it's not that," I replied sitting down in front of him.

He watched the Kansas shake in the fingers of my right hand.

"What's up? You look so . . ."

"It's like this," I replied, quickly explaining everything that had happened since I left him. I cursed the boys for not arranging things on their own and finally asked him what I should do.

As he listened, he rolled a cigarette. I tried to make one too - without being invited - and dropped half the makings. His patience and calmness made me even more nervous.

"If you are destined to kill your sister's husband, you can't get out of it. You know, I'm not sure that things are that absolute, and that you can't refuse. There is an absolute decree not to violate human life, you can't refuse that either."

"But the circumstances . . ." I replied angrily. "If you had seen Wimbadi's face. I'm sure all his friends feel the same. They'll never have anything to do with me again if I don't help them."

"Quite possibly. Well then, why don't you look at it another way? Kuslan is on the side of injustice, you are on the side of truth. And you have just quoted the Koran to effect that God will repay the unrighteous man the full measure of his evil."

"I'm not writing a book. This is real."

"It's part of life, like a book. I've been told that what an author writes reflects his personality. He should act on that basis, shouldn't he?"

I felt as though I had been struck and thrown deeper into the whirlpool of my problems. I knew what I ought to do. The problem was no longer theoretical but practical. I had never thought of murdering a man before. I should have told Wimbadi that I didn't want to do it, without caring whether they accepted my reasons or not. I would have felt better and been freed of these intricacies.

"Look, if it was just Kuslan I think I could do it. I wouldn't care about the children. This is different. I care about my mother. I care about what she would think if she knew that I held the key to whether the husband of her only daughter lived or died."

Hari blew out some cigarette smoke and relaxed his frown. This made me more anxious. The cool, broad front room was no better than my narrow study. Both were hell. Hari was like an angel testing me to see whether I was worthy to enter eternity.

"All right. It's up to you. You're old enough and smart enough." His voice was as calm as a pond in the early morning. "Firstly you

have to decide whether your arguments are genuine, and whether they will lead to action. Secondly, everything else can go to hell. What does this have to do with your sister, or your mother, or your children's children? You should put all that aside and instead . . ."

"I know! By God, I know all that!"

"But merely knowing is not enough. There is knowing, and there is knowledge which leads to action. You talk about fighting for human dignity. What are you afraid of then? You're not going to kill him for selfish, personal reasons, are you? If you were, things would be different. I wouldn't let you."

I surrendered. My reasons for not wanting to kill my brother-in-law were egotistical and unrelated to the real problem. I was on the side of justice, my future victim was an agent of barbarianism. Killing Kuslan would effect neither myself nor my children's children. But every man thinks that he is right and everyone else is wrong. Did I have the right to kill him, no matter what he had done? Wasn't it merely a matter of who happened to be the stronger at the moment?

I worried about this. My intricate explanation bored Hari.

"Be honest. I'm sorry to have to say this, but I am disappointed in you. Does your cultural struggle begin with yourself or with truth and justice?" I nodded. "Well, take the example of the prophet Muhammad, who showed us the way to heaven. He destroyed the enemies of Islam without any hesitation at all. I'm sorry to talk religion when you're interested in the philosophy of life. I grant the usefulness of Heidegger, Bergson, the Bhagavad Gita and Marxism, but religion is the word of God. It's not just there for 'knowledge' and then to be ignored."

I was too ashamed to listen to any more or to argue with him.

I agreed with him but could do nothing except throw the cigarette butt out through the window behind my shoulder. Although I knew it, I refused to admit that what he had said was true. Selfishly I wanted to avoid sin and to remain pure. Surely all men crave purity.

Suddenly I began to cry, not at what I was about to do, but at my own spiritual weakness. My legs shook; sweat poured out of my body.

"All right. The Lord be with you. I accept what you say." I stood and left without excusing myself. "Now where to?" I wondered.

I recited the beautiful names of God and wondered: "where to? home? or to Yayuk's house?" There were no other alternatives, I had to go to one of those two places. Did I really want to kill Kuslan or not? My only comfort was both naive and primitive: thousands of men had killed without bothering about it. If it was a sin, I would have a lot of company in hell. I decided to go home, bathe, change my clothes, and then to go to Yayuk's house and meet the boys.

V

The sun had set; I guessed that it was after six. There was a bicycle against the tree in our front yard, Wimbadi's. My heart suddenly began to beat very loudly.

"Daddy, daddy. Uncle Wimbadi's having a wash. Where have you been?" Bambam, my oldest, asked as he ran to meet me.

"Has he been here very long?"

"Yes. Did you bring me any bread?" Byuti, my second, asked.

"No. Leave me alone. I'm hot," I said, parking my bicycle near the kitchen.

Damn. Wimbadi was singing very loudly; his voice was very good. It was an old song, composed by the late Ismail Marzuki: "Girl of Bekasi." The song was one of Yayuk's favorites. The words were accompanied by the splashing of water.

I went into the front room and threw myself down on the divan, dressed only in my underpants.

"Hey, Soes," he greeted me, as he hung the towel up. His face shone. "Good news, Soes."

"Don't put the towel there if it's wet."

"I know that. Good news, it's over."

I looked at his broad back and watched him comb his hair.

"Over?" I asked cautiously.

He lifted his eyebrows and smiled.

"When?"

"Before. After I left you." He turned and looked at me. "The boys 'gave him a bath.' He surrendered. Yayuk and the kids came with us. Some of us walked, some had bicycles. Honest to god, I haven't told your wife yet," he whispered. "You'd better tell her. Bambam says no one else has been here yet."

I felt as though caught in a large empty space. I felt an abstract relief and saw my future clearly, caring for Yayuk and her children.

That didn't bother me much. God was in each of the small events which went to make up the millions and millions of particles of human history. He had kept me from murdering Kuslan. The act would have been legal, and no one would have spoken badly of me for having done it. Tears ran down my cheeks. I sighed. It is impossible to describe how I felt.

Outside the room my wife offerd Wimbadi a cup of home-ground coffee. A spider carefully killed a fly caught in his net on the ceiling. My oldest shouted to the other children. A rooster crowed nearby. A horse-drawn carriage clinked along the road past our house. And so on, and so on.

I suddenly wanted to sleep, even if only for a few minutes. My eyes felt very heavy. Weariness began to embrace my whole body.

Jakarta,

June 1966.

THE THREAT

by H. G. Ugate.

He opened the door slowly and the night wind came in with him. The two children stopped chasing each other around the legs of the chairs.

"Mummy's not home yet," the two-year-old girl reported. Closing the door, he looked at the clock and then walked towards her.

"She'll be home soon," he said, sitting down. Her arm rested on the chair and he stroked her hair.

"She should be home, it's nearly dark," said the other child.

"She'll be here soon. You have a sleep and wait for her. She might bring you some cake." The children looked at him.

"Go to bed." The boy was a year older than his sister. Reluctantly they went.

Stretching out in his chair, he looked at his watch. "Seven fifteen; an hour and a quarter late," he thought. "I wonder what they're up to."

He took a cigarette from his pocket and smoked it slowly. The door opened and shut violently, and a few seconds later his wife was sitting on the opposite side of the table.

"Well?" she asked sharply.

He shifted in his chair and dropped his ash into the ashtray. His attitude irritated her.

"Where else can she go?" he finally asked.

"That's none of my business. You have to decide, before it's too late."

"I told you this morning I don't want to make her go. Isn't that enough?"

"They'll kill us and burn the house down," she shouted angrily.

"I told you before she came that they would threaten us and that we musn't listen. We knew what we were doing."

"You could lose your life over this. If that's the way you want it, I'm getting out." She stood and ran to the bedroom door. He crushed his cigarette and followed her.

She had opened the cupboard door. An open leather case lay nearby.

"Listen," he said. Her lips were pressed tightly together. "I want you to understand," he added quietly.

"There's no point in talking about it. I'm going." He watched her in silence as she began putting her clothes in the case.

"Why are you going - are you afraid?" he demanded. She took a blouse and sarong from a hanger.

"I don't want to die for nothing," she replied, shutting her lips tightly again.

"No one does. I've been busy all day. I went to the village head and showed him the letter. I told him this wasn't the first. He said he'd fix things up."

"Good luck. I don't want to live the rest of my life under constant threat."

She closed the suitcase, then stood and opened the cupboard again and began searching under the clothes. She found a gold chain and quickly put it on. She took out several sarong lengths and put them in the bag. The chain swung backwards and forwards as she bent down, so she took it off and put it in the bag too.

He watched her hurrying.

"We were threatened before when you were against the PKI. Now you're on their side. People say we're communists now."

"Whose side am I on?" he asked as soon as she had finished. "Not theirs. I helped kill them. That was wrong. We have to do what we can so that the hatred those deaths caused will never bear fruit."

"Her husband hated and threatened you. He's dead, and now you feed his wife and children."

"So? Someone has to look after the kids. We can't pray and then watch orphans starve to death. She didn't know what it was all about. He sacrificed her too."

"She knows that. Why help her?"

"They lost everything. The children will grow up bitter if we don't help them now. Something far worse than what has already happened, could happen again." He kept on explaining. She refused to listen. He had said the same things to other people. They didn't believe him either.

"I've been trying to get her a job. Perhaps she could be a servant," he said suddenly.

"Why bother - why not just marry her? She used to be your girl friend. You're going to a lot of trouble over nothing."

He was stunned. "I have no intention of ... I swear it."

"There's no need to."

"She didn't want me. I was too poor. She married Jamal instead. His father left him nothing. He decided that Jamal was no longer a Muslim; he was a heathen. I told you all that before you married me."

"You can marry her now that Jamal's dead."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"You want the mother - the easiest way to do that is to keep the children. I'm ashamed ... ashamed ... all the neighbors are laughing at me ... " Her voice shook.

"They're lying."

"Lying? They saw the two of you in a trishaw - "

"I was looking for a job for her. I took her to a friend's house. She's probably still there."

"You worked it out together. You left separately, then you met somewhere and took the trishaw. You wouldn't do that if you were being honest with me. Why did you do it?"

"You're right, Ida - I'm sorry. I didn't want the neighbors to see us."

She pushed the lid down with her foot and pulled on the strap. It wouldn't shut. Anger showed on her face. The sweat stood out on her forehead. He took the strap and buckled it in the last hole. His smile quickly vanished as she lifted the case and threw a shawl over her shoulder.

"Are you really going ... ?"

"Do I look as though I'm playing around?" She turned, but stopped with her left hand on the door of the room. "Tell the young widow I've gone ... "

He looked at her. They looked at each other for a long time.

"All right, if that's what you want. I can't force anyone to believe the same as I believe, not even my wife. I've tried to explain to you."

She stood there holding the case. He approached her and she

suddenly looked at him.

"I won't tell her what you said. I never had any intention of marrying her." They were silent. She bowed her head, then suddenly looked up again and their eyes met. Somehow they were holding each other tightly and she was crying. He carried her to the bed and carressed her hair.

"We've been married six years and I've never given you any children."

"It doesn't matter. Don't think about that."

"The neighbors laugh at us. They never visit. Yet you stick by her. I thought that there was something else. I was jealous - she used to be your girl friend."

He stroked her back. She continued to cry.

"I know the neighbors despise us. They don't try to understand what we're doing. I'm sure God smiles at us."

He was cut short by the sudden scream of a woman. Outside voices shouted: "PKIiii, PK Iiii!" The voices grew louder.

Quickly he ran to the front room to look out from behind the curtain. Before he could do so a stone smashed through the glass. He dropped to the floor. Other stones hit the window and the walls. The shouts continued. He steeled himself and crawled along the floor to the door. "Listen to me ... I want to explain ..."

"P K Iiiii!" Rocks beat against the wall.

"P K Iiiii!"

He opened the door. As he stood his wife grabbed his hand. He shook her off but she grabbed him again.

"Let me go!" he said, shaking her. "I want to tell them we're Muslims, not communists."

"They're possessed. They won't listen to you." A large rock hit the doorpost and they fell to the floor. Several other stones hit the wall, followed by blood-curdling screams. The children began to cry, frightened by the noise.

She slowly crawled away from him. For a moment there was no noise. Then he heard a woman screaming and cursing. Several men laughed. The screams and the laughter stung him: he wanted to go out to the woman.

He crawled to the kitchen, then around the house. In the pitch black, four men were gathered around her. He decided to stay where he was.

Suddenly a man screamed "P K Iiiiiiii!" and several others joined in. Stones lashed against the side of the house. The woman screamed and swore again. Several men laughed contentedly. The loud pathetic screams made him angrier. Then there was silence. A few stones hit the house. Then there was no one in front of the yard.

He rose from his hiding place and walked over to the woman. She tried to get out of the ditch.

"Ani ... " he called in a whisper.

"Oh ... " She was standing. He put his arms around her and helped her. They looked at each other in the dark. He thought of what his wife had said.

"Did they hit you?" he asked. She did not reply.

"Come on," he said, helping her to the house. He could hear the neighbors talking outside their houses.

He sat her in a chair. Her cheek was bruised and her blouse torn. His wife brought the two children out in her arms. As soon as she saw

her mother, the younger began to weep. Ida tried to calm them, but they struggled free and ran to their mother. Ani cried and hugged them. The man and his wife watched sadly. Ani looked up at Ida, and then down at her torn blouse.

"We'll go tomorrow. It's not fair for you ..."

"Where will you go?" Ida's voice trembled. Ani wiped at her tears in silence. The children watched her, then the boy began to cry too.

"There are a lot of bridges; we can sleep under one," Ani replied quickly. She held her children tightly. Ida moved closer and touched her shoulder.

"Go to your room. We couldn't let you leave and sleep under a bridge. That would be a sin." She helped Ani to her room and wiped her tears.

He looked at his watch: a quarter past eight. Then he looked around the room. There were broken pieces of glass scattered beneath the window. The neighbors were still talking outside. He walked to the door and shut it. The letter had insisted that Ani leave by six: two and a quarter hours ago. He was still nervous. He looked out again. Several stars shivered in the sky and he praised God for His greatness. The village head lived two houses away; he decided not to report what had happened but simply to tell God and ask His pardon.

Banda Acheh,

December 1968.

A WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN

by Gerson Poyk.

A could not sleep. He saw bodies falling. Dead by the thousand. The generals at Lubang Buaya. Ordinary villagers. Most clearly, the body of K, his enemy. The corpses did not frighten him because they formed a mass. A solid mass of bodies, like in the Main Stadium at Senayan. A crowd like grass in a mountain valley. The voice at the microphone a fierce bull, tearing away at the grass. The living and the dead were similar. The bull roared over the living; fear and terror roared among the dead. Their screams emphasized that life is brief and fragile, all men must die. A knew that one day he would die. Not as K had died, but his eyes would open for the last time just like K's eyes had, before they left him in the silent hole in the ground.

He tossed and turned, afraid. When the roosters finally called to each other, he looked at his watch and saw that it was five o'clock. There was a bathroom next to his white room, and he stood and walked there. He stopped, then lit the lamp in his room. It did not catch, so he lay down again on the white sheet. His eyes wandered over the ceiling as he tried to forget what had happened. He lifted his arm and thought of K's rotting arm. Depressed, he tried to kick the memory into an obscure corner of his mind. Had he not thought of K's wife, he would have succeeded. She had five children. The women and her children still lived. They were not grass. They suffered. He had to help them. The shadows of the dead began to retreat as he concentrated on the living.

On the bed he began to plan the best way to ask the local command for permission to help her. Although she was no longer in prison, she still had to report regularly. Her husband had been prominent in the local PKI. The thought of having to report regularly bothered him. He pleaded: "I have sinned against Pancasila* and deserve to die. Hadijah and the children do not. Forgive them." The words roared in his ears, and he found it difficult to tell whether it was K's voice or his own. He sat in the room a long time.

The whole night had been agony. It was an impossible task to take on: driving out the shadows of the dead, worrying about Hadijah and her five children.

Dawn shone through the holes around the shutters and the door. He opened a window and looked across the road, to the football field. The sight upset him. There was a tall podium at the left of the field, which K had often used. He thought of K again, then tried to forget him by looking at the morning sky and the few, low-hanging clouds. He looked at the trees, the houses, the electricity and telephone cables. The concreteness of these objects pleased him; there was still life in the world. Not for K. But his wife, Hadijah, was alive. Her children were growing. He had to find her.

He washed and quickly dressed. A waiter brought his breakfast.

"Late home last night, sir?" the man asked.

"Mucking about, following carloads of prisoners," he replied.

"Pretty late."

*The five principles of the Indonesian state: Belief in God, nationalism, humanism, democracy and social justice.

"How many people last night?"

"Ten, including a man who so slandered me that I was put in prison. While I was there, my child died."

"Did you use the sword or the iron club on him?"

A choked on his rice. "Neither! I watched. I didn't do it!"

The man stood in front of him, watching. A noticed his eyes.

"Why are your eyes red?"

"I didn't sleep very much last night either."

"Were you following cars too?"

The man's hands and lips began to tremble. He changed the tray to his left hand and looked wildly around the room.

"I need all my laundry in a hurry. I'll be leaving in a few days. You can take this away."

The man took the plates.

By eleven, A was at Hadijah's door. The house was locked but he could hear the children playing inside. He knocked, and the door opened. Hadijah's face was pale. She moved her lips as though trying to speak and couldn't.

He looked away, inside. Her eyes were sad and frightened, and she watched him as he looked from room to room. There was a broken duplicator in the front room. In the middle room, there were four cupboards full of books - thick volumes, brochures, pamphlets and newspapers. The keys which opened the glass doors had been confiscated.

He looked back at her.

"Have you come to re-arrest me? I've just come back from prison."

Silently he took her arm and led her to the front room. She trembled. They sat facing each other.

"I came to see you," he said. "I heard the children - where are they?" He stood.

"In the back room." She opened the door for him, and he saw five children sitting on a woven rush mat with an old woman. Four of the children stood and greeted him. Each held a stick of sugar cane. Their eyes were round and innocent. The smallest, unable to stand, cried, and Hadijah quickly lifted her and put her on her hip.

"Who is the old woman?" A asked, staring. The old lady looked back; her hollow eyes were deeply sunken into her wrinkled face.

"She looks after the children."

He looked at her again. "What's your name?" he asked firmly.

"She's deaf and dumb," Hadijah explained.

"What!" he was startled. "How does she know what they want, or why they're crying?"

"K wanted her. He felt a servant ought to be deaf."

A returned to the front room. She followed him, and they sat down facing each other again. The oldest boy appeared, holding his sugar cane. His face was just like K's. The boy stood next to his mother and the baby, and looked at the guest. A looked at him for a long time. Finally the boy crossed the room and sat on A's lap. A held him and stroked his head. When he looked up, A saw that Hadijah had bowed her head and was crying.

"You must forget how you feel," he said, stroking the boy.

She wiped her eyes.

"Are you shaking because of me? I'll go if you are. I'm staying in the hotel. If you want anything, come and find me." He took the child off his lap and stood up.

"Why did you come here from Jakarta?" she asked, the baby still in her lap.

"Not to be cruel. I have some official business to take care of. And I want to redeem the things my wife pawned while I was in prison."

"How is your wife? Is she still working?"

"She's fine. Yes, she is still working. We couldn't survive if she didn't. And she doesn't like being home on her own. We don't have any children."

"Adopt a few of mine. I can't feed them all."

A looked at the boy he had been nursing.

"Take one that doesn't look like K," she said.

"That isn't the problem. I'll have to send a telegram to my wife first."

"Perhaps you have a friend here who could look after one for me. Please ask. But everyone knows us. They wouldn't want to," she sighed.

A sat down again and put the boy on his knee. He thought of K and tried not to.

"Not that one: he looks too much like K."

"Why should I hate the dead?" he asked, looking at the boy.

"You ... you killed him!" she fell back into the chair.

"No, I didn't kill him - I was only a witness."

"Why didn't you try to stop them?"

"One man can't stop the lava pouring out of a volcano."

"People aren't lava."

"The lava from Lubang Buaya," he replied quietly. "A strange lava, full of cause-and-effect and action-and-reaction. It was all unplanned. The hole spewed up the lava, it spread in a chain-reaction pattern like

an atomic bomb. Thousands of people have died. Your husband too. I watched him die last night."

She moaned. Before she could drop the child in her lap, A picked up both children and carried them out of the room. The moan became a roar and then disappeared in the sobs which were lost in her pale, corpse-like body. Her breathing was shallow. A lifted her and carried her to the bedroom. The old woman blinked, and gestured with her mouth and hands. The children watched their mother as she lay there unconscious. A began setting about to find some medicinal oil. Soon she was conscious again.

"It's over then. I didn't think they'd kill him. Life imprisonment, yes. He deserved it. But what about the kids? I haven't got anything else that I can pawn or sell so that I can feed them. And I'm not allowed to work."

He said nothing. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he watched the children play and chew sugar cane as though nothing had happened. He looked at their eyes, child by child, and they all reminded him of K. The shadows came back again and he fought against them. K, full of enthusiasm, at the podium. The slander he had suffered. Being taken to prison, tortured and forced to admit to things that he had never done. The months he lost contact with his wife. The death of their only child. The things that he had worked for, which they had sold, or - a few of them - pawned.

And reaching further back, how he had loved Hadijah. As he thought of their engagement, K's shadow disappeared. It was Hadijah's fault. Many women like chocolates and shining toys; K had used them well. A never spoke to an audience or expected to sit at the front

of every meeting. He never rode in a car. He never discussed and solved such problems as "productivity," "distribution," "land reform," nor was he a member of the council. He was an ordinary civil servant, who saw unfair dealings and tried to speak out about them. He saw the statistics on food and clothing being manipulated by K, who was head of the Regional Committee for Basic Necessities. K had claimed that the figures showed an annual grain surplus and that rice ought to be donated to other regions. Because the price of rice increased daily, A and some of his friends were arrested and forced to "confess" that they had been dumping rice in the sea. As he sat next to Hadijah, he thought of his imprisonment and torture, the death of the child and the loss of his possessions.

He stayed by her side. The children chewed on their cane. The deaf and dumb nursemaid came and went, staring emptily at him. When the children grew bored with a piece of cane, they spat it out and threw it outside the room. Some cried. Some played. At last Hadijah stood up.

"I'm sorry," she said weakly. "Forgive me. Fate hasn't been very kind to either of us. If you hate me, at least forgive the children. In the last few days I've sold everything I had just so they can eat. Today they're eating sugar cane. Tomorrow yam. The day after that ... I don't know what. I don't want them to grow up like their father. They musn't betray others to get what they want - dig holes for others and fall in them themselves."

A was delighted. It was the Hadijah he used to know. He stood and walked around the room, carried away by his own emotions. The woman and her children watched him. He was acting as though he were in his own

house. Then he saw Hadijah leaned against a pillow on the lattice work of the bed. It was not his own house. He was not married to Hadijah.

"I've worried about the children ever since I came. What will happen to them?"

The question frightened her. "When are you going back to Jakarta?" she asked.

"In a few days."

"Take one with you. Please. It's the only way. I'll give them to people who can feed and school them."

"And what about you?"

"I'll worry about myself afterwards. They've interrogated me already. I'm only class-D. I can go back to normal society. So normal society will have to look after me." She spoke very quickly.

"Still making speeches," he said softly but firmly. "Let's talk about more concrete matters. What about your family back in the village?"

"K talked most of them into joining the party. I don't hold out many hopes for them. God only knows what will happen."

The old woman returned with a plate of fried yam. She took the two leather chairs from the corner of the room and put them together for A and Hadijah. The woman gestured for them to eat; A nodded and smiled. The woman laughed. The children ran into the room and the nursemaid took the baby from its mother. Yams to celebrate a meeting.

As they ate A tried to think of other solutions. There were none. Finally he excused himself and went back to the hotel, still thinking. Near the hotel he bought a packet of clove cigarettes to calm his

nerves.

The man brayed and said: "Been to get your own back on the Gerwani, have you mate?"

A looked at him angrily. Sensing his mistake, the obscene twist of the vendor's smile vanished at once. "I'm sorry, mate; it's what most of the Gerwani who aren't in prison are doing now."

A walked away silently.

After lunch he lay down and was soon fast asleep. In the afternoon he walked around the town, thinking of old friends and wondering if any of them would take one of Hadijah's children.

He entered the quarter of the town where most of the PKI had lived and kept walking calmly, glancing occasionally at the houses on his right and left. Several crossroads and corners had signs which stated: "This district is now clean of the 30th September Movement."

The whole town looked like election time. Every house had a placard of allegiance to a political party. Some had the Muslim NU symbol, others had the Christian Parkindo and Partai Katolik, the national party PNI, and various other symbols.

Although the placards made him curious, he didn't ask anyone about them. He just kept walking. Several houses were empty. A number, which had formerly belonged to members of the PKI, had been destroyed.

Suddenly a man called out to him: "Hey, friend, when did you get here? Have you come to stay?"

He turned to the voice. It was O, an old friend, who taught history at the High School. A good friend, who understood his problems, and the communists' attitude to him. Without answering, A walked into

O's front yard. The teacher called his wife, and they all shook hands.

Soon they were talking about their families. The wife asked him if they had had another child to replace the one that died.

"Not yet. But I've been lucky here - I've adopted the child of a former colleague of my wife. The women used to be good friends when they worked in the governor's office."

"Who?" O's wife asked.

"Hadijah."

The couple were startled. A's child had died. Now he was looking after one of his enemy's children. They also remembered that Hadijah had broken her engagement with A and married K instead. They were shocked.

"But - " the teacher began, " - look at the consequences of K's actions. Not just for his wife and children ... for everyone in the town who was even a nominal communist. As soon as the radio announced what had happened at Lubang Buaya, people started hunting down the PKI like they were rats. They dug their own holes - big holes, small holes - and filled them all. It was 'an in-between time.' Everyone seemed to be killing everyone else. People were so scared that they started putting party symbols on their houses. If you had stood at your door and said you were a human being, no one would have been interested. The mobs were only concerned which party you belonged to." He stopped briefly.

"No one escaped," said A. "But we can still look after their children. My wife and I will adopt one and care for it. It'll be our own child." The teacher looked at him.

"Care for the child and teach it," the teacher began again.

"Teach the child to be a person and not the member of a certain party. The children will always be liable to a certain disease: hatred. If we don't teach them about God, religion and morality, a tragic dialectic will be perpetuated in our history."

"Will you take one of Hadijah's children then?" A asked hopefully.

The husband and wife looked at each other. "I'm sorry, friend," O replied. "We teachers aren't very well paid. Anyway, the Ministry for Gestapu Affairs has already taken all I have, to look after pregnant PKI women and fun-loving young girls." He laughed. "How can I look after someone else's children when my own are sick and dying?"

"Hush," his wife insisted. "Tell the truth. Don't joke."

"I have to make a joke of it. If I didn't we would all have been dead a long time ago."

A listened, but he was already thinking of his other friends. He sat for a long time, then finally excused himself and left. As he walked he remembered that one of his friends owned a rice mill. The porter at the gate told him that the factory had been taken over by the government. The owner was involved with the 30th September Movement: he had given financial support to the Coup, and he had cheated the masses of their grain. A realized that it must have been the mill owner who reported his comments on the statistics.

It was night. He was still thinking. Walking was easy, for it was cool. He wanted to find his friends. The shadows returned but he was no longer afraid. His concern was with the living.

Sometimes he was startled when a person walked quickly up behind him, passed and disappeared into the distance. Sometimes he spoke to people and they ignored him. From time to time he stopped under a lamp

and rested. He felt as though some uncaptured member of the 30th September Movement was spying on him. But he was convinced that God would protect him - he was, after all, caring for the orphans. He walked, although it was late, and was not afraid.

He remembered a friend who had been a contractor and went to him. The friend had been quite well off. The friend was surprised to see him.

"I thought they exiled you for being a subversive force," he joked.

"They're the ones that are in exile now!"

They talked and the host brought out special dried meat and palm wine. The conversation turned to hunting, and the host asked him whether he still hunted. A replied that no one hunted deer in Jakarta; power and pleasure was the thing there.

"Are you hunting power?"

"No. Power hunts me."

"Are you a deer in Jakarta?"

"No, I'm a rabbit."

The host laughed. "A guinea pig, eh?"

"Right."

"So am I. They've got me in a box, I can't move. Imagine - they've given me the job of repairing the work the communists and their associates did. They built houses all right - not much cement and who cares if the walls fall apart. Quantity, not quality, that was the thing. They made a lot of money and used it for digging holes."

The contractor's wife joined them. "And how does your wife find Jakarta?" she asked.

"Not bad. But she's very thin."

"Still pretty, I'm sure. Hadijah is the one who has lost weight; I saw her going by just the other day."

"I've come to ask if you can help her." The couple smiled at each other as though he were joking. "She's a widow. She needs help with the children."

"Has K been ... ?" she asked.

"Yes. Dumped in the hole he dug himself."

The husband and wife said nothing. The wife sighed.

"That's why I've come. K has his reward, but his children are our responsibility. I'm going to adopt one. Can you take one, too?"

The woman was moved, and her eyes misted over. Her husband was unaffected. "There's something I think you should know," he said. "We are no longer people here - we're political animals. We have to consider the possible political repercussions."

"Hush," his wife insisted. "Don't talk about politics. Talk about the children."

"This concerns them too. People have changed. They belong to a collectivity called a 'party' and everything the party does is legal. I hope things will change soon. Really, I'm sorry. We're frightened. It's a small town. People know if you take a cat in. Imagine what it could be like sheltering the child of a member of the 30th September Movement. An angry crowd can be a very ugly thing."

A stood up. He had failed. He excused himself and quickly returned home.

The waiter met him at the hotel with a smile and offered him dinner. A refused. He went to his room, trying to think of another solution. First he sat, then he stood and walked around his room,

the lounge, and finally the grounds of the hotel. At last he went back inside and rang another friend, a doctor who had worked in the town for a very long time. It was no good. The doctor said he was a physician, not a social worker. A insisted, but the doctor was afraid to look after the child of a communist before the fuss had completely died away. His attitude irked A. There had been a shipwreck and drowning people were killing each other over the few planks available.

He left the hotel and went by horse-drawn carriage to the various orphanages. The superintendants told him that their religious foundations had recently begun building schools and had no more money for orphanages. Disappointed, he went back to the hotel again.

The next day he visited Hadijah and was consoled by the bright eyes of the children. They were eating yam.

"No one wants to help," he told her. "The civil servants claim they don't earn enough. People like the doctor and the contractor are afraid of the political recriminations. The religious groups are building schools and have no spare funds for orphanages."

She laughed bitterly. "It doesn't matter. Not everyone is afraid of children."

"Oh?"

"The beggars aren't."

"Don't give up hope. I'll take them all back to Jakarta. We'll keep one and entrust the rest to an orphanage."

She said nothing for some time. Her head hurt and her eyes were yellow. Her pale fingers massaged her temples. As the child most like K climbed onto his lap, she was strangely moved and her heart beat more quickly. It was almost as though A were nursing K.

The house was so gloomy that A could not bear to stay very long. He returned to the hotel, ate, and lay down on the bed, struggling mentally and emotionally to come to some definite solution. He felt as though he was swimming in the sea and had at last found a plank to save himself with. All around children were crying. He could only save one of them. There were four more.

His mind confusedly turned to other topics. He hated Hadijah. Every organization needed money and was therefore bourgeois; they all needed to communicate with other people - and that meant radios, cars, and such like - and to pay their workers, just like any Chinese businessman. Communism was as bourgeois as capitalism. He refused to believe that she had nothing to feed her children with. She must have had some golden trinkets hidden somewhere. She was smart. She had been married to a smart party man for a long time.

Day changed to afternoon, then to night. He ran to her house.

"You've been lying to me with your crocodile tears!" She said nothing. Her heart beat more quickly. He had changed so much. "I don't believe that the wife of a communist in league with mill owners and other bourgeois-capitalists never received anything. Confess! You're trying to keep what you have by sacrificing your children. You materialistic bitch!" She was stunned. "Everyone knows what sort of a person you are!"

The children came one by one, some chewing sugar cane, some chewing yam. He watched them come. "Look at them. How can you bear to lose them?"

The dumb woman came. A shouted: "People would still know even if your servant was blind as well. They'd find out. Tell me you

haven't got anything! That you're a beggar, or a prostitute or a thief! I won't believe you, and neither will anyone else!"

He turned and left. Back in his room he decided not to bother about the living any longer. To hell with them. They were dishonest. The only honest people were dead. Death was undeniable. Life was short and fragile. He knew that. Even if he was not yet a rotten corpse decaying in a hole somewhere, one day he would be. He rolled about on the bed, quivering with fear. These were not mass emotions but private enemies which he alone could feel. They were not the sort of thing which filled the Main Stadium at Senayan. He called on God and talked with Him. It was very late.

There was a sudden knock at the door. He staggered over and opened it to find the waiter and several other men waiting outside.

"Can you bring me some coffee, please?" he asked.

"We haven't come for coffee," the waiter replied. "You're under arrest." The men were familiar. One was the cigarette vendor.

"Who are you? Where do you come from?" A asked.

"Civil Defense. Come with us. You've been pretty busy with the Gerwani."

He ignored them and began to shut the door. They stopped him and, because they had swords, he followed them into a field. They ordered him to sit down for immediate trial.

"Don't be too hasty, brothers. I was trying to help the children." His voice shook before the animal viciousness which lurked behind their every action.

"Who are you?" one man asked.

"K was my enemy."

"Why are you so worried about his kids?"

"My enemy was an idea and the consequences of that idea. The person was separate."

"Where are your papers?" another man asked.

"In the room."

The waiter went to get the papers and returned with his case. They looked through his letters.

"Look," one of them said. "You're a civil servant. F grade. So are we, except that we're A grade. Some of us haven't got any grade at all. Things have been pretty bad lately. Give us some of the money the Gerwani gave you!"

"What money?"

"What's in the bag?"

"It's mine, leave it alone."

Ignoring him, they began turning the bag inside out.

As they did so, a patrol car passed. It turned and swung its lights over them. A waited for the car to stop and for the thieves to run until they were captured. The car turned again and disappeared around the corner. The court of eyes reconvened.

"All right, take your bag back," the group said. "We won't kill you. We're bored with that. We won't get anything tonight."

A tried to remain calm. He asked them about Hadijah and her hidden wealth.

"She's got shares," one said.

"Don't trust her - she's trying to trick you, giving the children away."

"Then she'll be free to do whatever she wants to. She can be a

real first-class slut then."

As they talked, they were suddenly aware of approaching army uniforms. The men put a knife to A's back and ordered him to crouch down. They waited for the patrol to pass. It kept coming, and shouted at them. They stood up to explain themselves.

"We've caught a communist, sir."

"They were trying to rob me."

The patrol arrested all of them. A informed the officer that he was a good friend of the Senior Commando Officer in the district and demanded to see him the next morning. The commandant came.

"They knew that I'd been visiting Hadijah, so they decided that I was trying to persuade her to share her wealth with me. They took my money. Fortunately your patrol showed up."

The commandant smiled. "What did you tell them?"

"That I wanted to look after the children."

"What was their response?"

"They looked after my wallet." They both laughed. "But I am still suspicious. No one believes in poor politicians any more."

The commandant thought for a while. "We took everything," he finally said. "Anything left over would have been spent months ago. Take the children. The important thing is not merely to feed and clothe them, but to form them so that there will never be another Lubang Buaya."

A thought of the children. Leaving the five thieves behind, he went to the hotel, then to Hadijah's house. The dumb woman was outside arranging the hire of a horse-drawn coach. She pointed silently to the house, touched her chest, then pulled her hair. She shut her

eyes and lay down in front of the horse. The horse looked at her and flicked its ears. The driver was amazed.

A went to her. She moved her mouth and pointed. Taking his hand, she led him into the house. The children were everywhere. The youngest sat on a mat, playing with its own filth. The old woman ignored them and dragged him into the bedroom. Hadijah was on the bed. Her eyes were closed. She was pale. He felt her pulse. She was dead.

"The prison, her husband's death, no one to look after her children, the way I behaved, public opinion ... " He stood in front of the body, then covered it with a blanket. "Shock." He left the room.

Several days later, a man, five children and a deaf and dumb woman boarded a ship leaving the small harbor town. No one waved goodbye to them except the seagulls flying in the distance ...

Jakarta,

September 1966.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

by Zulidahlan.

I dwell in the valley of the shadow of death. Mother's body is still uncovered. She lies dumbly on the divan. Dead at last, after months of illness and pain.

I gaze on her pale, faithful face. Her eyes have not fully altered. Shreds of memory still seem to hang there. It is as though she can see something that she has never seen before. But no. Almost her whole life has been lived in suffering.

Our neighbor's clock slowly chimes three. Soundlessly night becomes more and more melancholy. Soon it will be dawn. What should I do? Tell the neighbors, tell the local officer. And? We have nothing. Nothing at all. The neighbors have shunned us from the day my father was taken, a year ago. Then Marmi - my elder sister, Parlan - my brother, and Tarto - my father's younger brother. None of them have ever returned, nor have we ever heard from them again. It happened very quickly, like a bad dream. But it was not a dream. I am still awake.

I begin to arrange her body. First I straighten her legs, then I take the pillow from under her neck. I cover her with her best cloth. I look at her, my feelings are mixed.

Am I bitter? Or have I reached the stage of grief in which one no longer knows how to cry? Both. Bitter and sad, and sadly bitter - at whom, I cannot say.

There were causes and effects; we were not the only victims.

The reasons were so compelling that often I did not know how I should react.

Three months ago, I was suspended from school after the roundup. I am alone in the village. Everyone seems to mock me. People, animals, even objects, seem to hate me. They watch me with round, suspicious eyes. Even my smallest step is difficult and under continual scrutiny. I suffer, but what can I do? I lack the courage to commit suicide, and do not, at any rate, want to. My father used to say: "Be a man, and no one can beat you - not even God!"

I cannot see that that is any sort of victory at all. It certainly doesn't comfort me. I don't know, I can't think. Our neighbor's clock slowly chimes again. I begin to move.

First I open the door and the windows. The air is very fresh. The wind stings my eyes. I didn't sleep last night. My heart hurts worse.

Some of our neighbors have opened their doors. What can I tell them? My mother is dead. No. I can't expect much from them. They don't like us. I must go to the village head and tell him that my mother died at ten minutes to three o'clock. But not too early. I resign myself and wait.

The morning is as busy as any other morning. The villagers have a lot of things to do. They are laborers, petty traders and junior civil servants. They are good people. A few are cruel and malicious, but they too are human. They act badly for the wrong reasons, just as mother, the others and myself did, or were forced to do.

The confused din of the village mosque begins: children learning how to recite the Koran from young teachers. Many of the older

teachers - the learned kyai, and those who have been to Mecca, the haji - were killed, victims of human stupidity. They were first kidnapped, then tortured. Our family, or at least our friends, helped kill them..

A year ago there were fewer voices, and fewer children learning. They studied at home, with the man who had taught their father or their mother, and their elder brothers and sisters. The mosque was almost mute, its lamps were seldom lit. The night watchmen rested there on their rounds. In the day, people played dominoes.

The fetid morning wind stings my eyes. The sky is slowly turning from grey to red.

"All right, I will remember what you told me, mother. I apologize for every opportunity you gave me, which I misused."

Stepping out, I close the door and walk to the village headman's house. It is not very far away. I walk slowly, so as not to get there too early.

But it is still too early. There are a lot of young men there: the night watch. I nod and they stare at me accusingly.

"Is the headman here?"

They advance in silence, staring.

"I want to make a report."

"What about?" asks a short, fat boy, with a cruel face.

"A death."

They continue to stare at me. "My mother died at three o'clock this morning."

"Oh," the fat boy says. "All right, I'll tell him." He lazily throws away his cigarette butt.

"What's up, Nif?" asks a thin young man. He has just appeared.

"A report."

"Sit down, sir."

I nod and obey. He pulls me up a chair. We face each other across the small table.

"Why have you come so early?"

"My mother died at ten to three this morning."

"Innalillahi wainna ilaihi roji'un," he whispers. We are Allah's and we return to Him. He bows his head momentarily. "Was she very sick?"

"She was sick for a long time. Ever since my father and the others were arrested."

He nods and sighs.

"Very well. We'll tell the headman. You can go now. Er - ," he seems to interrupt himself, " - your house is at the end of Mojopahit Lane, isn't it?"

I nod. I want to speak to him very much, but I am dumb. I am reluctant to talk. I am afraid. I am - I don't know what else. Perhaps he is being too kind.

He understands and asks if there is anything else I want to say.

"We haven't got anything - "

"Don't worry about the funeral. We'll help. The neighborhood association. It'll be all right."

I want to tell him that I am all alone and that the neighbors hate me, but I can't. Expressing my gratitude to him, I leave wearily.

As I walk home I am suddenly afraid. It has been said that no one

will help us, that we are strangers, and that we cannot be buried in the cemetery.

What should I do? Bury her in the front yard? The neighbors would be angry if I did that.

Thoughts beat in my head like hammers. Oh God, if You really do exist, show me the way. Which path should I follow? I cannot think.

I am suddenly stunned: I have never called on God's name so devoutly. It is morning and I am hot and sweaty. My mother told me: "Don't carry the bitterness on. Ask for forgiveness. We were wrong. May all those who bear prejudice, hatred and malice, be accursed."

I am home and ready to tell them of her death. The sun is shining through the tops of the coconut trees. Into the house of one neighbor after another. I have avoided them for a long time. They are thoughtful and controlled as I tell them of her death. Just like the thin young man. Most of their faces reveal no hatred.

Despite my grief, I am glad. I am sad and happy and optimistic.

A few people begin to come to the house. They ask about her sickness and about myself. As day advances, more people come.

I can do nothing. They prepare her, without prejudice and without bitterness. I sit among them, thinking. There is a bond between us, the living and the dead. Something that we did not feel as a family, that was beyond us. How great God is. Unconsciously, I begin to cry.

I am close to Him. They lift the body. I am calm, grateful to Him, sad because of Him.

Lord, I can still pray. Open the hearts of my friends as You have opened mine. Bring us closer together, into the spirit of family that I see this morning.

Kudus ,

1966.

DARK NIGHT

by Martin Aleida.

Kamaluddin Armada got off the train at Balapan, and one hour later was on the bank of the Solo River, in Mojo district, waiting for the prau to ferry him across. It was cold and he shivered. The river flowed quickly. The sun had just risen and was hidden behind the bamboo leaves. The leaves shook when the cold morning wind brushed them, then froze again.

He had not been there before. He was going to Soroyudan and did not know how far it was. He turned east and wondered where the village was. He didn't know. Partini Mulyoharjo's recent letter had told him:

... After you cross over in the Mojo ferry, there is a road to the east. Follow it for about half a kilometer, until you come to a road on the right. Take that road and be careful, it is a very windy road. With luck you should come to a mossy stone gateway about half an hour later. To your right there will be seas of rice field. If it is still early morning, the sun will be clearly visible, for there is not one leaf of shade. As far as you look you will see rice fields, nothing else. I am waiting for you in the village of Soroyudan. Mention my late father's name, Mulyoharjo, to anyone you meet - they will take you to our house ...

Eight years ago, he had left his small town in Asahan, and his

parents, for one thing: freedom. His feudal and fanatically religious family seemed like a prison. At first he had enjoyed the freedom of a sailor's life, dropping anchor in Sabang, Sambu, Tarakan, Sumbawa, Tanimbar, Merauke and Port Darwin. Each new harbor and sea meant happiness.

But now, on the bank of the Solo River, he felt none of the thrill of being in a new place. He had decided that he would never find happiness wandering. He was twenty-nine.

The river flowed quickly, the leaves rustled in the wind. The prau approached the bank down below. He and a dozen other people climbed down and onto the boat. One of the passengers wore a faded drill uniform and a fez, and carried a case. The rest were merchants and farmers. Two men punted the boat along; although they did not wear shirts, they were not cold. It took less than ten minutes to reach the other side. He took out ten rupiah and offered it to one of the polemen.

"Up the top, fellow," the man replied in thickly Javanese-accented Indonesian.

"Oh," Armada replied, realizing his mistake. The other passengers were at the top of the bank, at the hut next to the food stall. They paid five rupiah each.

The road east spread out in front of him as though it led all the way to the almost extinguished ball of fire, the pale red sun. He decided that that was the road to follow.

It had been neither hardened with river rock, nor smoothed with asphalt. It was in its original state: clay.

From the distance, a few men on bicycles and women carrying bas-

kets walked towards the wharf. There were already many people waiting. This was how life was lived here each day. He began walking.

"Excuse me, sir," he said before overtaking the man in uniform. He had not excused himself to anyone else: they might not have understood him, he might not have understood them. He looked at them, smiled, then nodded politely. They returned the gesture and said rhythmically: Inggih monggo.*

The man in uniform could have been an official, come from the city to examine something in a village, or a local schoolteacher. In either case, he would have understood Armada's Indonesian.

"Of course. Go on." Then he added: "Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

Armada slowed down. "Soroyudan."

"Do you live there?"

"No."

They began to walk together, their shoulders almost touching. Armada fell in with the other man's pace.

"Where are you from?"

"Jakarta."

He looked at Armada, curious to know more. Armada walked. The man walked.

"Jakarta?"

"Yes sir."

"Are you going to see your family?"

"No. My future family."

*Javanese phrase meaning "certainly!"

The man smiled uncomprehendingly, curious to know more. "Your future family - what do you mean?"

"People who are not, as yet, part of my family."

"Your fiancée, you mean?"

"Yes."

Armada laughed. The man laughed too, contented. His teeth were white and healthy. The two men introduced themselves.

"Where are you going, sir?"

"Laban. Have you been to Soroyudan before?"

"This is the first time."

"Do you think you'll be able to find it all right? It's only a village after all - "

"I have a letter from my fiancée, with directions how to get there from Balapan."

"Oh ... " the man said, impressed.

"Is it far to Laban?"

"Further than Soroyudan. I can go that way - I'll walk with you."

"Thank you, thank you. What a coincidence ..."

They walked. At the end of the road, the very end, the horizon, the sun was no longer a pale ball but a blazing center of light. Armada began to feel warm and relaxed.

"Do you mind if I ask you who your fiancée is?"

The man looked at him politely, apologizing with his eyes if his curiosity should prove offensive. There was nothing to forgive: curiosity is no crime. His expression showed that he did not expect an immediate answer. So he added: "Laban is an administrative unit, and includes Soroyudan. I'm the secretary for the area."

A secretary, Armada thought, he told me that without being asked. It's nice to know a secretary. No doubt he's well thought of in the district. Completely without embarrassment, Armada replied happily: "Her name is Partini."

"And her full name?"

"Partini Mulyoharjo. Her father's name is Mulyoharjo."

"Mulyoharjo!!" The secretary moved away, frowning. His eyes revealed and concealed a mixture of emotions: fear, hate, amazement and bitterness. Mulyoharjo! Mulyoharjo! The name was like a rock thrown onto his face, and sent fierce waves out which slowly calmed, became ripples and then died away completely. When his face had lost all expression, he returned to Armada's side. Their shoulders almost touched. Armada looked at him apologetically.

"I'm sorry. What's wrong?"

"Mulyoharjo," the secretary repeated, calmly.

"Why?" Armada insisted.

"Have you ever met him?"

"No."

"He's famous. Not just in the village, or in Laban, but throughout the whole regency of Sukoharja, as far away as Solo. He was a big man in the PKI. He defended the Peasant Front in court in Solo when they were busy confiscating land. His friends love him. But he's made a lot of enemies too. Me, for example. They took my land, and he defended them. The verdict hasn't been given yet, but he's lost anyway. The Coup took place. He vanished. They finished him off in Bachan and threw him in the river like a dead fowl." The man looked quickly at Armada. "I'm sorry, sorry. He would have been your father-

in-law. I'm sorry." He took Armada's shoulder and shook it gently.

"Your father-in-law. I'm sorry," he pleaded.

"It doesn't matter. If that's the truth, there's nothing to forgive."

"You are from Sumatra, aren't you?"

"Yes. From Asahan, near Medan."

"I see. The Sumatrans are plain-speaking people. I like that." Then he added: "Did you know that your future father-in-law was dead ... had passed on?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Partini told me. My fiancée. His daughter," he replied calmly. "She's Javanese, but she speaks plainly too. She told me about her family, and her father in particular. She told me he was a communist. She wasn't boasting - she just wanted to make sure that I knew. She's very honest. I like that. I loved her all the more for telling me." Armada looked at the secretary. "So you don't need to apologize. Partini told me all about him. Will you tell me about him?"

"It's not good to talk about the shortcomings of the dead."

Armada was silent. The secretary stopped talking. They walked in silence, as the wind whispered in the bamboo to the right and the left of the road.

Suddenly Armada was aware of being on the road to the right. The sun had swung around and sheltered behind the bamboos to his left. If I follow this road I should come to the gateway, just as Partini said. That must be the entrance to the village.

"How did you meet her?" the secretary asked.

"She was at school in Jakarta. I sold petrol at a roadside stall in one of the better streets. Love is blind, they say - that's probably true. We never expected to meet. Imagine. She came from here; I am from the north of Sumatra. She was studying hard at school; I was sitting on the side of the road like a piece of dirt, dust pouring over me every day.

It rained. She sheltered in my kiosk on her way home from school, and we met.

Three months after the Coup she left school and returned home. She gave me two reasons. The first was that she was worried about her family. The second was that they hadn't sent her any money for a long time. I helped her a bit, but I couldn't do much. She came back to her mother, and her brothers and sisters. Her father was dead. The family was very bitter. I wondered what it was like when she got there: her mother a widow, the children fatherless.

"We kept in touch through letters. You can imagine how glad I'll be to see her."

Kamal hesitated. The secretary smiled gently, encouraging the love-sick young man to continue.

"I was like dirt on the side of the road, and she liked me. She was so sweet, so fine and so honest. She's the only woman I've ever met that wouldn't lie to you or pretend to be what she wasn't. I don't wish to be presumptuous, sir, but you can tell a dishonest woman simply by the way she dresses. It's even more obvious when she opens her mouth."

Armada was quiet for a moment, then he continued, smiling: "Finally we decided. We wanted to get married."

"When will that be?"

"In three days time. Partini says her mother wants us to get married right away, then I can stay there and help them in the fields. It will be a simple wedding."

The secretary listened as Armada gave full rein to his emotions.

"I used to be a sailor once. I wanted to be free. I thought that once I was free, I'd be happy. I was, for a while. Then I got bored. Part of me seemed to be missing."

"Was your father a civil servant?" the secretary interrupted.

"No, a merchant. He wanted me to be a good trader and a devout Muslim. He was a very hard man. Even when I was grown up, he used to beat me. He fought with my mother all the time. I hated that, so I ran away. I just cleared out. It was awful leaving my mother."

"How long have you been away?"

"Eight years."

"Do you want to go back?"

"Of course. I miss her. Everyone misses their mother ..."

He thought suddenly of his father's strictness, his mother's gentleness, and the day that he left home. Only his sister knew that he was going. She cried and tried to get him to change his mind, but he wouldn't. He had decided.

"But now I believe that happiness lies in accepting responsibility," Armada added as the memories began to recede. "I want to get married. I want to have my own house. I'll have to take the father's place. Being responsible will mean being happy -- "

Kamal suddenly stopped walking, lost in thought.

"I don't really know whether the village will accept me. The

father was a communist." The secretary said nothing. His face showed nothing. He was hiding something. "Sir," Armada began. "I know this is still a dangerous district. It used to be a communist stronghold. Partini told me that in one of her letters. I'm really worried. The young men might come and punish me - kill me and throw me in the river - for being a PKI. They might think that I'm a courier, or a refugee from Jakarta. I'm marrying the child, not her father. I'm not sure that he'd even approve of me if he was still alive."

Kamaluddin Armada looked at the secretary, trying to work out what the other man was thinking, hoping he would give some opinion.

"What do you think, sir? You're a man of some standing in this district. I'm worried."

The man said nothing. Armada stared at him attentively, waiting.

"I'm marrying the child, not her father."

He looked at the secretary again, and suddenly saw a knife-line of pain cross his face. The man looked away. Kamal waited. Finally the secretary spoke.

"I should be grateful to you. I haven't known you long, but you've told me a lot about yourself. I appreciate your politeness to me, and the responsible way you've acted towards one of our young women." He paused. "You're a determined young man. I hope you won't snap when things don't work out."

"You mean if the wedding is postponed?" Armada cut in. "That's impossible. Her mother insisted. We're old enough. There's no chance of that. It's just that I'm worried about the political situation."

The secretary seemed not to hear. His eyes fixed on some distant

object.

"Yes," he sighed, almost moaned, "I should be grateful. But now that I've met you, I know that I too have sinned ..."

He looked sharply at Armada, his eyes reflecting regret and the desire for forgiveness. Armada bowed his head and, like a blind man suddenly deprived of his stick, asked confusedly: "How have you sinned?"

"I am the first one to tell you. The news will wound you deeply ... A week ago a communist refugee from Yogyakarta, Mulyoharjo's brother, was discovered hiding in Partini's house. The people cut him to shreds and burnt the house down."

Armada was shocked. The secretary watched him with tears of regret in his eyes. He pleaded for forgiveness.

"Sir --" Armada moaned.

"Partini, her mother, the other children ... " The plea was more intense.

"Yes -- " the word fell from Armada's mouth.

"The people don't discriminate at a time like that. They have borne their anger and bitterness a long time. When it finally explodes, one cannot expect them to be rational. We can both understand that. When anger and bitterness are king, intellect goes under. They were all killed. Partini, her mother, the other children, were hiding their uncle; he was a communist. The families of communists in other areas have disappeared as well, you know. The fact that Mrs. Mulyo couldn't read and that her children knew nothing about politics made no difference. Politics is blind. They all went into the river."

Armada moaned. His head spun and his eyes were suddenly clouded. The road was like a great swinging rope. The trees swayed. He closed

his eyes. His body seemed imprisoned. Everything he saw and felt moved. Moved, shook. The secretary held him tightly by the shoulder so that he would not fall down.

"Be strong."

Armada walked with the secretary's support. He hobbled to the edge of the road and sat next to a pillar.

"Are you telling me the truth, sir?" he asked. His heart stung, as though it had been cut with knives of bamboo.

"I'm the secretary of Laban. The people trust me. Everything I told you happened. I have sinned; I had to be the first one to tell you. I'm sorry. You told me about yourself and your ambitions. I have destroyed those ambitions. I'm sorry." The man squatted in front of Armada, wiping his tears on his shirtsleeve.

Armada leant wearily against the stone. There was nothing left. The joy he had hoped for from being the responsible head of a family was gone. He was once more an outcast. A sailor who would never reach the port he wanted.

He ran his hand along the pillar and about four meters away, vaguely saw another. For a long time he stared at the other pillar. They were the same. Two stone pillars on separate sides of the road.

He thought, and soon he was certain.

"Is this the gate to Soroyudan, sir?" he asked softly.

"Yes." The man looked to the southwest, to a few houses at the edge of a clump of trees.

"How awful," Armada thought. "To be the sailor that never arrives." He moaned and held onto the pillar.

"You're still young. There's still time. Be strong."

Armada looked to the east, to the rice fields green like the sea. He suddenly remembered her letter: "As far as you look you will see rice fields, nothing else. I am waiting for you in the village of Soroyudan."

"The sun's getting high, sir. You'll be late. Don't worry about me."

"No. You're my guest. We honor guests, especially those who come a long way ... for nothing. I'll take you to the head of Partini's neighborhood association; you can rest in his house."

"There's no point in staying for ash and rubble."

"We won't go to her house if you'd rather not. Just to the neighborhood head. You won't see her place at all. I think you should rest a little before you return to Jakarta. You must be tired and ... You need to rest."

The sun had sunk into the earth three hours ago. The only noise on Bachan bridge, five kilometers to the south of Soroyudan, was the occasional sound of a passing bicycle. There was a dull light at both ends of the bridge; the middle was black. Armada stood in the middle of the bridge, dully watching the water. His lips trembled. He paid no attention to anyone who passed him, and they ignored him. In his hands were two sheets of paper, dated 2nd March 1966.

Occasionally his trembling lips seemed to form a word. The word sounded like "Partini ... Partini ..."

He crushed the letter suddenly and threw it into the water. It fell like a white feather and vanished with the current into the dark.

"How can I repay your love? Your family are dead. There is no

grave I can visit, as though even the earth could not accept you because your father was a communist. Your uncle was a communist and ... oh my love ..." He sighed softly.

Lifting his head slowly he looked blankly towards the west, the direction Muslims turn to pray. "Oh God," he whispered to the Most Merciful. "It was not Your hand that swung the sword, or pushed the bayonet, or pulled the trigger that killed Partini, her mother and the fatherless children. It wasn't, it wasn't. You are the Merciful One. Forgive the sins of my beloved and her family. They were my family, I was theirs, even if You had not yet married us. Forgive us all. Amen."

He closed his eyes and slowly bowed his head.

Sometime later he put his hand into his jacket and took a knife from his pocket. He slit the vein on his left wrist. The blood spurted out. He put the knife to his neck and slashed the vein until the knife stopped at his collar bone. The neck hung open, the blood spurted out. The two veins were broken. The third cut went into his belly. His guts hung out. Blood flowed freely from the three gaping wounds.

He waited silently for the angel of death, as though death were the climax of all his hopes and dreams, the end of life - his final method of achieving happiness. It was a bitter freedom and a worse happiness.

His eyes darkened and spun. The bridge shook. He leant against the rail, his strength draining from his body through the three wounds.

"I'm coming, Partini," he managed to moan.

Blood washed over his shirt and body, and over the broken asphalt of the bridge. It dripped into the flowing water down below.

At last his strength was gone. He was no longer Kamaluddin Armada. He was a dead body. The body bent between the belly and the thighs, curled over the rail, and fell into the river.

A MINOR CONFLICT

by Sosiawan Nugroho.

We used to talk a lot while we were working, although not usually about anything very serious, or with much intensity. It was easier to muck around, tell jokes, you didn't feel so hungry then. Sometimes we got onto wider social issues, usually as a result of talking about how to earn enough money, which was something we talked about a lot.

The three of us - Amir, Hirman and myself - used to work in a batik factory in Lawiyan, putting wax on the cloth. We didn't belong to any political parties or affiliated associations, either right-wing or left-wing. We saw things in different ways. Amir had prayed five times a day ever since he was a kid and was a reasonably good Muslim. Funny enough, his other attitudes were more left-wing. He used to think that a Muslim could be a good communist.

Hirman was also a bit left-wing. I was more moderate, sort of in the center. I'm not an extremist. I believe in honesty, truth and justice and that you have to decide for or against anything on the basis of these three principles. I don't get excited easily. I believe in what the government is trying to do: socialism for everyone based on Pancasila, no matter what groups people belong to or who they are - as long as they believe in Pancasila, that's all right.

I don't have any political ambitions. I used to talk about politics because everyone else did. There were a lot of things happening in every direction, including literature (which is what interests me most), and they all seemed to have some connection with

politics.

Hirman and I were working away when Amir came back from Friday mosque. He had a frown on and he started talking right away: "That Kyai Farid is really too much. He never sticks to what he's supposed to be talking about." Amir took off his jacket and his fez and put them on the nail on the wall.

I smiled. Farid is quite young - very clever, socially committed, and a real revolutionary (the way everyone was supposed to be at the time). I found out Amir was complaining about the sermon. (I had a boil on my backside so I didn't go to the mosque that day.)

"Why?"

"He doesn't give a sermon - it's a political speech."

"A speech?"

"Sure. He talks on and on about how to do the best for religion, and how the Coup was the biggest act of treachery ever. Crush the PKI and its mass organizations! They wrote the script; they directed the show and provided all the actors as well. They are polytheists, hypocrites and anti-God. They talked about economic prosperity while their organizations destroyed the economy so they could make more trouble."

Hirman looked as if someone had dropped a caterpillar down his back.

"Bloomin' opportunists. They've got the wind in their sails at the moment, and they're using every chance they get to have a go at the commees."

I didn't like the way he said that. The others had, by any standards, played pretty rough. But I played along with him.

"You're right, Hirman. They're just opportunists. Still that's politics - any chance to have a hit at your enemy. The comms had all the wind before October. The Cultural Manifesto and the Body For Sukarno were 'reactionary' and got crushed."

Hirman smiled bitterly. I had been called a Manikebuis - Cultural Manifesto-ite - for I see more than one side of things. I believe in art for art's sake, not like the comms.

"I mean, the 30th September Movement had to be crushed - but he doesn't have to work it into every sermon," Amir added.

"You should be used to that. Politics used to be about everything - that's called 'revolutionary progressive thinking.' I heard a lecture a few years ago in Sriwedari by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the writer. I forget what it was called but he was on about socialist-realism in literature. It was more like a speech than a lecture."

"How do you mean?" Amir asked.

"He was talking about literary socialist realism - the application of the teachings of socialism, Marxism he meant, to literature. He was a proletarian humanist and not of the 1950's decadent bourgeois universal humanists. He didn't like anyone who supported bourgeois literature - it makes everyone too weak to fight; was realist realism; aesthetically unattractive, wrapped up in beauty, reality and silence; was too individualist and not concerned enough with the struggling masses. He said universal humanism was Van Mook humanism, a capitalist and colonialist subterfuge being used by the neo-colonialist imperialists and had to be crushed and utterly destroyed."

I looked at them to see what they were thinking. They were frowning. Amir walked away noisily. Suddenly there was a cough. It

was a short, fat, fifteen year-old kid. He didn't have a jacket on, and his black skin was bright with sweat.

"What do you want?" we all asked him.

"Curry and rice," he replied.

"Curry and rice?" Amir mocked.

We looked at each other and finally burst out laughing. He looked confused. He'd been trying to sell us curry and rice every day for the last year and a half. We never bought any. We never earned more than seventeen and a half rupiah a day, curry and rice cost five.

"Do you want some, sir?" he repeated.

"Next month ... er, next year, my boy?" Amir replied.

"All right, sir," the boy replied with a big laugh, leaving. He probably wanted to prove that even if his skin was black, his teeth were as white as Chitra Dewi's.

"Don't be stupid, 'Mir," Hirman snapped. Amir was the only one still laughing. I thought our previous conversation had died, but I was wrong. As soon as Amir stopped laughing, he started talking again.

"I still think the left-wing is the most progressive faction. It's being used as a scapegoat." (He meant the PKI but wouldn't say so.)

"They used everyone else as a scapegoat before," I remarked.

"You mean the Cultural Manifesto-ites?" Hirman sneered.

"Not just them. The Body For Sukarno, as well. The goats have turned into tigers now."

"Paper tigers?"

"Maybe. But their teeth and claws are more effective than those

of the old fossils," I joked.

"It's no good being a scapegoat," Amir sighed. "You're always on the wrong side."

"There's certainly no future in being reactionary."

"It depends how you look at the word," said Hirman.

"Those who carried out the Coup were reactionary," I said.

"That depends on how you look at things."

"The facts are clear enough," I said angrily.

Hirman frowned. I began to get worried.

"Sus," Amir suddenly asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"You think I sympathize with the communists, don't you."

I was right to be worried. It looked like there was going to be a fight. Amir must have sensed how I felt, because he changed the drift of his remarks.

"Look, Sus, I know a lot of people secretly think that I am a sympathizer. Some people even call me a pious PKI."

I couldn't help laughing; the phrase was both precise and poetic.

"What's wrong?" Amir demanded.

"Well, where there's smoke, there's fire," I teased.

"Don't be difficult," he said nervously. "You know I'm not a communist."

"But a lot of other people don't," I said, egging him on.

"That's what I want to know. Do you think I am?"

"Promise you won't be angry?" I turned to Hirman. "Witness this please, Hir."

"Stop messing around," Amir insisted.

"All right," I smiled. "But I do think you're a bit odd."

"What do you mean 'odd'?"

"Being a Muslim and a Marxist at the same time."

Hirman briefly stopped mixing dye.

"How do you know?" Amir asked.

"From the way you talk and act."

"So you think I'm a Marxist Muslim, not a pious PKI. There is a difference you know."

"Come on, they're both the same." I smiled.

"Islam is a progressive, revolutionary and rational religion. Marxism is a scientific and progressive scientific theory. Islam opposes colonialism and all forms of oppression, so does Marxism. From these parallels, or similarities at least, a Muslim could quite well act like a Marxist."

"Granted. But there are differences too," I replied.

"Like what?"

"The most basic one is philosophical. But because their philosophical assumptions are so different, their goals and tactics must be radically different too."

"In what way?" Hirman asked.

"Islam is founded on the Unity of God. God is One. He is the creator, He made the earth and everything that exists. He is superior to His creation; He set it in motion and He determines how it is to function. His power is absolute, He himself is eternal. Islam is not only progressive, revolutionary and rational, but insists on absolute belief in a God who cannot be fully understood by reason alone."

"And Marxism?"

"You know more about Marxism than I do, Hir'."

"Tell me anyway."

"All right. Marxism - correct me if I've got it wrong - is founded on Dialectical Materialism and History. Materialism claims that matter is primary and decisive. Thought is secondary and determined by matter. Religion is an idea. God exists in our own minds, as an image created by those who need Him. So philosophically Islam and Marxism are diametrically opposed. Islam believes in God, Marxism doesn't."

Hirman smiled. I waited for him to put me right.

"I've heard all that too many times before - not just from Muslims, but from other fanatics as well."

"I'm only telling you what I've heard Marxists say," I defended. "Muslims believe that their religion, Islam, is inspired by God. Marx said, in a book called On Religion, that 'Man makes religion, religion does not make man'." (I quoted in English for Hirman's sake; we had studied Advanced English together with Mr. Mardi, until he was transferred to Semarang.)

I turned to Amir. "Is Islam inspired, 'Mir?" I asked him.

He nodded. "There's a specific verse in the Koran - Innaddina 'indallohi al-Islam - which means, more or less, Islam is the religion of God."

"How can you prove that religion and Marxism are actually opposed to each other?" Hirman asked.

"From the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin."

"Go on."

"Marx says in On Religion: 'The abolition of religion as the ...'"

I stopped then continued: "'The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness.' Marx clearly regards religion as an obstacle, as a 'drug,' to people in their pursuit of happiness. Outwardly religion is sweet, inwardly it is poisonous. Religious happiness is false and illusory happiness."

Hirman made no comment, but merely asked "And Engels?"

"In the same book Engels writes: 'There is no room for priests in the communes; every religious manifestation, every religious organization must be prohibited.' A few lines further down he mocks: 'The only service that can be rendered to God today, is to declare atheism'."

"And Lenin?"

"The only thing I've read is O. Hshem's book on Marxism and Religion, but he says that in The Marxism of Marx and Engels Lenin writes that: 'We have to fight against religion. This is the A.B.C. of materialism and thus of Marxism as well.' Hshem concludes with the slogans: 'Get rid of religion! Long live atheism! Our main task is to spread atheism!'"

Hirman was bowed in thought. Finally he said: "Marxism is still developing. Modern Marxism is not the same as the Marxism of Marx and Engels' era, when they had to fight so hard against religion. Modern Marxism, especially in Asia, treats belief as a private matter. It doesn't matter whether a person is religious or not; just as long as religion does not actively oppose Marxism or hinder the proletarian struggle, it is not an issue. Where there are similarities, such as in the attitudes to capitalism and imperialism, religion ought

to be embraced as a comrade-in-arms."

"Marxism has always changed its tactics to suit the situation, conditions and level of the struggle. Tactics are temporary, the goals and assumptions remain the same," I said.

"Marxist tolerance isn't a tactic. It comes from a change in theory, based on a change in circumstances."

"I'm not sure what you mean by a change in theory, Hir. If the change doesn't effect the goals and assumptions, then it is only a tactical change. The fundamental differences remain. I doubt that Marxists would accept the kind of change in goals and assumptions that we're talking about."

Hirman was lost for answer. He said nothing. It was hot and humid, because the rain would not come. But other things made me sweat as well: the energy and concentration needed to use the right words. I lifted my glass of tea. Amir suddenly sighed. "This is crazy," he said. "I started this, and you haven't said a word to me the whole time."

I smiled, Hirman was a bit insulted. Amir laughed, and we felt better.

"Sus," Amir asked, "so far you've only talked about philosophical differences. What about the differences of aim?"

"Well, we both know that Islam and Marxism want a just, prosperous, peaceful and caring society. But the sort of society they are after is very different."

"How?"

"Obviously Islam wants a Muslim society which will worship God and follow His laws. A person should be spiritually and physically content,

both in this world and the next. Marxism doesn't believe in the next world, just as it doesn't believe in God. Marxism and communism only care about here and now. Heaven is a reactionary fantasy. Marxism believes in proletarian morality and the end of religion."

"So a Muslim can't be a Marxist," Amir concluded.

"I don't really think so. A good Muslim should be a servant of God; a Marxist should be an atheist. How can one believe in God and be an atheist? How can one build a society which glorifies God and a society which hates any suggestion of religion? It's impossible."

"Can a Muslim accept any Marxist theories then?" Hirman asked.

"Any worthwhile theory that doesn't contradict the teachings and laws of Islam is a Muslim theory as well, no matter what its origins."

"Well, why not work with those other 'Muslim' groups then?"

"Islam has various types of teaching, 'Mir. There are theological principles, ritual principles, and social. The theological principles have to be followed implicitly, there's nothing you can do with them. The secular ones, about types of state and society, are as open as possible, as long as the sources of Islamic law aren't contradicted. So there's no need to go outside the Muslim community."

"Did you know Kyai Arif?" Hirman asked.

"Yes," I nodded.

"He was a clever man. A real scholar. He knew a lot about religion and about Marxism. Why did he join the PKI?"

He was pushing me. Compared to Kyai Arif I didn't know very much about Islam or Marxism. I had spent four and a half years in the Jama'atul Ikhwan religious school, and read a bit. All I knew about Marxism came from reading the communist daily Harian Rakjat, some

pamphlets and a few books. But my answers seemed right.

I didn't know what to say. God the Compassionate and the Merciful must have given me the words. "The cleverest people aren't always the best Muslims. A lot of other Kyai and Muslim intellectuals understood Islam and Marxism, but never became ... shall we say 'Marxists'?"

Things were tense. Hirman was silent, so was Amir. I didn't have anything else I wanted to say. Each of us were thinking our own thoughts. I looked at Hirman but he looked down and pretended to scrape wax off his stamp. He was angry. I couldn't see Amir's face.

I was worried. I hoped Hirman wasn't mad at me. It was stupid to spoil a friendship just because of a difference in opinion. I had tried to argue constructively, to defend truth and justice, to put the problems in proper perspective and not be biased. If I had been a bit forceful, it was only because Hirman and Amir used to think that the New Order forces - especially the religious groups - were self-seeking. They never thought about the crimes and filthy behavior of the Old Order groups they sympathized with. I get angry when people are being dishonest.

I stood firm. I had meant well and they started the discussion anyway. If they couldn't accept my good intentions, that was too bad. But Islam teaches us that we ought to find the best, friendliest solution to every quarrel. Without thinking I said: "Hir, have you got a fag?"

They laughed. I don't smoke. I laughed too, not at my own forgetfulness, but simply because I was glad that Hirman was no longer angry at me.

THE AUTHORS.

Martin Aleida: Born in a devoutly Muslim, merchant family in Tanjung Balai, Asahan, North Sumatra, 1943. Began writing short stories in Indonesia Baru, Medan. Worked on ships and barges for two years in the Riau Archipelago, and after 1966 in a shipping firm in Belawan, Deli, North Sumatra. Later left for Jakarta and worked variously as a waiter, bus conductor, sidewalk salesman, etc., before taking a reporting job in 1971 with the newsweekly Tempo.

Satyagraha Hoerip: Born Lomongan, East Java, 7th April 1934. Attended school in Malang and studied at various universities without taking a degree. Won the award for the best short story in the literary magazine Sastra in 1961, and has published one collection, Sepasang Suami Isteri (Husband and Wife, Mega Bookstore, Jakarta, 1963). Has also edited a collection of essays, Antologi Esei Tentang Persoalan-persoalan Sastra (Essays on the Problems of Literature, Sinar Kasih, Jakarta, 1969). Currently works as Coordinator of Home News, and Editor for Art and Culture, in Sinar Harapan.

Kipandjikusmin: A pseudonym. Born in 1940. Complicated religious history: his father remarried in 1946 and his Protestant step-mother educated him in a Christian school in Malang, East Java. Later transferred to Yogyakarta, where he became a Roman Catholic, and studied at Canisius High School, Salatiga. While studying in a further Christian school in Semarang, his father's remarriage led him to re-embrace Islam. Failing to complete his studies in Semarang, he transferred to the maritime academy, Akademi Pelayaran Nasional, then worked in government service in

Jakarta for six years. "Kipandjikusmin" (Kusmin was his father's name, Panji his grandmother's, the Ki sounds nice), commonly known to his friends as Tono, become widely known for his short story, "Langit Makin Mendung" (The Sky Grows Darker), which earned its publisher a suspended two-year prison sentence.

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Gerson Poyk: Born in Namodale, Rote, in the Moluccas, East Indonesia, on the 16th June 1931. Studied at the Christian Teacher's College, SGA Keristen Surabaya, and subsequently taught in Ternate (after 1956) and Bima, Sumbawa (after 1958). Began writing in 1954, and later became a regional reporter for Sinar Harapan, the leading national Protestant newspaper, until he left in 1972 to study in the International Writers' Program, Univeristy of Iowa. Has written a novel, Sang Guru (The Teacher, Pustaka Jaya, Jakarta, 1973), numerous short stories and poetry. He now supports himself by free-lance writing.

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Usamah: Born 20th August 1943, Pekalongan, Java. Studied in the English teaching division, Universitas Saraswati, Solo. Awarded a prize in 1962 by Sastra for his short story "Suatu pagi di bulan April" (A Day in the Month of April); members of the communist cultural organization, Lekra, forged a letter rejecting the prize. Was head of the Muslim students' association, Pelajar Islam Indonesia, in Solo during 1964, and in the

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