INDONESIA SPECIA



wordt vervolgd-amnesty international-dutch section-march 1973

amnesty international

The objectives of Amnesty International are defined in its statutes in the following manner:

"Considering that every person has the right to hold and to express his convictions and the obligation to extend a like freedom to others, the objects of Amnesty International shall be to secure throughout the world the observance of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by:

(a) irrespective of political consideration working towards the release of and providing assistance to persons who, in violation of the aforesaid provisions are imprisoned, detained, restricted or otherwise subjected to physical coercion or restriction by reason of their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origing, colour or language provided that they have not used or advocated violence. (hereinafter referred to as 'Prisoners of Conscience').

(b) opposing by all appropriate means the imposition and execution of death penalties and torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading penalties or treatment of prisoners and others detained or restricted in violation of the above provisions."

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is an independent organisation and has consultative status with the United Nations, Unesco and the Council of Europe. It endeavours particularly for the implementation of the provisions of Articles 5, 9, 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 5 No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practise, worship and observance.

Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

contents

- Foreword by Sean MacBride, S.C.
 Introduction by Dr. Herman
 - van Geuns
- 3. The roots of the problem 4. Who are the prisoners
- 4. Who are the prisoners
 5. Detainees in Indonesia a
- lawyer's view

 6 Numbers! Numbers! Numbers
- 6. Numbers! Numbers! Numbers! 7. Political prisoners' families
- 8. The geography of imprisonment
- 9. How the prisoners live
- 10. The island of Buru
- 11. Plantungan the women's detention camp
- 12. Release the problems
- 13. Indonesian attitudes 14. The prisoners speak
- 15. Memorandum
- 15. Memorandum
 16. What can Amnesty do?

Wordt Vervolgd

Two-monthly periodical of Amnesty International in Holland and Belgium.

Secretariat of the Dutch Section: Amnesty International Roetersstraat 34 - 36 Amsterdam/Holland Phone: 020 - 22 46 74 Giro: 48.92.37

Secretariat of the Belgian Section: Amnesty International Gulden Vlieslaan 1 1060 Brussels Bank: M.Wesseling, rubr. A1 Kredietbank Tervuren (pcr 5634) 434-5091941-27

Amnesty International Samuel Amnesty International 53 Theobald's Road London WC1X 8SP

Chairman of the International Executive Committee: Sean MacBride, S.C.

Secretary General: Martin Ennals

This Indonesia Special is published by the Dutch Section of Amnesty International in agreement with the International Secretariat.

We wish to express our warm gratitude to all persons who spent so much of their time and energy writing and compiling this Indonesia Issue as published by the Dutch Section of Amnesty International

The Editors



An unknown political prisoner in Indonesia.

foreword by sean macbride sc

This publication presents the situation of more than 55,000 untried political prisoners in Indonesia and describes the plight of their children, wives and families. It makes clear the extent to which the rule of law has been abrogated by the Indonesian Government in its treatment of these men and women, most of whom have now been in prison, invariably in bad conditions, for more than seven years.

During my own visit to Indonesia in 1970, I was able to verify not only the existence of this vast number of prisoners, but also the fact that it is Government policy to detain indefinitely many thousands of prisoners, while admitting publicly that it has no evidence against them of any criminal activity.

These are prisoners of conscience and until all are free, Amnesty International will persist in its efforts to secure for them full human rights as laid down by international convention and agreement.

1973 is the 25th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights; as a member of the United Nations, Indonesia has a moral obligation to recognise the principles contained in the Declaration. Amnesty urges the Indonesian Government to announce during the year a general amnesty for all untried political prisoners.

KATA PENDAHULUAN OLEH SEAN MACBRIDE, S.C. KETUA AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Penerbitan ini menunjukkan keadaan para tahanan politik Indonesia yang jumlahnya lebih daripada 55.000 orang yang tak pernah dituntut atau diadili serta melukiskan pula nasib anak-isteri dan sanak-saudara mereka itu. Menjadi jelas betapa jauh sudah ''rule of law'', kekuasaan hukum ditiadakan oleh pemerintah Indonesia dalam cara memperlakukan para tahanan pria dan wanita itu yang jumlah terbesar rata-rata sudah meringkuk dalam penjara selama lebih dari tujuh tahun dan hidup dalam keadaan sengsara.

Sewaktu dalam tahun 1970 saya mengunjungi Indonesia dapat saya menyaksikan sendiri kenyataan adanya jumlah tahanan yang demikian banyaknya serta juga fakta bahwa memang adalah politik resmi pemerintah untuk menangkap berriburibu tahanan untuk waktu tak tertentu. Pemerintah sendiri pula bahkan mengakui dengan resmi bahwa tidak ada bukti apapun yang terdapat bahwa mereka telah melakukan kejahatan yang dapat dituntut didepan pengadilan.

Mereka jelas sejelas-jelasnya adalah ''prisoners of conscience'' yaitu ditahan karena keinsyafan batin dan pikiran yang merupakan hak azasi mereka. Selama mereka belum bebas semua, maka Amnesty akan tetap berusaha keras agar bagi mereka dilaksanakan jaminan hak-hak azasi manusia sepenuhnya sebagaimana tertera dalam konvensi dan perjanjian internasional.

Tahun 1973 merupakan Tahun ke-25 Pernyataan Hak-hak Manusia, Sebagai anggauta Perserikatan Bangsa-bangsa Indonesia mempunyai kewajiban moril untuk mengakui azas-azas yang terkandung dalam Pernyataan tersebut. Amnesty mendesak peme rintah Indonesia agar dalam tahun ini mengumumkan penampunan umum bagi semua tahanan politik yang belum diadili itu.

VOORWOORD DOOR SEAN MACBRIDE, S.C., VOORZITTER VAN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Deze publikatie behandelt de toestand van meer dan 55.000 niet-berechte politieke gevangenen in Indonesië en beschrijft het lot van hun kinderen, vrouwen en familieleden. Het maakt duidelijk in welke mate de Indonesische regering de rechtsregels overtreedt met betrekking tot deze mannen en vrouwen, van wie de meesten, over het algemeen onder slechte omstandigheden, al meer dan zeven jaar gevangen zitten.

Tijdens mijn bezoek aan Indonesië in 1970 kon ik uit eigen waarneming vaststellen dat het hier inderdaad om zo'n groot aantal gevangenen gaat. Ook stelde ik vast dat de regering een politiek voert die er op is gebaseerd duizenden gevangenen voor onbepaalde tijd te interneren, terwijl openlijk wordt toegegeven dat er ten aanzien van deze mensen geen bewijzen bestaan van enig gepleegd misdrijf.

Zij zijn "gevangenen van hun geweten". Totdat allen zijn vrijgelaten zal Amnesty International haar pogingen voortzetten om de gevangenen hun volledige mensenrechten terug te geven, zoals deze zijn vastgelegd in internationale conventies en overeenkomsten.

In 1973 is het 25 jaar geleden dat de Declaratie voor de Rechten van de Mens werd getekend; als lid van de Verenigde Naties heeft Indonesië de morele plicht de beginselen van die Declaratie te erkennen. Amnesty dringt er bij de Indonesische regering op aan in dit jaar een algemene amnestie af te kondigen voor alle onberechte politieke gevangenen.

introduction by dr. h.a. van geuns

Amnesty's aim is to help political prisoners and prisoners of conscience; we are not concerned with national politics, nor do we pass judgment on the beliefs of those in prison. Amnesty's interest in Indonesia began in 1961, long before the tragic events of 1965. Then, as now, it was motivated by a concern with the principles of human rights, had no partisan political interest, and worked for the release of individual prisoners of conscience, at that time critics of the Sukarno Government. Today its work is focused on more than 55,000 untried prisoners, detained as suspected communists after the attempted coup of September 1965.

AMNESTY MISSIONS

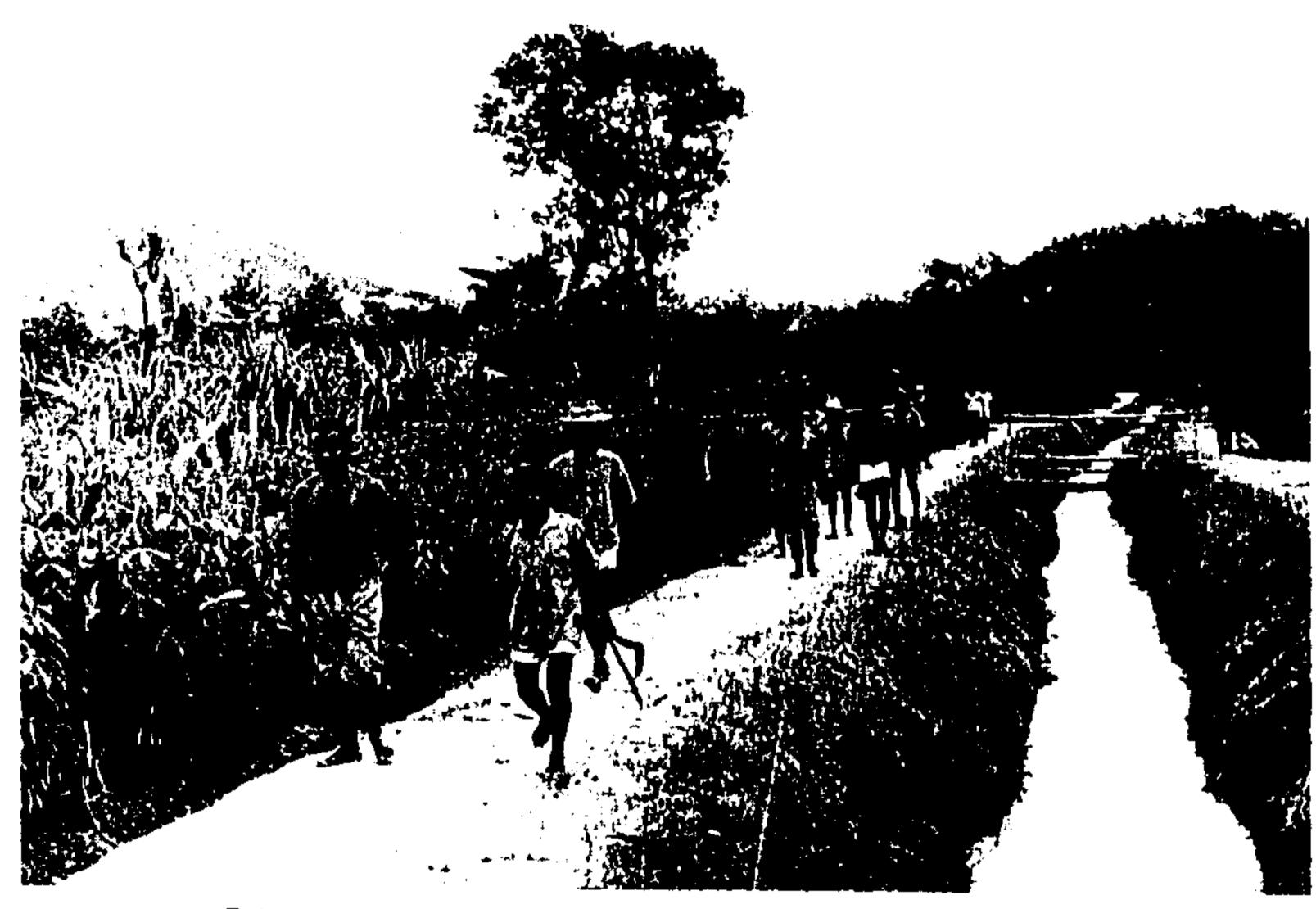
Since 1965 two Amnesty missions have visited Indonesia - in July 1969 and in October 1970. The first delegate was Professor Julius Stone, a distinguished international lawyer from Australia, and the second, Sean MacBride, was then Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists, and as now - Chairman of Amnesty. Through these missions, as well as through less formal contacts, we have collected a mass of factual material on political imprisonment. The Indonesian Government deserves credit for the facilities made available to the delegates and for the unusual frankness with which it discussed its policies, and admitted the magnitude of the problem. Amnesty works for the release of prisoners of conscience in 60 countries; few Governments face graver problems of political imprisonment than Indonesia, and none has so systematically departed from the rule of law in its treatment of untried detainees.

NOT SENTENCED

Who are the prisoners? Officially all are described as committed marxists and prominent members of the communist movement. But, to an outsider, a striking feature is the number of those in prison who are not political prisoners in the accepted sense of the term, but are rather prisoners of accident or victims of circumstance, arrested by mistake or military inefficiency, and subsequently unable to challenge their detention. In the pages that follow several case studies are given; two are of prisoners taken into custody at the respective ages of 11 and 13 and now, seven years later, still in prison. These are extreme examples, but in one sense both are typical: they have no lawyer, habeas corpus is void; though

not sentenced, they cannot defend themselves nor answer the prosecution case since no case has ever been brought. They have simply been arrested, and in this total loss of civil and legal rights they are typical of their tens of thousands of fellow which succeeded the defeat of the 1965 prisoners.

The Indonesian explanation is that the judicial system is under-staffed, and an inadequate administrative machine renders massive adjudication impossible. The majority of prisoners cannot therefore be tried, but are instead screened by military intelligence teams whose brief is security not justice. Amnesty has continually pointed out that such a manner of treatment is in total contradiction to the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, accepted by the present Indonesian Government when it rejoined the United Nations in 1966. It is all too easy to imagine how many people were taken prisoner on insufficient legal grounds in the atmosphere of mistrust and mutual suspicion



Prisoners in Buru island returning to their quarters after a day's work in the field.

This publication has been written with a simple aim: it seeks to make known the situation of tens of thousands of political prisoners held in a single country, to show the conditions within the prisons, the circumstances of the families and the problems which people must face even after release. The Indonesian Government rests its policies on the national philosophy - the pantja sila - which emphasises the prime importance of social justice (keadilan sosial); until the Government looks again at the political detainees it must inevitably deny social justice to a large group of Indonesian citizens.

> Dr. Herman van Geuns, Member of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International and until recently Chairman of the Dutch section.

the roots of the problem political imprisonment

A major problem haunting Indonesia today is that of the political prisoners. The speeches of President Suharto and his Government make frequent reference to it while, at a deeper level, its importance is reflected in the fact that since 1965, a new word has been added to the language - Tapol - (tahanan politik: political prisoner).

In the first years after Independence, Indonesia was virtually free from political imprisonment. Then, in the late nineteen fifties, after regional rebellions had taken place in several parts of the Republic, several thousand political arrests were made; by the early 1960's, most were released under a general amnesty and fully rehabilitated. Some few political leaders remained in prison and were joined by occasional journalists and critics of the Sukarno Government.

During the nineteen sixties, Indonesian politics underwent an increasing polarisation between left and right; in October 1965, this came to a head with the defeat of a left-wing coup attempt by the army, the gradual replacement of Sukarno's Cabinet by a military administration and the onset of a massive and violent anticommunist purge in which more than three hundred thousand died and two hundred and fifty thousand were arrested The tapol problem has now become a permanent feature of Indonesian society.

THE SUKARNO ERA

Its roots date back to several years before September 1965, when martial law was promulgated in 1957 and Guided Democracy was introduced in 1959 by President Sukarno. To the outside world this period is associated with Sukarno's flamboyant character and with his spectacular foreign policy of struggle for the re-incorporation of West Irian into the Republic, confrontation with the newly-established Malaysia, withdrawal from the United Nations and close alliance with Peking. Internally, however, the Army succeeded in expanding its powers, not only militarily but also in political and economic affairs.

After the promulgation of martial law in 1957, many army officers became government administrators and in some places

ruled like 'warlords' who were almost unassailable by the central Government. With the nationalisation of Dutch enterprises in 1958, many sectors of the economy were placed under army control.

There was only one serious contender for power rivalling the Army leadership (PKI) which claimed a rapidly expansion membership, reaching more than three million in 1965. In addition, mass organisations under communist leadership had a combined membership of well over ten million.

At the Centre, the Army and the PKI worked in a shaky alliance with President Sukarno, but bitter conflicts arose be-

tween the two forces in the regions. In some places, Party committees were outlawed and their leaders placed in detention.

But time and again, the President, who used the PKI as a counterweight to the growing power of the Army, protected the party and countermanded Army

PKI attacks on military management of the economy were stepped up and antagonisms grew as the pro-Chinese stand of the PKI became more apparent. Tensions sharpened during 1964 and 1965 during this period: the Communist Party when the PKI openly supported unilateral 'ing actions by peasants to expropriate landowners in an attempt to enforce implementation of the Land Reform Law. Things reached breaking point when the PKI advocated the creation of a 'Fifth Force' of armed peasants and workers to fight Malaysia side by side with the Army, the Air Force, the Navy and the Police Force. But before this



Indonesian political prisoner in West Kalimantan.

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

THE 30 SEPTEMBER EVENTS

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

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

During the course of 1966, some of

those who had been arrested were

Today, seven years after the establishment of President Suharto's New Order, the arrest of political suspects remains a continuing feature of the Indonesian scene. Even now, after years of consolidation and after general elections in July 1971 have provided it with powerful Parliamentary support, the Indonesian Government still sees those in detention as a serious threat to its stability. Their number remains in excess of 50,000. Up to the end of 1972, only about three hundred political prisoners had been brought to court; the vast majority has never been tried and the governments has itself admitted

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

that it has no intention of trying them.

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

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

DEATH SENTENCES

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

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

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

indonesian attitudes

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

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



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

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

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

who are the prisoners

Directly or indirectly involved in the 30th September Movement - this is the charge levelled against tens of thousands of political prisoners, the overwhelming majority of whom cannot and will not be tried.

What is the official definition of this vaguely-worded phrase? A presidential instruction, No. 09/KOGAM/1966, signed on President Sukarno's behalf by General Suharto and issued in May 1966, defines three levels of 'involvement':

- "Clearly involved directly in the 30th September Movement* those who:
- 1. planned, helped to plan or knew about the plan for this counterrevolutionary movement but did not report to the competent authorities;
- 2. being conscious of its objectives, undertook activities in the implementation of this counter-revolutionary movement.

Clearly involved indirectly in the 30th September Movement:

- those who, after knowing of this counter-revolutionary movement:

 1. displayed an attitude, whether in deed or words, of approval for this counter-revolutionary movement;
- 2. consciously displayed an attitude, whether in deed or words, of opposing endeavours/movements for the suppression of the 30th September movement.

There are indications of, or it can reasonably be thought that there was, direct or indirect involvement in the 30th September movement:

those who:

- 1. were members of the former, outlawed PKI or of the executives of mass organisations of like ideology/under the aegis of/under the protection of the said former party PKI, together with their activists; 2. were ordinary members of former, outlawed mass organisations of like ideology/ under the aegis of/ under the protection of/ the former party PKI, and those who, according to existing antecedents, were involved in the 'Madiun Affair' ** who, after the occurrence of the said counter-revolutionary movement, did not categorically oppose it in accordance with reasonable conditions and abilities."
- * The movement responsible for the coup called itself the 30th September movement which soon came to be abbreviated in Indonesia to G.30.S. But the coup attempt was postponed for one day and occurred on 1st October, 1965. This explains the discrepancy between the movement's name, always used in charges made by the authorities, and references to the day of the coup.
- ** This incident occurred in September, 1948; it was a major clash between the PKI and the Army.

and twenty-three educational institutions; it includes in the case of the Trade Union Federation SOBSI, a sub-list of 62 trade unions, and in the case of BAPERKI, a Chinese organisation, a sub-list of two mass organisations and the BAPERKI-run Res Publica University.

Immediately prior to September 1965, the combined membership of these organisations was estimated at about 15 million. Allowing for double counts in cases of persons belonging to more than one organisation and excluding those virtually non-active, the effective strength would probably have been about half this number. However, for purposes of screening and arrest, the deciding factor was nominal rather than active membership. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the measures taken by the government and the Army in the form of arrests, dishonourable dismissals and general ineligibility to obtain employment or education has, in some way, affected well over seven and a half million people.

The mass arrests that took place and still continue are thus broadly directed against communists and marxists, and their followers or supporters. In addition, a large number of people, especially members of the Armed Forces, have been arrested for being "Sukarno-ists", as the New Order has been at great pains to condemn policies followed by President Sukarno in the period before September 1965.

DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

Prisoners are classified into three main categories: the 'A' group, against whom there is enough evidence, in the government's view, to warrant their being charged and brought to trial; the 'B' group, firmly believed by the government to have been PKI leaders or activists and therefore 'traitors' but against whom no charges can be laid because of lack of evidence, and who are to be detained indefinitely without trial; and the 'C' group, composed of followers of the PKI and who, according to the government, are scheduled for release. In addition, there is an 'X'

OUTLAWED MASS ORGANISATIONS

And what of the 'mass organisations of like ideology' referred to above? These were listed in a Presidential Decision, No. 85/KOGAM/1966, issued in May 1966 and signed on

President Sukarno's behalf by General Suharto. In addition to all the committees of the PKI, from the Central Committee down to the village resort committees, the list covers twenty-six mass organisations category, consisting of those who have not yet been classified as 'A', 'B' or 'C' or whose former classification is up for reconsideration; there is yet another category, 'F', whose precise definition has not been clarified.

PRISONERS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

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

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

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

One extraordinary case is that of the youngest prisoner known to us on Buru island. When he was eleven, his father and mother were both arrested. Too young to survive alone, he accompanied his mother to prison. She died some time later and the boy was taken to the father in detention at Nusakambangan, the prison island in Central Java. The father was scheduled for transfer to Buru, but died before this happened. Nevertheless, the boy was sent to Buru camp, where he is now held as a 'B' prisoner, the category reserved for 'committed marxists and 8 traitors'.

five of the a dopted prisoners

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

sitor situmorang

ge: 51 years

Occupation: Writer and Poet

Date of Arrest: 1967

Charge: None

Trial: None

Place of detention: Salemba Prison, Jakarta.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Age: 20 years

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Date of Arrest: October 1965

Charge: None Trial: None

Place of detention: Plantungan women's detention camp, Central Java.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sugiyah

five of the a dopted prisoners

Occupation:

Date of Arrest:

None

Charge: Trial:

None

Place of detention: Buru Island

Karel Supit was born in Menado, North Sulawesi in 1917. As a young man, he worked in the oil fields at Cepu, East Java. After the proclamation of the Republic in 1945, he formed and led a nationalist guerrilla group in East Java against the Dutch colonial government.

karel supit

subronto kusuma

After 1950, he returned to Menado, where he took the initiative in establishing the left-wing trade union federation, SOBSI, in Minahasa and helped to build the Communist Party in the region. In 1954, he became a member of the Party's Central Committee. He was elected a Member of Parliament for the Communist Party in 1955 and became a person of great prominence in his own region.

He strongly opposed the Permesta rebellion against the Central Government which broke out in North Sulawesi in 1957 and was arrested. He was released several months later when the rebellion was suppressed by Central Government troops. Later, he moved to Jakarta to work at the Communist Party Headquarters where he became the head of the Party's International Department.

In 1963, he was appointed a member of the Indonesian delegation to the United Nations Assembly; he also participated in several Indonesian delegations to various international conferences and gatherings.

Following the October 1965 coup attempt, PKI leaders and members endeavoured to evade arrest, but Karel Supit was caught within days. After being held at the Salemba Men's Prison in Jakarta for five years, he was moved to the Buru detention camp in 1969. His wife, Mrs. Lies Supit, had gone into hiding in 1965 knowing she faced arrest because of her work with the pro-communist women's organisation, GERWANI; their children were taken care of by relatives. Early in 1967, Mrs. Supit was also arrested and is now detained at the Bukit Duri women's prison, also in Jakarta. Despite the proximity of his wife, while Karel was still under detention in Jakarta, they were not permitted to meet. Later, one of their sons was also arrested.

When Karel Supit was transferred to Buru he was 52 years old, well over the maximum age of 45 which had been fixed by the government for those to be deported to the island. It is not difficult to imagine that he must, at his age, be finding the rigours of life in Buru a serious threat to his health.

Age:

about 38 years

Occupation:

Musician and composer

Date of Arrest:

August 1968

Charge:

Trial:

None None

Place of detention:

Salemba Prison, Jakarta

Subronto is a well-known.musician. His first job was at the Ministry for Culture and Education, where he eventually became editor of the magazine published by the Ministry. Although he had no formal musical education until he was over 30, he developed a great interest in Indonesian music and helped to organise choral activities in youth organisations at a time when this was still a novelty in Indonesia.

atmaja

He joined LEKRA, the left-wing cultural organisation, and in the early nineteen sixties rose to prominence as one of Indonesia's most popular composers. Some of his work had a political content. The most popular of all his songs was 'Nasakom Bersatu' or 'Nasakom Unite', popularising the Sukarno Government policy of Nasakom union of the three main streams in Indonesian society, nationalism, religion and communism.

From December 1962 until July 1965, he studied music in East Germany at the Hans Eisler High School of Music, part of the Humboldt University. After graduating, he returned to Indonesia, just a month before the coup attempt.

The new political situation after October 1965 made it impossible for him, as a member of LEKRA, a proscribed organisation, to obtain any form of public employment in his profession. He made his living teaching the piano and the German language and also managed to train a small choir and compose several works, none of which could be performed or published because of the political stigma which was attached to him.

In August 1968, he was arrested. The allegations against him are believed to be connected with visits made to his house by former LEKRA colleagues and the assumption by the authorities that these persons were involved in anti-government activities. Whether or not such allegations were ever substantiated, his position as a member of LEKRA and his fame as the composer of 'Nasakom Bersatu' and other songs popular during the Sukarno era have been decisive in keeping him under detention. Such activities would be classified as 'preparations for an atmosphere which led to the coup' which could make Subronto open to the charge that he was 'directly or indirectly involved in the 30th September/PKI movement'.

Siti Suratih (in front left) working with fellow-prisoners in Plantungan.

Occupation:

45 years Nurse

Date of arrest:

1966

Charge:

Trial:

None None

Plantungan women's detention camp, Central Java. Place of detention:

Mrs. Siti Suratih was born in Central Java. After completing her education, she joined the nursing profession, obtaining excellent qualifications. She continued in her profession after her marriage to B.O. Hutapea, a communist from North Sumatra who became a member of the Party's new Politbureau established under Aidit in 1949.

siti suratih

Siti Suratih herself was never attracted by political activity and did not join any mass organisation. She had four children and continued to work as a nurse, moving to Jakarta together with her husband, where she obtained work at the Central Army Hospital. She became chief-nurse at the Maternity Ward.

After the abortive coup in October 1965, she was dishonourably dismissed. Since she herself had never been politically active, it is clear that her dismissal was because of her marriage to a leading communist.

For a year or so after the coup, she lived in very difficult circumstances. She had no contact with her husband who had gone underground and had to care for her children alone. She was under continual harassment because of her husband's position; the military kept a close watch on her to discover whether she would be contacted by her husband.

She was arrested in 1966 while her husband was still in hiding and her interrogation was concerned only with her relations with him. None of her relatives was able to take care of three children still with her, and she was, therefore, compelled to take them with her to the detention camp where they stayed for several months. When she was transferred to the Bukit Duri women's prison in Jakarta, she was not allowed to have her children there and had to leave them behind at the detention camp in the care of other prisoners, to await the forthcoming visit of relatives in the hope that they would take the children home. The children are now at school in Jakarta and are staying with their aunt.

In 1968, her husband was killed during an attack on a centre of communist activities in Blitar, East Java. In 1971, Siti Suratih had still not been officially informed of her husband's death. For the major part of her detention, she was believed to be a category 'C' prisoner and was expecting early release. However, in mid-1971, she was transferred to the Plantungan women's detention camp in Central Java, and so deduced that her classification had been raised to 'B'. Her transfer may also have been because she was required to work as a nurse. Shots of her appeared in a film made by a Dutch TV unit of the Plantungan Camp (the accompanying photograph is taken from that film); she is shown treating prisoners.

detainees in indonesia a lawyer's view

It is hard to know where to start an appraisal of the legal situation of the Indonesian detainees. The material in this publication suggests that the rule of law no longer exists in Indonesia in that persons may be arrested without any reason being given, without any possibility of challenging their arrest and that they may subsequently be tried for any offence and under conditions which are not subject to any regulations. They are subject to treatment which is contrary to almost every article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which relates to the rights of persons arrested and detained.

WHIM OF AUTHORITY

It would seem that the selection of persons for arrest and detention is in many cases arbitrarily determined. Equally, the place of detention, the terms under which they live in detention, and, most important, the length of detention, appear to depend upon the whim of authority, and possibly even the whim of a particular official. It is this quality of uncertainty and dependence on personal decision which is the most alarming aspect of the situation from the lawyer's point of view. For example, people may quite commonly find themselves in prison for no better reason than that they happened to be present at the home or place of arrest of a suspect when the arrest is made. This is a matter for exceptionally grave concern when it happens to children, who may find themselves indefinitely imprisoned because they entered a place of detention simply to avoid being

indonesian attitudes

"Then there are the 'B' prisoners," We know for certain they (the 'B' prisoners) are traitors, that they are ideologically conscious, but there is not enough evidence to bring them before a court".

The Attorney-General, Sugih Arto, September, 1971.

separated from a parent from whom they have now in any case been separated whether by death or otherwise. There is evidence to show that people have been arrested and detained for no better reason than that the local military commander dislikes them, or covets their possessions. One imagines that in the prevailing situation almost any excuse will suffice to justify an arrest to his superiors, in the unlikely event that he is called upon to do so.

This state of affairs is possible because there apparently exists in Indonesia today no regulations regarding the arrest of persons which effectively circumscribe the powers of the military. Even if these regulations did exist no individual detainee would have the power to challenge his arrest. Since there is no right to challenge it in the courts nor any opportunity to do so, since detainees are it appears never allowed to see a lawyer. Even the comparatively very small rumber of 'A' category detainees who have been brought to trial have not generally been allowed to have the lawyer of their choice to represent them, and have not been allowed to discuss their case with their lawyer before the trial began.

NO ACCESS TO LEGAL ADVICE

The Government has decided that the vast majority of detainees cannot ever be brought to trial, because there is no evidence sufficient to convict them. It is therefore a horrifying fact that the avowed policy of the government of

Indonesia is that tens of thousands of people will be deprived of normal life for the foreseeable future without it ever being established that they have done anything in particular to warrant it. Instead of taking steps to reduce the number of detainees, the policy appears to be to establish large encampments of detainees in exile in remote parts of Indonesia on a permanent

Further, in most cases the detainees are never told why they are being arrested, and sometimes never have any indication of what caused their detention. Although the government categorises detainees, it does not appear that they themselves are ever informed which category they

Since there is no right to challenge detention in the courts, and most prisoners are never brought to trial, the fact that there is no access to legal advice is almost irrelevant. More important to the ordinary detainees is that from the time they are arrested to the time of their release, if that ever comes, they may have no news of their families for they may not write or receive letters and may not be allowed any family visits even if the place of detention is near enough to their homes for their families to visit.

Just as there are no laws which effectively regulate the circumstances under which people may be arrested and detained, there are no regulations which safeguard the conditions under which they are kept in detention. They may be dealt with at the discretion of the military commander, and may even be used as slave labour to his profit.

MALNUTRITION

Accounts of the treatment of detainees strongly suggest that the authorities do not accept any responsibility for providing more than the basic minimum diet for prisoners. If this is not supplemented by parcels from the prisoner's family (who will usually be suffering very severely financially from his arrest in any event) he may well suffer from malnutrition. Even more horrifying is the fact that if a prisoner falls seriously ill he will probably receive no medical treatment, or very inadequate treatment and may die.

There is not space available for more than this brief summary of the legal situation of detainees but it may be sufficient to indicate what a totally unacceptable situation at present exists. It would appear that a very large number of people in Indonesia today are regarded by the authorities as having forfeited the right to be treated as human beings and citizens, and as having no rights before

numbers! numbers! numbers!

"It is impossible to say exactly how many political prisoners there are," the Indonesian Attorney-General, Sugih Arto told a gathering of foreign jounalists in Jakarta in September, 1971. "It is a floating rate, like the Japanese yen vis-a-vis the



Salemba prison in Jakarta.

And why is it impossible? "The thing is that local commanders have the power to arrest and interrogate any person under suspicion of being a threat to national security. These people can be held for an unlimited period of time. It is not always compulsory to report such security arrests to the Central Command in Jakarta, "Sugih Arto

More recently, in October, 1972, a senior officer of the Kopkamtib, Command for the Restoration of Security and Order, said that the number of political prisoners being held has its "ups and downs". And why is this? "On the very day we release or sentence someone, we shall probably be arresting others." These remarks provide the setting for what many have come to call the macabre numbers game. Recently, there have been a number of official pronouncements. on the question which have been confused 29,000. and contradictory. We summarise below, the most important pronouncements made in the last eighteen months:

- 13th August 1971 In response to the publication of Amnesty's Memorandum to the Indonesian Government, Foreign Minister Adam Malik told journalists that there were "90,000 prisoners". On the same day, the Attorney-General said there were "50,000 'C' category detainees" all of whom would be freed by the end of the year.
- 26th August 1971 After meeting the Dutch Foreign Minister, Adam Malik said that there were "45,000" political prisoners, of whom 22,000 would released. A rough consensus of the be freed by the end of the year.
- 20th September 1971 In a speech to foreign journalists, when he described the number of political prisoners as a "floating rate", the Attorney-General mentioned an overall total of "about 50,000".

- October 1971 Brigadier-General Marpaung, speaking for the Minister of Defence and Security, gave these figures: 19,516 'A' and 'B' prisoners; 3,112 'C' prisoners; 14,336 'X' prisoners. Total: 36,964.
- 1st January 1972 President Suharto announced that "all 22,000 'C' prisoners' had been released.
- 4th February 1972 General Sumitro, would be freed in January 1972. But in Deputy Commander of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order to the confusion by announcing that (Kopkamtib) told journalists that there were "2,494 'A' prisoners, 16,076 'B' prisoners, no 'C' prisoners and a handful of 'X' prisoners."
- October 1972 A spokesman of the Kopkamtib said: "There are 9,935 prisoners on Buru and 29,000 in the rest of Indonesia." Total: 39,000. Re-settlement sites were being sought for the
- 14th November 1972 The Indonesian Embassy in London issued a fact sheet, originating from the Attorney-General's Office and the Department for Security and Defence; this stated that there were now "38,221 political detainees"

CONTRADICTIONS

The discrepancies in these figures are numerous. Let us concentrate only on the repeated pronouncement that all 'C' detainees have been figures announced during 1971 would suggest that this should have left between 20,000 and 25,000 prisoners in detention. In October, 1972 however, we are told that there were 39,000 prisoners altogether - without any breakdown according to category.

In the absence of any official explanation, we offer two of our own. Either that more than half the 'C' detainees were reclassified and are now being held as 'A' or 'B' prisoners, or that about 15,000 people have been arrested during the course of the last twelve

The same discrepancies appear in release announcements which were reported fairly frequently in the Indonesian press during the closing months of 1971. A typical example comes from Sumatra. In December 1971, Brig-General Jasir Hadibroto, Commander of the All-Sumatra Command, said that "all 1,718 'C' prisoners in North Sumatra have been released. "A few days later, a Jakarta daily announced that of the 1,718 'C' prisoners in North Sumatra, 426 had already been released and the remainder January 1972, a Jakarta paper added "the first batch of 'C' prisoners had been released in the middle of January."

How are we to arrive at any reasonable estimate of the number of prisoners currently being held in detention in Indonesia? The figure of 39,000 mentioned by several sources in October and November 1972 appears to be related to classified prisoners of the 'B' categories for the Kopkamtib spokesman explained that, in addition to the 10,000 prisoners on Buru another 29,000 would be detained in 'resettlement camps'. We can therefore assume that this figure does not include unclassified prisoners in the 'X' category, and probably also excludes 'A' prisoners awaiting trial, said to number about 5,000.

In view of what the Attorney-General told foreign journalists in September 1971 about the broad powers of local commanders, and in view moreover of what we know about the prolonged and often unregistered detention of prisoners by local commanders, during the initial period of interrogation, an estimate of ten to fifteen thousand in 'X' category may not be an exaggeration. This plus an understandable scepticism about the official figure of 39,000 classified prisoners suggests that the lowest estimate must be 55,000 and the real figure may well be much greater. 13

political prisoners? families the fight for survival

Indonesian society has always been known for its sense of social cohesion, its ability to care for those stranded by misfortune or left without a breadwinner. There is no social security system, but the traditional social cohesion has in the past managed to deal with problems which, in a welfare state, would become the responsibility of the State. Since 1965, this fine tradition has been shattered; large numbers of people have found themselves without communal sympathy and protection because of the pervading anti-communist atmosphere. They are the families of political prisoners, the wives and children of prisoners, and children deprived of parents since 1965 through imprisonment or death.

SOCIAL OSTRACISM

This is not simply a matter of coping with economic problems and educating children; it extends to a kind of social ostracism that has destroyed friendships, broken fraternal blood relationships and made good-neighbourliness a rare exception rather than an accepted mode of behaviour towards those related to political prisoners. It is almost as though these families suffer from a contagious disease and no one who can possibly avoid it wants to become contaminated.

How then do the wives and children of political prisoners survive? Some

wives have cut their relations with their imprisoned husbands altogether. They have been unable to bear the strain of prolonged separation with no prospects of reunion. Life is not easy for a woman without her husband in Indonesian society, and many prisoners' wives have fallen prey to pressures exerted upon them by military officers. Their fear for their children's security has made them particularly vulnerable.

The vast majority of wives, however, have not succumbed to this type of pressure, and a very large number of them live on the brink of starvation. Few of them can find regular jobs, not

only because of a lack of skill or qualifications, but also because most employers demand a "declaration of non-involvement in the 1965 coup" which detainees' wives are not able to get, unless they have money to bribe local officials. Some people have been able to purchase these declarations for prices varying from two to several hundred dollars, a thing that is not uncommon in a society where corruption has become almost a way of life.

NON-INVOLVEMENT DECLARATIONS

Neither is it an easy matter for the children of detainees to continue their education. A major difficulty is finance; school fees are high, even for primary schools, and transportation to and from school may require even more money than the fees. Moreover, children require 'non-involvement declarations' to take examinations or enter university; this applies even to children who were little more than infants at the time of the coup. In 1971, the press reported that children entering secondary school at the age of 14 had to produce one of these declarations, yet they were only eight years old at the time of the coup! Many wives try to make a living from

dressmaking or baking cakes which

Mrs. Pramudya Ananta Tur and four of her eight children in her home in Jakarta. Her husband - the famous writer - is detained in Buru.



they hawk on the streets. Mrs. Pramudya Christmas 1971 for a small celebration, Ananta Tur, wife of Indonesia's foremost writer who is now detained on Buru Island, sells cakes to try and make ends meet. She suffers from a pulmonary ailment and requires regular medical treatment. Another woman, who once ran a prosperous building firm, is now herself living in a bamboo shed in one of Jakarta's poorest districts; her husband was arrested as a member of a left-wing trade union, and she is now supported by her son who bought a 'non-involvement declaration' in order to get a job as a barman in a Jakarta hotel. Her youngest son died two years ago because she could not afford to pay for necessary medical treatment. There are numerous other examples of human tragedy that have occurred among these neglected families.

HARASSMENT

The difficulties they face are not only caused by an absence of assistance from official sources. In many cases, the families are actively harassed by local military units who force them out of their homes and deprive them of their belongings. They are defenceless against such harassment and cannot even contemplate taking legal action unless they have financial aid for the lengthy court proceedings.

Another constant worry is that of finding out about the whereabouts of a detained husband. Wives who have lost trace of their husbands. either immediately after his arrest or as a result of transfer from one place of detention to another, are often treated in a very humiliating way when they make enquiries at any military unit.

The only source of succour for these families in distress is a small number of private organisations, mainly the Christian churches which, in some places, have started relief programmes for the families of political prisoners. One diocese of the Roman Catholic Church took steps to bring prisoners' wives together to share their problems and to try and solve them through communal effort. A chaplain took the initiative and worked out a plan of action; it included fund-raising by selling hand-made products, simultaneously providing the women with some form of employment. The money was intended to pay schoolfees for their children. But, inevitably, such endeavours run into difficulties and this one was suspected of providing a cover for political activities. When the women participating in this particular scheme met together at

one of them rose to thank the organisers on behalf of all the wives. A few days later, she was summoned to a military office, held for a whole day and questioned about the speech she had made. She was later released but the incident disturbed many women who had found some comfort in the regular get-togethers and common

effort, and they decided to stay away

Relief projects are in progress in several major towns in Indonesia but they are still very limited in scope and can help only a very small fraction of those in need. The lack of dedicated personnel and regular sources of finance make these efforts little more than a drop in an ocean of human suffering.

Perhaps the best way to conclude the above account is with the true story of one particular child who, for the purposes of this story, we shall call Narto:

"Mrs. S. had been under detention for several years because of her associations with the left-wing women's organisation, Gerwani. Her husband had been murdered in an incident in Jakarta shortly after the coup attempt and, ironically for her, had been buried at the Heroes' cemetery in Jakarta because his death was thought to have been the result of an attack by communist youths. When she was arrested, she took one small child with her to prison and left her other children with relatives. The relatives never visited her and she had no news of her children.

One day some years after her arrest, she, together with several other women prisoners, was carrying garbage out of the prison where she was being held in Jakarta when, glancing towards the crowded streets, she suddenly began to scream: "Narto! Narto". The prison commander who was guarding the women prisoners on garbage duty asked her why she was shouting.

"That's my son," she cried. "Narto, my son, over there, picking up fag-ends.''

The Commander saw the boy to whom she was pointing, and began to run after him. The boy, seeing a soldier running after him, took to his heels and fled. Many startled bystanders joined in the chase; the boy was soon caught and the commander dragged him back to the prison. Only then did the child realise that his own mother had been calling him,

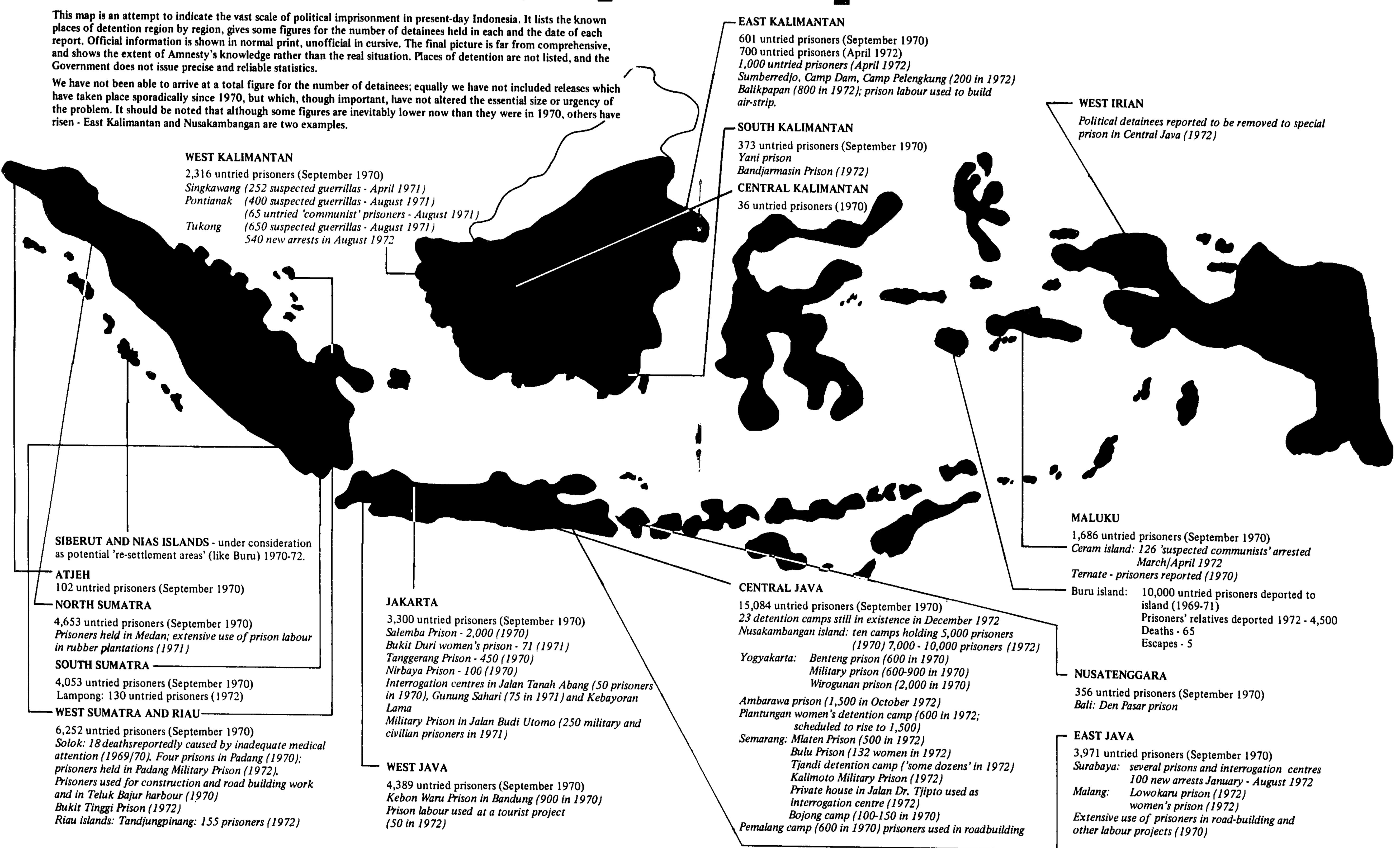
He was dressed in rags and filthy from head to foot. His mother embraced him and carried him into the prison. By the time they entered the prison compound, everyone had rushed out to see what was happening, political prisoners and their military guards, criminal prisoners in the nearby blocks and the civil administrators of that part of the prison. It was a heart-rending scene, and everyone, guards as well as prisoners, wept as they watched the mother and child. The mother was torn between joy at finding her child after years of separation and anger at seeing him in such a wretched condition. Nothing could more poignantly have depicted the tragedy of so many families torn asunder by political events for which they are not responsible.

After bathing and dressing Narto in her own clothes, the mother discovered that he had been staying with an uncle who had found the responsibility of looking after him too burdensome and had made his life a misery. Narto could not stand the life and ran away. He had been living on the streets for weeks, begging, collecting fag ends and sleeping under railway carriages in sidings.

For some months he remained in prison with his mother, but the prison commander realised that the child must be found a home outside. With the help of the visiting Catholic priest, a place was found for him with a Catholic family and he was soon able to start going to school again after having missed several years of schooling."

Narto was saved from misery by a lucky coincidence. How many children live on as he once lived, with no escape from the wretchedness of life in a society that cares nothing - or is too afraid to care - for the children of political prisoners?

the geography of imprisonment



how the prisoners IIVe

What is life like for the tens of thousands of political prisoners in prisons and detention or interrogation centres throughout Indonesia? The overriding feature is their deep resentment at being detained for their political views or past associations, and their frustrations at being held for so many years without trial or prospects of release. Added to this, the conditions in which they must live present continuing hazards to their health and welfare and to their peace of mind.



Prisoners at work in Buru island.

The Indonesian Government uses the low living standards of the Indonesian people as a pretext for doing nothing to improve the lot of the political prisoners. But by keeping them in custody, and for such a long period of time, they inevitably assume responsibility for these prisoners and are under obligation to provide them with basic minimum standards.

It is not easy to describe actual conditions. Most places where prisoners

are held are completely closed to outsiders and few who are released would risk their freedom by giving an account of what they experienced. Moreover, there are numerous prisons, camps and interrogation centres in both large towns and small towns, and in places remote from centres of population. There are even places of detention referred to in Indonesian as''tempat tahanan gelap'' or "illegal places of detention" whose very existence is concealed from the surrounding population.

The welfare of the prisoners is left largely to the discretion of local military commanders, and whatever central, provincial or regional policy may be, the officer in charge of a prison or detention centre is in practice in a position to regulate things very much as he likes and to determine how much of any official allocation for prisoners is actually spent

Besides the so-called "re-settlement camp" on Buru Island, and the women's detention camp in Plantungan, Central Java, places of detention can be subdivided into prisons and detention or interrogation centres. The latter generally cater for newly-arrested detainees and are run by the local army unit or its intelligence unit. The prisons, which accommodate prisoners after their initial period of interrogation, are in the hands of the Military Police Corps (CMP). Some are ordinary prisons taken over in part or as a whole from the civil authorities, whilst others are regular military prisons. Where general prisons are used, political prisoners are kept in strict isolation from criminal prisoners and conditions of the untried political prisoners are in all cases far worse than those of convicted criminal prisoners.

ACCOMMODATION

In the prisons, accommodation is grossly over-crowded, unhygienic and forbidding. In Tanggerang Prison on the outskirts of Jakarta, three prisoners are confined to a cell 1.4 metres by 2 metres. In Padang Military Prison, Central Sumatra, cells built for four persons are used for between eight and twelve prisoners. At the local prison in Lampong, South Sumatra, prisoners are herded into dormitories where they sleep packed closely together on the floor. The prison at Ambarawa in Central Java is reputed to be one of the worst of all the prisons used for political prisoners, and the building - used first by the Dutch and then the Japanese - is in a serious state of disrepair.

Accommodation at detention and interrogation centres is generally far

worse than at prisons. These units operate in converted old houses, and prisoners sleep in tiny, unventilated rooms or along half-exposed corridors. In some places, the prisoners have no proper sleeping accommodation at all but make use of raised stone platforms or ledges under a ceiling so low that it is impossible to sit up.

All prisoners, whether at prisons or camps, sleep on the floor, which in Indonesia means upon stone or tiles. They are nowhere provided with any kind of bedding, and what mats they use have been supplied by relatives outside or by church organisations. They fold whatever clothes they have for use as a pillow, and many sleep with no cover at all. The damp, cold walls and floors and the lack of mats and bedding inevitably cause pulmonary and respiratory disorders.

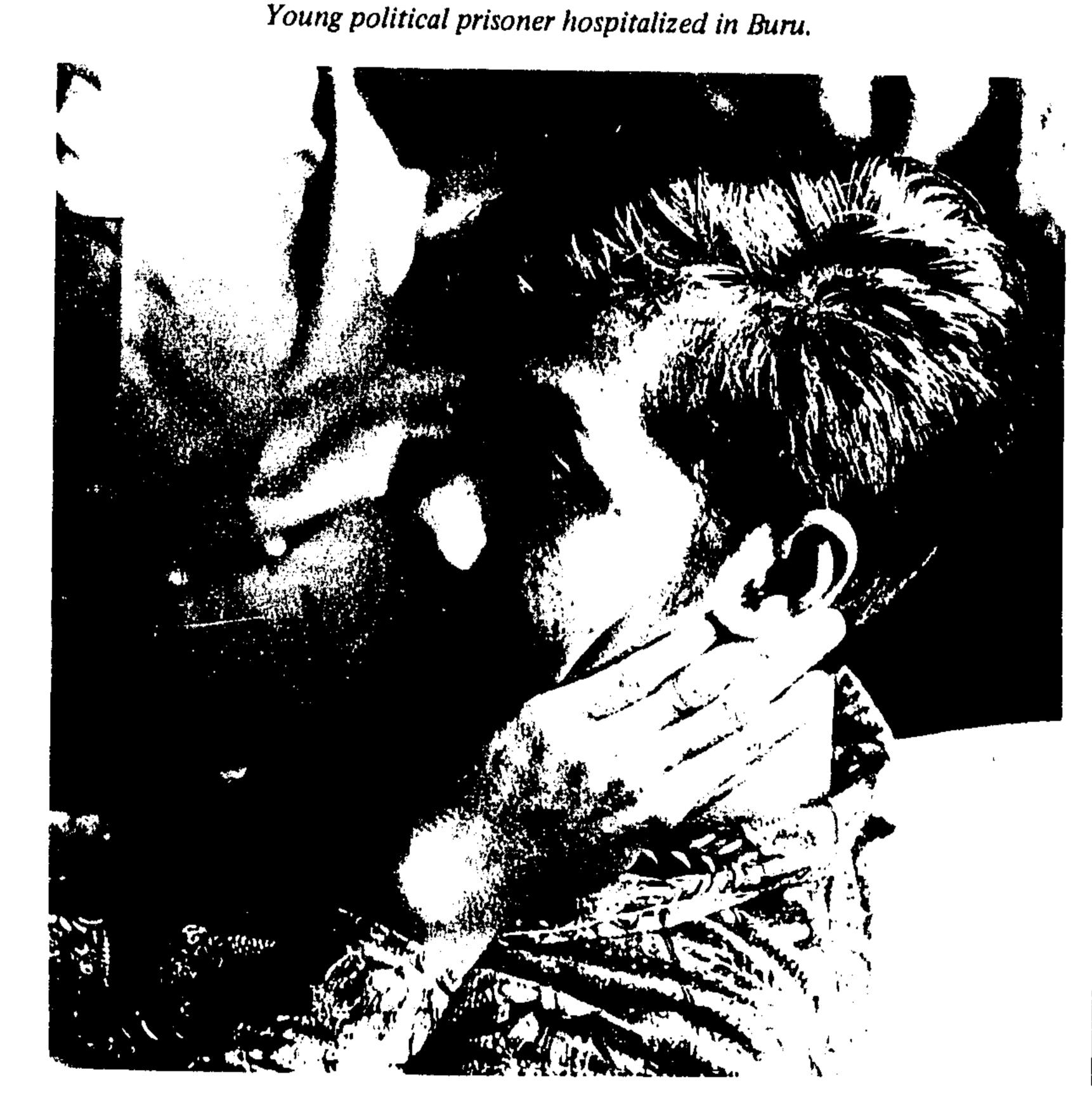
FOOD AND OTHER PROVISIONS

The standard diet for political prisoners consists of two plates of rice a day, but this can vary in quantity from a full plate to just a few spoonsful. At the Padang Prison, the prisoners get only two handfuls of rice for each meal. With the rice, the prisoners receive a small dish of watery vegetables, one minute piece of soybean cake (tempe or tahu) and occasionally a small piece of salted, dried fish. The diet is not only lacking

Prisoners marching to work under armed military guard.

in quantity and quality but also variety. Meat and eggs are rarely provided, usually Some prisons have a rudimentary medical only on festive days when donations are received from local religious organisations.

The only beverage is boiled water, twice a day, and in many of the detention camps, the prisoners must supply the paraffin with which to boil the drinking water. The prisoners get no tea or coffee,



no sugar or milk and no other kind of food, nothing in fact but the two meals referred to above. No soap is provided, neither do the prisoners receive clothes, towels or tooth-brushes. The clothes the prisoners wear are provided by relatives outside or by fellow prisoners. Many of the men wear nothing but a pair of tattered pants and a grimy vest.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Medical facilities are seriously lacking in all places of detention. Detention and interrogation centres have no medical facilities at all; there are no visits by doctors and no medicines are available. In case of sickness, the prisoners must rely on what they themselves or colleagues receive from outside, and if a visit to a clinic or hospital is required, this must be paid for by the detainee who has to pay transport expenses and give his military escort a good tip. Many detainees have no money at all and must therefore do without, even when seriously ill. The most widespread illnesses are pulmonary and intestinal disorders and skin diseases.

service and some an ill-equipped hospital · block, but doctor's visits are irregular, and medicines are scarce and difficult to obtain. When prescriptions are issued by the doctor, they must be bought and paid for by relatives. Prisoners who have no relatives to visit them must rely on an occasional dose from the prison stock of medicine. Even medicine purchased outside must be stored at the prison office, and in many cases they are not all handed on to the prisoner. Much of the medicine used comes from private donations, particularly from church organisations, and the officers in charge take a good share before anything reaches the prisoners.

indonesian attitudes

"I am against the inhuman treatment of these prisoners. We all know that most of the prisoners categorised as political prisoners are not really communists. They were starving people, very poor people who didn't know what they joined. At the time, the communist party was the most effective party. I have to say this because of my moral sense."

Arief Budiman, Indonesian psychologist and former student leader in an interview with Dutch television. August 1970.

how the prisoners live

Hospitalisation is possible only in very rare cases, and often comes at a time when the patient is beyond help. Many deaths occur in prison cells without any medical attention. No reliable figures of deaths are available but it is known for instance, that in some periods the death rate at the Salemba Prison in Jakarta, which accommodates about 1,500 political prisoners, has been as high as one prisoner a day. In Padang Military Prison which accommodates a few hundred prisoners, and which is never visited by a doctor, eighteen prisoners are known to have died during the years 1969 and 1970, due mainly to malnutrition and lack of medical attention. In Lampong, South Sumatra, many prisoners are known to have died as a result of extreme malnutrition.

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Political prisoners are deprived of all forms of cultural and educational activity. There is a rigid ban on the entry of all reading material, with the single exception of sacred books such as the Ku'ran and the Bible. In some places, even these books are not allowed. No writing material is permitted. Cultural activities are also prohibited except, in some places, in preparation for celebrations of religious festivals,

No form of educational activity is provided for the prisoners, except religious instruction which is compulsory. This is particularly frustrating for the many youngsters under detention who have been unable to complete their schooling and are thus growing up in prison, unfit for any kind of employment requiring training. Handwork is allowed only at certain places, at the discretion of the prison commander, and in many cases this is permitted largely in order to provide the comman-

der or other officers with personal profits. Women prisoners are somewhat more favoured in this respect, but for male persons, handwork is difficult to arrange as they may not be permitted knives or the other sharp implements required for carpentry, woodwork, sculpture and the like.

As a result of the almost total absence of cultural and educational activity, prisoners spend most of their time doing nothing. Inevitably this adds to the frustrations and dissatisfactions that build up after a long period of incarceration.

FORCED LABOUR

Many reports have been received about political prisoners being compelled to work for officers at their place of detention for little or no remuneration In some cases, they work as domestic servants, mechanics or chauffeurs, and are used in the offices as typists or for menial tasks. In other places, for instance, in East Kalimantan and West Java, they are used as forced labour on major construction works. In one case, prisoner have been used to repair an airstrip, in others they have been used for harbour or road construction, in others they have been used as plantation labour, and in yet others, they have provided the main labour force for the construction of tourist projects. It is not unusual for detainees to be held under continuing detention simply because they provide a valuable source of cheap or unpaid labour for the local commander.

CONTACT WITH FAMILIES

Of all the factors that make life in prison intolerable for political prisoners, perhaps the most irksome is the strict constraints placed upon meetings with families. For the majority of prisoners, there is no communication at all; relatives may be living in far-away places, or may have lost trace of the prisoner altogether. With the exception of prisoners held at the resettlement camps in Buru and Plantungan, no form of written communication is permitted at any time and for any purpose, not even to notify relatives of the whereabouts of the prisoner. There are many

men and women in Indonesian prisons who have had no news of their children for many years, and youngsters who have heard nothing from their parents, sisters or brothers since the time they were arrested many years ago.

Relatives are permitted to bring provisions to the prisons; indeed, without this source of supply, prisoners' health would be far worse than it is today. But relatives coming to the prison for this purpose must have a certificate of residence from the local Government representative confirming their relationship with the prisoners. Some are unwilling to apply for this certificate because of the stigma that attaches to relatives of political prisoners. If their relationship with a political prisoner becomes known, it may jeopardise their chances of permanent residence or employment, or education for children. In many prisons, political prisoners are , permitted to meet relatives only once a year and sometimes even less. Where meetings are regulated more frequently, permits are issued on a discriminatory basis and can be denied to some prisoners though relatives are not told the reasons for this. Husbands and wives who are both in prison have no means of communication, and in the vast majority of cases never meet.

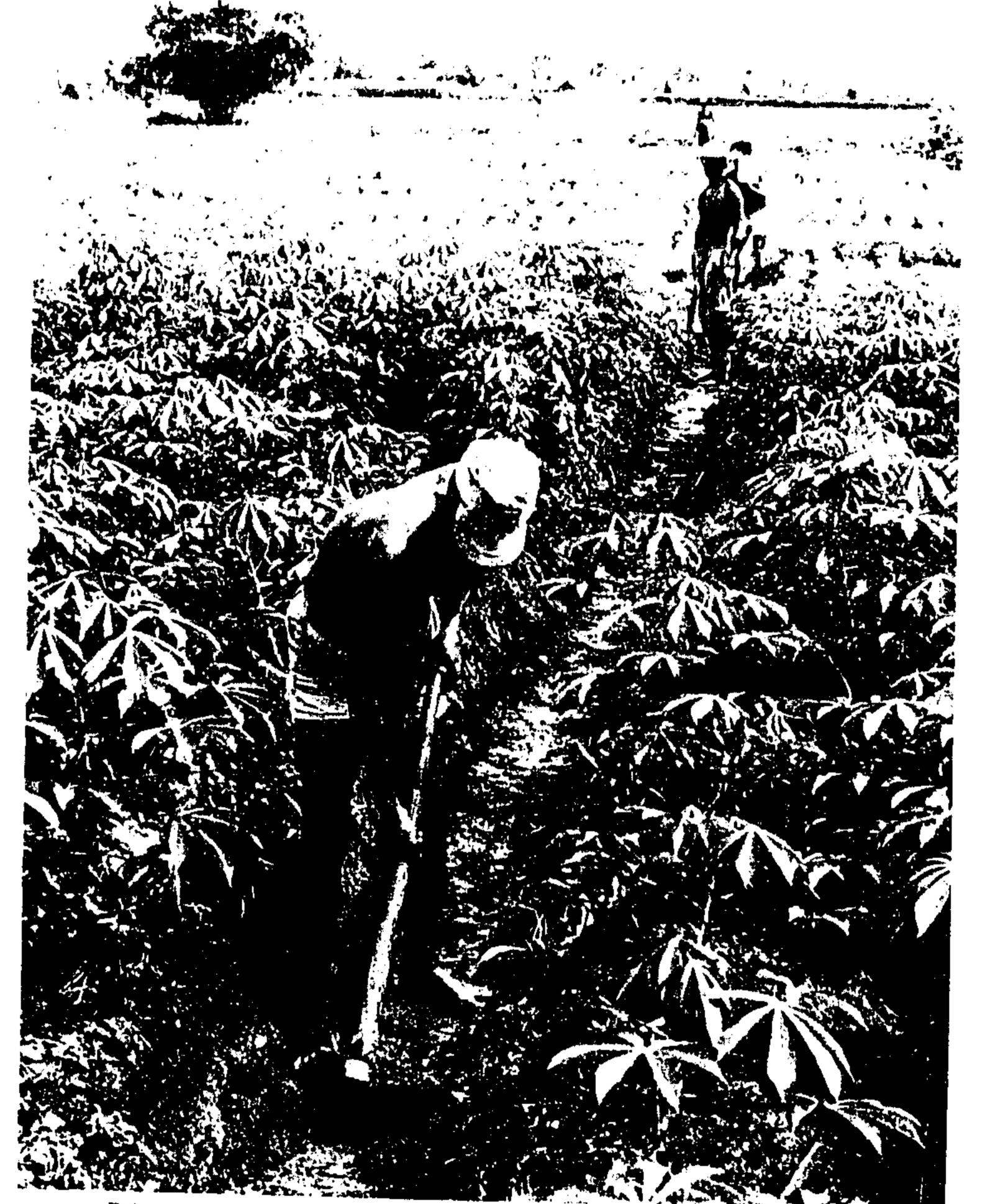
DEGRADING AND INHUMAN CONTROL OVER THE PRISONERS

In all prisons and detention centres, the prisoners are completely at the mercy of the officers and soldiers in charge. They have no contact with civil authorities. Prison rule and discipline is arbitrary and unpredictable, and prisoners have no redress against frequent maltreatment or injustice from prison officials. Punishment is generally collective. The arbitrary nature of individual power leads to gross violations; an example is the case of a prisoner in Salemba Prison who stole some cassava because he was hungry and who was forced to eat cassava until he died of over-eating.

Most officers in charge of political prisoners adopt an attitude of extreme arrogance towards their charges whom they look upon as being guilty merely because they have been arrested. They look down upon the prisoners as 'communists', 'atheists' and 'traitors' and therefore unworthy of humane treatment. Prison officers and guards who may be inclined to treat the political prisoners with a sense of humanity and justice are prevented from doing so openly by the fear that this may cast suspicion on them, leading to a loss of position, or even to a loss of freedom.

the island of buru

In July 1969, the Indonesian Government announced the establishment of a permanent 're-settlement' project on Buru island for untried political prisoners. By then, the first batch of 2,500 prisoners had been transported there in conditions of utmost secrecy from prisons throughout Java.



Prisoners grow their own food. Cassave fields in Unit IV, Buru.

The island of Buru is part of Maluku, one of Indonesia's most easterly groups of islands. Until 1969, when it became the site of the first long-term detention camp for political prisoners, it was a little-known island, not unduly small but with a population of only about 40,000. It had long been under consideration as a site for transmigration projects to relieve the population congestion in Java.

Agricultural production is still essentially primitive. The island has no roads linking the tiny capital, Namlea, to other townlets and villages; the only form of transportation is by river. The island is covered by dense jungle; regular communications with the rest of the

country are non-existent, the only link being an occasional sea transport service between Namlea and Ambon, the capital of Maluku, several hundred miles to the East.

The creation of a detention camp in Buru added a new dimension of permanency to the problem of political detention in Indonesia. Instead of speeding up the trials and releasing those against whom no charges could be brought, the Government had embarked on a course of long-term compulsory 're-settlement' for many thousands of prisoners.

OTHER "BURUS" CONSIDERED

Since 1969, the prisoner population on Buru has risen to 10,000; by October

1972, sixty-five had died. Late in 1972, the Indonesian authorities announced that 're-settlement' sites for another 29,000 political prisoners were being sought; two islands have been mentioned in this connection: Nias and Siberut, both lying off the west coast of Sumatra.

The decision to establish the Buru project was taken by the Commander of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib); the Attorney-General was then appointed to manage the project. Thus, the Army had delegated responsibility for those political prisoners it had decided not to release to the Attorney-General's office. This does not, however, mean that the political prisoners on Buru are in the hands of a civil authority. The Regional Military Command at Ambon is in charge of all security arrangements of the project and the guards and personnel are recruited from the Military Police Corps (CPM). Moreover, the Army is powerfully represented in Bapreru (Buru Resettlement Executive Authority), the Executive Chief of which is a senior Army Officer, Brigadier General Wadli Prawirasupradja.

"THORN FOR THE COMMUNITY"

What are the official motives for the project? The Attorney-General, Sugih Arto, (himself an Army general) stated in the Preface to a brochure issued by Bapreru in December 1969 that the transfer of category 'B' prisoners to Buru is intended 'not to isolate them from the public at large but merely to provide them with a

indonesian attitudes

"How long have they to stay there (in Buru)? They themselves are asking this question. Their families are asking this question and I myself join in asking it. And the answer is as dark as the sky above unit II on that December afternoon in one thousand nine hundred and seventy-one.... They are all lonely men. They are all lonely while labouring from morning to sunset. They are also troubled by the feeling of uncertainty about the future and about their loved ones far across the seas, parents, wives, children, relatives."

Indonesian journalist Marcel Beding in Kompas after his visit to Buru, December, 1971.

indonesian attitudes

"As far as I know from newspapers and other sources, their (the political prisoners') condition is very bad, very poor; there is lack of medical treatment but this is the case with all prisoners in Indonesia... Everything must be done about this, because it is a shame for Indonesia. I will take risks to help them."

Indonesian lawyer Adnan Buyung Nasution, now Chairman of the Indonesian Legal Aid Organisation, in an interview with Dutch television. August 1970.

the island of buru

new means of living together with their families, because it will only risk their own safety if they are to be returned to their original community

The impression created by this statement is that the prisoners are being held there for their own protection. But, as we read on, the contrary becomes apparent. In the very next sentence, the Attorney-General goes on to say that the men being sent to Buru are those strongly believed to have played "an important role planning, supervising and carrying out..... the 30th September/PKI Movement either before, during or after it took place; however, we have not ample evidence to prosecute them further. We consider it still dangerous for our security if we return them to the community; they are still like a thorn for the community."

So, after all, it is the community that, in the Government's view, needs protection and from men who cannot be prosecuted because of lack of evidence. Then, the Attorney-General, the man who heads the Indonesian judiciary, goes on to express the hope that "with this brochure, prejudices and wrong impressions such as, notably, that the Government does not uphold human rights, will be avoided". It is for the reader to decide whether the Attorney-General has made a convincing case in support of his assertion that the Indonesian Government is upholding human rights.

FORCED LABOUR?

The essence of the Buru project is that men who are to be held in permanent detention must work for their own sustenance and cease to be a burden upon the Government that holds them captive. Provision for prisoners on Buru is the responsibility of the authorities only for the first eights months after their arrival; from then on, they must live from their own labour.

Official declarations about Buru always stress that the project is not a concentration camp but an agricultural resettlement scheme where political prisoners will be "given the opportunity" to become self-sufficient. There is, we are told, no forced labour on Buru. The Attorney-General, in the Preface already quoted above, makes the point in the following words "... re-settlement on Buru island is dissimilar to any olddated or recent concentration camps abroad, because in Buru Island there 22 is no forced labour".

The Bapreru brochure is at great pains to justify its system of labour on humanitarian grounds. It quotes a Dutch colonial regulation stipulating that detainees should "wherever possible, be given the opportunity to work". It then states that, according to the Pantja Sila principles "everyone should work to the best of their ability", and then shifts ground to make the bold assertion that "everyone whether a member of a free society or undergoing punishment ... is obliged

This circuitous argument is then crowned by a paragraph that proclaims the following: "Procuring work to detainees of the 30th September Movement/PKI, therefore, is one of the Government's efforts in respecting them as human beings who, in the interest of the development of their physical and social life, have to work to the best of their ability."

A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

It is one matter for the laws of any state to uphold the right of its free citizens to work; it is quite another matter for a government to assume the right to impose upon its untried captives the obligation to work for their very survival.

For, indeed, to the political prisoners on Buru, survival depends on a twelvehour day of arduous labour under the strict supervision of armed guards. It is a programme that applies to all alike, young and old, sick and healthy, to writers, scientists and artists who have been deprived of any opportunity to devote even part of their energies to creative work of their own choosing. One foreign journalist who visited the

island in December 1971 and published his impressions in Newsweek on 14th February, 1972, described it in these words: "For those with no previous farming experience, and for the older men and the intellectuals, the gruelling manual labour is sheer physical punishment".

"RETURN TO SOCIETY"

According to a statement made by Deputy Attorney-General Sutrisno Hamidjojo, in December 1971, then in charge of the Buru project, the final stage for Buru prisoners is the stage when they are "returned to society", the stage of 'socialisation'.

"Returning to society" sounds very much like rehabilitation or release; in other words the end of detention. But the Indonesian authorities have something very different in mind. At this final stage, said the Deputy Attorney-General, "political prisoners would remain on the island, but would no longer be bound by discipline, such as, for example, attending roll-call." They would be allowed to have their families with them, but as we shall see later, this had not meant freedom for the men prisoners but rather semicaptivity for the families.

Furthermore, before a political prisoner is allowed to advance to the final stage of his life on Buru, he must change his ideology from communism to the Pantja Sila, and agree to contribute his energies to constructive effort. It is not clear how the authorities intend to verify the ideological leanings of their captives who are, anyhow, being held in Buru because they are believed to be "dedicated communists" and "traitors".

CONDITIONS

A fair amount is known about conditions on Buru. The Government

Prisoner resting during hard labour out in the field.



has granted permission to several groups of journalists to visit the project and they have since written up their impressions in detail. An International Red Cross mission also visited the island early in 1971 and, although, according to normal Red Cross procedure, the mission's report has not been made public, the members of the mission took the unusual step of holding a press conference after their return to Jakarta from Buru at which they spoke of the project in terms of admiration and praise. Buru. they said, had reminded them more of a common agricultural society than a camp for prisoners. They found no traces of dejection or tenseness on the prisoners' cheerful faces.

But the impressions of the group of foreign and Indonesian journalists that visited Buru in December 1971 were strikingly different. The reports of the foreign journalists were so critical that they were not allowed to circulate in Indonesia; the Newsweek issue containing a report of the visit was allowed to circulate only after this report had been blacked out.

The journalists' reports show a deep concern for the physical conditions in which the prisoners were forced to live, but they were even more deeply concerned about the frustrations of the prisoners whom they had met. The Dutch journalist, Peter Schumacher, wrote "Buru is not what one would call a devil's island, at least, not the small part we were shown" (the group saw only four of the eighteen units in the camp) "but my general conclusion is that, despite the spiritual care, most of the prisoners are worried and some are simply desperate?"

NO HOPE FOR THE OLD AND THE

As is the case with political prisoners in all other places of detention in Indonesia, the prisoners in Buru are deprived of all news from the outside world; they may not read or write, but can correspond with close relatives once a month, though only a small percentage of letters actually get through.

Medical facilities for the prisoners on the island are described by most visitors as being totally inadequate. The authorities state that eight doctors are in regular attendance at the camp, but the visiting journalists all spoke of a serious shortage of medicines and other medical equipment. In less than two and a half years, sixty-five prisoners have died in the camp. In 1971, the authorities stressed that they died not because of conditions they experienced on Buru but as a result of ailments they had before their transfer. Yet, the

Bapreru brochure states that all prisoners transferred to Buru would be subject to medical examination first, to check their physical fitness. By December 1972, the London Embassy was claiming that deaths were due not to illness but old age a surprising shift from original claims that no one over 45 would be taken to the island. A German Catholic missionary, who has worked among the Buru prisoners for a long time, told Peter Schumacher that "the group of old and sick people is a great problem. The younger and healthy prisoners are caring for them as brothers, but there is little hope that they will survive."



Pramudya Ananta Tur, the well-known writer, in Buru since 1969.

DETAINEES' FAMILIES ON BURU

In 1972, the first group of wives and children were taken to the island. The Indonesian authorities always insist that their plans to bring the families of the Buru prisoners to the island is evidence of their humanitarianism. But the prisoners themselves, and in general, their relatives, look upon the matter very differently. When the group of journalists visited Buru, no prisoner with whom they spoke showed any desire to have his family with him. While separation from family is one of the most intolerable aspects of their life, they realise that life on Buru is totally unsuitable and far too arduous for their wives and children.(Incidentally, nothing has ever been said about how the 'socialising process' is supposed to work in the case of unmarried prisoners on Buru. They are presumably to be left to live out their lives as single men with no prospect of ever rearing a family.)

In a speech to foreign journalists in Jakarta in September 1971, the Attorney-General admitted that a survey, conducted to investigate the

attitudes of wives towards the prospects of joining their husbands in Buru had shown that 75 percent were not willing to do so, particularly because of problems for their children.

COMMUNITY OF 50,000?

But despite all this, the Government proceeded with plans to transport wives and children to Buru, and the first 102 families reached the island in July 1972. In October, Brigadier-General Wadli Prawirasupradja told a press conference in Jakarta that by the end of 1972, 4,500 family members will have been transported to the island and that eventually, families of all prisoners there will join their husbands or fathers, bringing the total population of the camp to 50,000 (including officers in charge).

These facts confirm reports reaching Amnesty International that pressure was being brought to bear upon families to go to Buru. One source has reported that wives were presented with the bleak alternative of joining their husbands on Buru or divorcing them.

At the October 1972 press conference referred to above, the Attorney-General made it quite clear that, although family members were free citizens, they would not be allowed to leave the Project. He admitted too that enormous social problems had arisen as a result of the arrival of the families. Some that he mentioned were:

Education of the children: If this were left to the fathers, the children might grow up 'dedicated communists'

Communications with the outside world: Free rein could not be permitted as this may be a channel for 'subversive activities'.

Livelihood for the families: They could not be allowed to live continually from public kitchens. But economic activity to earn a livelihood would require monetisation, yet he feared that 'too much money' in the hands of the families would be used for 'subversive activities'.

What better conclusion can be drawn than that contained in an article published in the Indonesian weekly, Tempo on 21st October, 1972: "People can well say that, having brought the families there, the problem of the political prisoners appears to have become more complicated than before."

* this and other quotations are taken from the official English translation of the Bapreru brochure.

plantungan

a women's detention camp

In April 1971, the first batch of women political prisoners were transferred to a newly-established detention camp in Plantungan, Central Java. The camp is situated several miles to the south of the town of Sukoredjo and is approachable only by an almost impassible road.

By August 1971, when the second batch of prisoners had been sent there, there were 360 women prisoners

at Plantungan and the number was scheduled to increase to 600 in 1972. The prisoners are from the 'B' cate-

gory whose detention will be virtually permanent. Some were originally thought to be 'A' category but their transfer to Plantungan shows that the Government has abandoned plans to try them and has re-classified them for indefinite detention.

The women at Plantungan must work from morning till night in the fields to produce their own foodstuffs. They are only provided with rice and vegetables and must rely on relatives for other food, such as sugar, tea and coffee as well as soap and clothes. Relatives are not permitted to visit prisoners at Plantungan and although food parcels can be sent, communications are difficult and costs are high.

**

The women prisoners at Plantungan working on the fields, This is compulsory labour, and they have to live from their produce.





Dr. Sumiarsih Caropeboka, examining a fellow-prisoner at Plantungan. She has no stethoscope and examines her patient by placing her ear on the chest.



Many women prisoners were pregnant when they were arrested and gave birth in detention. Others were arrested with small children. Where there are no relatives to take the children, they grow up in detention or may eventually be placed in orphanages or families willing to take them.



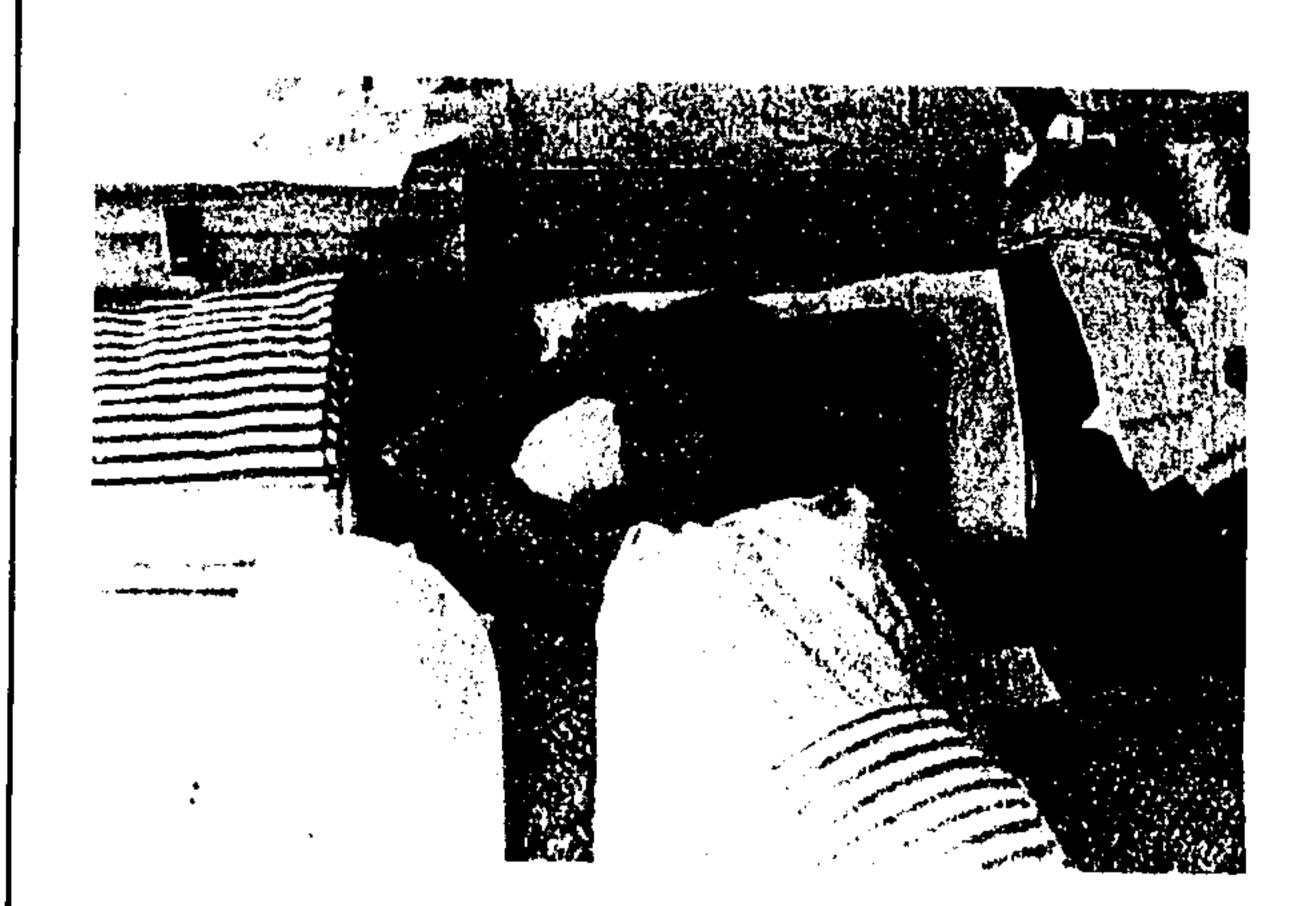
The daily supply of drink. Boiled water is the only beverage supplied to the prisoners.



(On the right) One of the youngest prisoners at the camp. When this photograph was taken, she was under 20 and had been in detention for six years. She has had no contact with her relatives since her arrest.

... 'Now that six years have elapsed since the notorious Lubang Buaya tragedy, a question arose: Is the nation ready to forget the bloody event and give another chance to the Communists to repeat their treachery? The answer must be in the negative, lest the Communists make use of the chance for the third time. The Communist movement, though officially banned, is not quite dead in this country. The remnants of the banned PKI activists are still moving around consolidating their forces in their effort to stage a come back... The arrests of Communist remnants here and there support this position(They) should never be given any more chance to participate in the nation's politics, no matter what their comrades say abroad... Today is the time when the nation should renew the pledge to carry on the struggle of the fallen heroes and step up vigilance".

From an editorial in the Jakarta Times, 30th September, 1971



A prisoner asleep in the dormitory. The space allotted to her is about two feet wide. The mat, blanket and pillow she uses were obtained from private donations.

(These shots were taken from a film made by a unit of the Dutch TV company, KRO, in August 1971).

the problems

In 1971, amid considerable international pressure and concern, the Indonesian Government undertook to release 22,000 'C' category prisoners and since then, some thousands have been freed though no reliable figures are available. But in a society so gripped by the fear of 'communism' release is by no means the end of the problem for the ex-detainee.



According to official information, these prisoners of the 'C' category in Tanggerang were recently released from prison.

Let us take the case of prisoners who return to their home towns or villages to rejoin their families. After six years or more without contact, a released prisoner may return home to find that his wife has remarried or that all his relatives have left without

The majority, coming back after such a long absence, find a community afraid to welcome them back; alienation from friends, neighbours and even close relatives is the result. They may find that their home is now occupied by military personnel. Here is one example of the caprice with which the military authorities treat the homes of political detainees. In 1970, the Jakarta military command wrote a letter notifying the occupant of a large house in the city that they 26 planned to expropriate it because it

was large and in a 'VIP area'. His assent would be assumed unless they received his refusal in writing. The man was then - and is now - in Salemba Prison. The house was appropriated. As a political prisoner is unable to receive or send letters, he had, of course, been unable even to read the original letter, let alone to object.

READJUSTMENT TO BE DIFFICULT

Then comes the problem of readjusting to society. There are no state schemes to facilitate this difficult process and no private associations dare to take the initiative, except occasional Christian organisations. Even where accommodation can be found, it will not be easy to find a job in a country with such a high rate of unemployment. Few people want to take the risk of employing a man or woman with a 'communist'

past, and many jobs are firmly closed to applicants without political clearance papers.

On paper, those released that are

of certain professional groups have specific rights; released prisoners who were once civil servants or in the armed forces are classified into three sub-categories: C1, C2 and C3. Those in the first category are entitled to apply for pensions but may not regain their former post. Those in the second category are allowed, in principle, to return to their former office but are excluded from senior positions. Those in the third category are entitled to full rehabilitation. Impressive in theory, the practice is less secure as hardly anyone knows what category he or she belongs to and the former place of work may be quite unaware of, or unwilling to recognise, the exdetainee's rights. In some cases, it takes time before the authorities decide upon a person's release category and meanwhile he is bound to remain idle, trying to keep alive by doing odd jobs. Furthermore, there is no form of legal redress if a former prisoner's rights are not acknowledged, or his

house has been requisitioned. He finds himself in many cases a second-class citizen and cannot hope to take legal action because of the expense. A few legal aid institutes have recently been established on private initiative, but they dare not provide unpaid legal services to ex-detainees because of the stigma that would attach to their

Added to all this, the spectre of rearrest is very real. Released prisoners are the first to come under suspicion if a fire breaks out or a train is derailed. Such events are immediately interpreted by the Army as 'subversive sabotage' or the work of 'communist agents'.

For all these reasons, life for the released detainee is replete with difficulties.

indonesian attitudes

WHY POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE A POLITICAL NECESSITY

Why doesn't the Indonesian Government release these political prisoners whose continued existence is damaging in terms of international relations? This is one answer sent to Amnesty from Indonesia.

One possible answer can be found in the basic strategy of the Suharto Administration. To execute his economic development programme, President Suharto feels it necessary to stabilise political life. He has given this job to the military. It has now become clear that what is meant by political stability is the absence of any kind of conflicts in society and that any situation which produces conflicts, even differences of opinion, cannot be tolerated. The stability President Suharto wants is not a dynamic one, but a static stability, almost a repression of freedom and action.

All this has been done under the banner of economic development. This slogan has become the key word to legitimise all kinds of action including action that violates human rights and is against the Indonesian legal system and constitution.

Thedetention of 100,000 people is also part of this strategy. If they were released nothing might happen, but it is also possible that something would happen and the present Covernment does not want to take the risk. They argue that it is better to sacrifice 100,000 people than the 120,000,000 who still live in poverty. So it is clear that the root of the problem lies very deep in the Government's basic concept of development. But Indonesian intellectuals are asking whether this kind of policy is a good one. Is it not better if we try to humanise the development programme, with the consequences of making it a bit slower? The essential point of this explanation is that there is an obsession with economic development resulting in a parallel obsession with social and political stability. Yet if the political prisoners continue to be held, other governments might be under pressure to stop their aid to Indonesia. There have been many moves in this direction coming not only from communists but also from non-political intellectuals, inspired by simple humanitarianism. Why has the Suharto Administration not responded to this pressure? It may be because no government has yet stopped its aid to Indonesia because of the political prisoner problem, but it may be for another reason. And here, I come to my second hypothesis.

One observer has drawn a comparison between the Javanese concept of power and that of the Western world. For the westerner, power is something abstract, a way of communicating with others, but for the Javanese, power is very concrete. Whereas for the westerner, power is unlimited and can be exercised through a knowledge of the techniques and a control over material things, according to the Javanese concept, power is dispensed by a supernatural force and is subject to limitations. Where good order and prosperity prevail, the man in power can rest assured of his legitimacy. But when disorder appears, whether natural



Indonesian army officer detained in a West Kaimantan prison, suspected of involvement in the 1965 coup.

disaster or social conflict, this is taken as a sign that the man in power has done wrong and power is slipping from his hands.

Now President Suharto is deeply influenced by the Javanese tradition which would teach him to regard conflict as a sign that power is slipping from his hands, even if that conflict is necessary for progress. Your opinions may differ from his but you must be circumspect in the way you express them. As one Indonesian newspaper editor has said. you may appeal to the government but you may not criticise.

According to this hypothesis, President Suharto may well fear that if the political prisoners were released they may disturb the stability and the harmony that has been achieved, which, because of his cultural

background, would make him uneasy upon his legitimacy to hold power. A third explanation concerns the Army. When Indonesia gained its independence, the military only served as a defence and security force. But in the 1960's, the late President Sukarno used the army as a socio-political force in order to balance the growing strength of the Indonesian Communist Party. The concept of the 'dual function of the military' was launched as the philosophical base to legitimise this new role. Military generals became ministers in the cabinet as well as directors in state companies. When the abortive coup of 1965 happened, the military, of course, were very active. The civilian force was practically crippled and at that time the military role was well received by the civilians because they desperately needed it. The situation improved and as a result of the economic development policy followed by the military themselves, a new hero emerged: the economist. Then followed the tragic fate of all military, the fate they can never avoid: in wartime people receive them with flowers; in peacetime they receive them with sour faces.

But it seems that the Indonesian army are not ready to accept such a tragic fate. Under the banner of 'political stability for economic development'. they now have a new role - as the custodian of social-political stability and to legitimise this role they have to show the people that there are

The communist political prisoners act very well as a scapegoat. The danger of communist subversion is continually and dramatically proclaimed by the military. New arrests are being made continuously in order to convince the common people that they are still active communist members. The slogan 'subversive' has replaced the slogan of 'British-American Neo-Colonialism and Imperialism' used during the Sukarno period.

So my third hypothesis is that the political prisoner problem is needed by the present Government to legitimise the military power to rule because it creates a sense of danger. The military of Indonesia has tasted the honey of power and they want to keep it in their hands. It seems that these three factors (and maybe there are more) are interwoven, which makes the problem so complicated.

prisoners

"We strongly urge Amnesty International to continue and intensify its activities to protect the interests of all political prisoners in Indonesia in accordance with Amnesty International's principles of human rights and its objective of protecting those who are deprived of justice and human dignity, or who have been victimised by abuses of the law.

"The practice of arbitrarily assigning a 30th September/PKI Movement label to any person has become a powerful tool in the hands of the authorities to enrich themselves at the expense of the political prisoners and their families.....

"... Unofficial sources have informed me that my classification has been changed from 'C' tot 'B' category.... As a matter of fact, a prisoner's classification can be changed at will by any team which has some authority in this matter. For example, my status has suddenly changed to category 'B' and perhaps, after the last interrogation....I might become category 'A' or 'X'!"

> From a letter sent out of prison by a political prisoner who has been adopted by Amnesty.

JAVA

ON FORCED LABOUR

The project is owned by a company of which the Military Area Commander and his family hold the majority of the shares.

"The prisoners are allowed to have their families with them but the majority prefer not to because the local population look upon them as social outcasts and there would be no future for the wives and children. The political prisoners live in wooden barracks and their labour can be used in other places as well. Now and then, families send food but only a part reaches the prisoners. There is a serious shortage of medicine and proteins.

"The daily wage is Rp. 15 (\$0.04) which is spent mainly on soap and tobacco (the cigarettes are shared). When the prisoners fall ill, they are sent to the local military clinic but there is little in the way of medicine and medical facilities.

"To most political prisoners, the 28 monotonous camp life is very

depressing. They work seven days a week from seven in the morning till five in the evening with an hour for lunch. Sometimes they work in the evenings too, from seven until ten o'clock, with floodlighting.

"They live very isolated lives, and there are no radios or newspapers. They have hardly any contact with the local population....

"They get hardly any material aid from outside and have to buy their own clothes and shoes from their wages of Rp. 15 a day....." Interview with a prisoner 1972

SUMATRA

LIVING CONDITIONS AT A MILITARY PRISON

"Blocks A and B are each used for four persons and sometimes for five, whereas according to the regulations, they should only be used for two. From six in the morning till five in the evening, the detainees remain within the confines of an area 2m by 8m. From five in the evening till 6 in the morning, they remain within the confines of an area 2m by

4m, where they have to eat, sleep, urinate, etc.....

"Detainees are allowed out only to fetch water and food, to obtain medical treatment, to get religious instruction, for interrogation or, when permitted, to meet relatives.

"Food is provided twice a day and amounts to two handfuls per person for each meal. Vegetables consist of only boiled cabbage and nothing elseBeverages consist of boiled water only, given twice a day.... The water for bathing and washing and other purposes is dirty. Only when it rains heavily is there any clean water..... During the hot season, the prisoners confine themselves to washing their faces and eating-utensils only, and the water is very muddy. The medical facilities are extremely unsatisfactory. If a detainee falls seriously ill, his fate is in the hands of the Almighty. A fee of Rp. 25 (\$0.06) must be paid for injections, but where can the political prisoners get the money from?

"Besides direct experiences, I saw many things that were diametrically opposed to the principles of humanitarianism and the law, and heard the sufferings and grief-stricken moans of the political prisoners both with regard to their own sufferings as well as those of their families and children living outside. But who hears or wants to hear, who sees or wants to see their sufferings and moans except God, the Almighty and Most Merciful?" Released prisoner's letter 1972.

AND THE WIVES' VIEW

"Tell Amnesty to keep fighting. The Army has promised to help me but it is only to enrich themselves. They talk and talk as they please; false promises, false inside information, all fabricated by themselves. Still many arrests, still many re-arrests and still many cases of torture, especially committed towards arrested common soldiers and lower-rank officers. Let Amnesty International go on.'

From a letter sent to a relative abroad by the wife of a political prisoner.

"I feel there should be some rules (or laws) for political prisoners the world over, which somehow could give them and their families a certain feeling of security. I think revolutions against existing governments will

occur for some time in all kinds of countries, and I think that the status of the political prisoners has never been defined, while the status of war prisoners has already been discussed by the Red Cross. I am thinking of a fair trial, for instance, instead of a lasting detention for an uncertain amount of time; of house-arrest instead of imprisonment, which would certainly lighten the burden of the families; of regular (monthly) visits which would be able to maintain the ties between father-mother and children and prevent estrangement; of the possibility to read and write and do other constructive work..... Could not these things be discussed on a world scale, to make the best of an unfavourable situation?"

From a letter written by the wife of a political prisoner to friends abroad.



Political prisoners doing compulsory work at the Balikpapan airport, East Kalimantan.

A CRY FOR HELP FROM 800 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN EAST KALIMANTAN

The letter translated below, dated 4th January, 1972, was written and signed by one of the 800 political prisoners now being held in East Kalimantan. He was writing from Balikpapan.

"Dear Sir,

Here in East Kalimantan, 800 political prisoners, including myself, have been held under detention since October 1965 in connection with what is generally called the 30th September/PKI Movement, without any prospect of being

We all have suffered from extensive interrogation and investigation, far exceeding the bounds of humane treatment, We have been beaten which more than once led to the hospitalisation of the victim. Heavy tyres have been tied round our necks. We have been stripped naked and our testicles have been punched. We have been thrown into the sea and pushed , into self-dug pits covered at the bottom with glass splinters. We have been given electric shocks and cigarettes have been used to burn us. I could go on like this but this piece of paper would not be large enough to describe all the hardships we have suffered. There are some among us who have been shot through the mouth. The authorities have forced us to confess to things that are not true even though we have already told them everything of importance in connection with our cases,

Lately, it appears that the authorities have begun to trust us a little: we are allowed to work outside. We have been forced to work on the construction of Government buildings for meagre remuneration. Often we have to work as 'volunteers' and receive nothing at all. The officers use us as servants to wash dishes and clothes and to clean out the toilets. If you care to earn Rp. 75 (\$0.18) a day, you can work day and night on the reconstruction of the Balikpapan Airport. There are hundreds of other odd jobs we have to do for the officers, far too many to mention them all, Because we have been imprisoned for such a long time already and no-one seems to do anything about our release, many of our families have broken up. Many wives have decided to get a divorce, and more often than not, the children of prisoners have to leave school for financial reasons. Many of my friends have died: sometimes death surprises us while we are chopping wood in the forest. There are female prisoners here too, some of whom were pregnant when they arrived. Their children have been born and raised in captivity.

These are just a few of the problems I should like to stress. It is nothing more than a broad outline, Since we do not know how long they will go on detaining us and the future offers no prospects - not even exile with our families like our friends who have been sent to Buru - we ask you for your help and support as soon as possible. Perhaps it will be possible for you to ask the Government to hear us and to put us on trial. If it is proved that we have done nothing wrong, we could then be released. However, if the authorities still want to consider us as a danger to society, would it not be possible for them to exile us to a remote island, together with our families?

We are eagerly awaiting your help and we thank you in advance. We are relying upon you - it is our only hope for the future,

Yours sincerely,"

memorandum

EXTRACTS FROM MEMORANDUM TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA

SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (February 1971)

"While fully appreciating the extremely difficult and dangerous situation which faced the Indonesian Government in 1965 and 1966, it is considered that the continued detention of vast numbers of persons who are uncharged and untried clearly contravenes the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the norms of the Rule of Law. The continuance of this situation is obviously highly damaging to the image of Indonesia in the outside world; it also tends to prolong the memory and bitterness resulting from the tragic events of 1965. From discussions we have had with both the responsible civil and military authorities in Jakarta, we believe that the Indonesian Government appreciates the necessity of dealing with this problem.

in the course of our investigations is the absence of reliable public statistics as to the number of prisoners held.....

'.....It is strongly recommended that the Government should take steps to obtain and publish precise figures as to the numbers held. Unless this is done the Government itself and the international agencies which are prepared to help the Government will be faced with added difficulties in the formulation of release programmes.

"In regard to the Category "A" prisoners the problem as we see it is that even if charges and evidence are available to put them on trial, the existing judicial machinery is totally inadequate to undertake the trial of 5,000 persons. It is understood that it is the intention of the Government to appoint five hundred new judges by 1974 for the purpose of undertaking these trials. Even if the Government does find it possible to appoint five hundred new judges and the necessary ancillary legal personnel within the course of the next two or three years, the trial of some 5,000 persons is bound to take another 10 years or so. This would mean that many of those awaiting trial will probably die before they are tried and that in a number of cases trials will take place only some 10 to 15 years after the events that form the basis of charges. This is obviously most unsatisfactory. It is 30 therefore suggested that a re-assessment

"One of the difficulties we have found of the cases of the 5,000 prisoners in Category "A" should be undertaken with a view to the release of those against whom there is no evidence and of those who even if guilty of some offence, could be regarded as having purged their offence by the 5 years they have already spent in prison. It is believed that if such a review of the Category "A" prisoners were undertaken, the number remaining for trial would be considerably reduced. The programme for the streng thening of the judicial machinery and the appointment of additional judges should in any case be proceeded with as the existing judicial machinery is insufficient by any standards. The existing judges, while dedicated, are overwhelmed with work.

> In regard to the Category "B" prisoners it is suggested that in these cases too there should be a complete revaluation. It is completely contrary to the norms of the Rule of Law that persons suspected of being "communist" should be detained indefinitely without charge or trial. If any of them are alleged to have committed crimes, they should be tried.....

"The principal reason advanced by members of the Government for the slowness in the release of the Category "C" prisoners is the fear of physical reprisals by the local populations. There has been no evidence of such an attitude by the population in the very substantial releases which have taken

place in the last year. It is confidently hoped that the President and members of the Government could offset any such danger by appealing to the population to facilitate the reintegration of the released prisoners into the life of the Indonesian nation.

"Without questioning the well-meaning motives which may have inspired the massive transportation of untried prisoners to island detention camps, it is a policy which is fraught with grave danger and which cannot be justified under any legal concept. The transportation for life of 10,000 prisoners, mostly males, without their families to camps on remote islands is clearly contrary to the laws of humanity and to justice. What is to happen to these vast penal settlements in the future? Is this the best way of eradicating the bitterness and dissension of the past? Is it wise to create substantial pockets of population, which will not unnaturally nourish resentment against the authorities who have transported them there? If any programme of resettlement for ex-prisoners is envisaged, this should be done on the basis of reintegration of the ex-prisoners into the life of the community and. wherever possible, on the basis of family grouping...

"In relation to the treatment of all prisoners we would respectfully draw the attention of the Indonesian Government to the provisions of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. We appreciate that in the existing circumstances it will take some time before they can be fully put into operation in Indonesia. We would, however, urge that copies of these Rules should be supplied to the commandants of all military camps of detention where prisoners are

"The concern of Amnesty International in making the propositions herein set forth was to put forward proposals which might be of assistance to the Indonesian Government in the solution of a problem which is of paramount importance for the future development and stability of the Republic of Indonesia. Amnesty International and indeed the other international organisations working in the human rights field would, we feel, be more than willing to extend any assistance in their power to the Indonesian Government to secure the constructive solution of these problems."

> Sean MacBride, S.C. 1st February, 1971.

What can annesty do

Amnesty is essentially a case working organisation; individual prisoners are allocated to groups of Amnesty members throughout the world - in Holland, America, Japan, Bangladesh or Sweden who then plead for their release. The idea is a simple one: it is invariably misunderstood.

In 1971, the Soviet newspaper Isvestia carried a strongly-worded article denouncing the 'malignant slanderers' who were then publicising Soviet treatment of political dissenters. 'Especially zealous', it noted, 'is the notorious Amnesty International'. In May, 1972, the Indonesian army paper Angkatan Bersenjata, criticised Amnesty in equally hostile terms for its reports on political imprisonment in Indonesia. Amnesty was 'an organisation of the New Left, it lacked objectivity and had never 'made accusations against happenings in the Socialist countries'. The ideology was different, but the articles shared a common feature: both saw Amnesty's efforts as directed solely against their own governments: neither understood the cardinal principle of Amnesty's work - to press for the release of prisoners of conscience regardless of politics or belief.

HOW IT WORKS

How does the system work? Prisoners are selected by the International Secretariat but a case is never adopted if there seems the slightest risk that this could hamper a man's situation or chances of release. As soon as it receives a case sheet, the Amnesty group writes to the Government asking for the prisoner's release, and explaining that this case is only one of three for whom they work. A representative group might be working for an Indonesian, a Russian and a Spanish prisoner. The aim of this arrangement is to ensure political balance and to prevent any part of Amnesty from becoming politically partisan. In the case of the USSR and Indonesia, the group's letters will probably go unanswered. When an Amnesty delegate raised this with one civilian Minister in Jakarta, the reply was revealing. Although the Minister normally replied to all enquiries, he had stopped even acknowledging

Amnesty's letters after he had been formally censured in a Cabinet meeting for 'corresponding with communists'; his colleagues had assumed that anyone concerned with the rights of political prisoners must be acting from a political rather than a humanitarian motive - in their view political prisoners had forfeited their claim to rights. In Spain, Amnesty's work is better understood; since 1970, prisoners can correspond, receive parcels of books and clothing and - most important -Amnesty members may arrange to visit their adopted prisoner in prison.

THREE DEFINITE AIMS

Even in Indonesia there are exceptions to the general rules of silence. Last year, the Commandant of Buru authorised a New Zealand group to correspond with their adopted prisoner. In response, the group have written to their prisoner monthly but ,have, as yet, received no reply. In real terms, what, then, can an Amnesty group do? The difficulties are clear, but there are three definite aims. The first and most important is to create a growing awareness within the Indonesian state administration, military as well as civilian, that a country which imprisons its opposition and uses political imprisonment as an instrument of government must forfeit foreign confidence in the quality of its government. To this end, Amnesty groups publicise their cases, alerting economists about the detention of an economist, journalists about journalists, doctors about a doctor, parliamentarians about an elected MP. Amnesty groups proliferate in the major aid-giving countries -420 in West Germany alone. Secondly, the group must arouse the conscience of people inside Indonesia - lawyers, the press, the prisoner's former colleagues. Thirdly and of equal

importance, the groups must ensure that the prisoners know they are not forgotten. It is clear that here there has been some success: Christmas cards have reached Buru; Amnesty postcards have been seen by women in Bukit Duri Prison; on one of the smaller islands, prisoners have made emblems to symbolise their appreciation of Amnesty's efforts; in Java, a prisoner has written asking the organisation to "continue and intensify its activities to protect the interests of all political prisoners in Indonesia in accordance with Amnesty International's principles of human rights and its objectives of protecting those who are deprived of justice and human dignity or who have been victimised by abuses of the law."

TWO ANSWERS

Criticisms can, of course, be levelled at this apparently piecemeal approach to such an enormous problem, since only a fraction of those in prison can be adopted. Is it just - or indeed desirable - to single out a hundred or so prisoners and ignore the others? There are two answers. Each adopted prisoner is a symbol of his 54,999 fellows, and while group work is providing continuing low-key pressure, it is the job of Amnesty's International Secretariat and national sections to take general initiatives on behalf of the prisoners as a group. These can take many forms. The two missions in 1969 and 1970 have been mentioned elsewhere; both were led by internationally-respected lawyers and both met Indonesian legal and military officials specifically to discuss political imprisonment. Before official contacts between the Indonesian Government and the governments of other countries, Amnesty briefs Ministers of the countries concerned. Its consultative status at the United Nations enables it to draw the attention of human rights and technical agencies to the Indonesian problem. Journalists are regularly briefed and when the international press reports on Indonesia, its information on detention whether accredited or not - has often come from Amnesty's files.

Utopian though it may seem, the aim of Amnesty's work is thus to apply persistent, informed and courteous pressure which, cumulatively, will persuade the Indonesian authorities to look again at the tens of thousands of prisoners, now cut from society, and recognise them as men and women to whom human and legal rights are as much due as to a head of state or to an army officer.

