
THE WORLD OF SERGEANT-MAJOR BUNGKUS: TWO INTERVIEWS WITH BENEDICT ANDERSON AND ARIEF DJATI

1. Early History

BA (Ben Anderson): *Pak* (Father) Bungkus, during the Revolution, where were you? In East Java all the time, or in Central Java? Or somewhere else?

Bungkus: It was like this, during the Revolution, actually even before the Revolution arrived, I was already a soldier in the TKR,¹ in a battalion of the Red Ants (Semut Merah). In Situbondo.

BA: *Red Ants?*

Bungkus: *Yes, Red Ants. In those days battalions had names like that, kan? Andjing Laut (Sea-Dogs, i.e., Seals), Sikatan (Javanese, a kind of magpie), Alap-alap (Javanese, Falcons). Nowadays, all this is gone. They have numbers instead.*

AD (Arief Djati): How long were you with the Red Ants?

Bungkus: Well, the Red Ants were destroyed by the Dutch in July '47 [at the start of the First Clash, or full military confrontation], so, let's see, 1945, 1946 ... almost two years.

AD: *And before the Red Ants? Were you in the Peta?*²

¹ Tentera Keamanan Rakjat (People's Security Army), formally inaugurated on October 5, 1945, was the first "army" of the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed on August 17. It became the Tentera Keselamatan Rakjat [same initials] (People's Salvation Army) on January 1, 1946, the TRI (Army of the Indonesian Republic) two months later, on February 26, and TNI (National Army of Indonesia) on May 5, 1947. That Bungkus recalls the TKR as having been there "before the Revolution" suggests that for him the Revolution meant the onset of real fighting with the colonialists.

² Peta, from Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Motherland), was created in October 1943 by the Japanese 16th Army occupying Java. It was intended to be a locally based, guerrilla force in the event of an Allied invasion. On the eve of the Japanese surrender it numbered about 37,000 men, with majors, heading battalions, as its highest-ranking officers. It had no central command or staff.

Bungkus: No. I was still in school. It was like this: I actually wanted to join the military for a long time. I tried to get into Heihō, but couldn’t.³ Wong, I was still in the fifth grade of primary school.

AD: Where was that?

Bungkus: In Panarukan.

AD: So you really wanted to be a soldier when you were only in the fifth grade?

Bungkus: Yes. Because every time my elder brothers came home from Peta training in Muntjar (a small fishing-town in Banjuwangi) they looked so dashing (gagah-gagah). I wanted so much to be like them. My brothers told me, “If you want to be a soldier, Peta means Pembela Tanah Air, defenders of our country. So we hold high the deradjat (perhaps, here, ‘honor’) of our nation.” Actually, I didn’t know what this meant. I didn’t understand who or what it was that had to be “held high.” But I wanted to serve (mengabdi). However, at that time, I couldn’t. I even wanted to join the Kaigun (Japanese Navy).⁴ Their training-ground was in Pekalongan, at the navy base in Pekalongan. But it didn’t work out. Finally, I tried for the Djibakutai, but that didn’t work out either.⁵ My body was too small. Then all of a sudden, there was a call for those sons of the Indonesian nation who wanted to serve the country to join the TKR. In the end, that was the reason why I ran away from school.

AD (laughing): So you really ran away from school?

KS (Khanis Suoianita): What grade were you in then?

Bungkus: Still in Grade 5. The Red Ant unit I belonged to was stationed in [the subdistrict of Karangasem (in the present-day subdistrict of Genteng, Genteng district, kabupatèn of Banjuwangi). After that I was stationed in Asembagus. Finally, I was transferred to this perdikan ... (inaudible), and then the Dutch attacked.⁶

BA: How old were you then, when you signed up?

Bungkus: Eighteen.

BA: Really?

Bungkus: Yes, I was born on August 1, 1927.

AD: Was there a pesantrèn (rural Muslim school) there in Asembagus?

³ The Heihō, formed in mid-1943, before Peta, eventually numbered about 25,000 men. Unlike the Peta, it was an integral, if auxiliary, part of the Imperial Army, and could serve anywhere in the Empire. The highest rank open to Indonesians was sergeant-major.

⁴ After the Netherlands Indies fell to the Japanese in March 1942, its territory was divided into three separate administrative zones; the Japanese 16th Army held Java, the 25th Army held Sumatra plus ex-British Malaya, and the Japanese Navy everything else. Though Java was 16th Army territory, the Navy controlled the huge naval base in Surabaya and was a presence in other Javanese ports.

⁵ Usually known by the Indonesian version of its name, Barisan Berani Mati (Dare-to-Die, or Suicide, Corps). Formed in December 1944, nine months before the Japanese Empire collapsed, it took its metaphoric lead from the kamikaze plots of the time. It was said to be the most “Japanified” of the various native militias formed by the 16th Army, and numbered—perhaps—about fifty thousand youths.

⁶ Traditionally, a *perdikan* village was one granted exemption from taxation by a Javanese ruler, either because it had provided some exemplary service or because its terrain included some sacred site which the villagers were obliged to care for. We were not sure if this is the meaning Bungkus attached to the word.

*Bungkus: Are you serious? The only one close by was in Sukoredjo, under Kjai As'ad. But then it didn't have so many santri as it has now.*⁷

AD: Did its santri also become soldiers?

Bungkus: Yes, indeed. Some joined Peta, some the TKR. But most of these village boys, whether pesantrèn boys or ordinary pemuda, rather than joining a regular military organization, preferred to join badan [perjuangan] ...⁸ —like BPRI, Hizbullah, Pesindo.⁹ There were a lot of them. In those days every party had its own pemuda organization. It was they who defended Surabaya along with the TKR. But after the government carried out its Re-Ra turning the TKR into the TNI, they all ...¹⁰

AD: In those days, didn't you use the Indonesian language (bahasa Indonesia)?

Bungkus: In those days, if I'm not mistaken, bahasa Indonesia was still bahasa Melaju (Malay), no?

KS: Yes.

BA: But in the Red Ants, did you use Madurese or not?

Bungkus: It was a mix. There were soldiers who used Japanese, and even some who still used Dutch.

BA: Really? Dutch?

⁷ *Santri* can either be used for the pious Muslims in general, or, as here, for the pupils in a *pesantrèn* (pe-santri-an). Bungkus was referring to the famous Pesantrèn Syalafiyah founded by K. H. As'ad Sjamsul Arifin, a favorite pupil of K. H. Hasjim Asjari who in 1926 founded Nahdlatul Ulama, the first "national-level" organization of "traditionalist" *ulama*. It is located quite close to Situbondo.

⁸ In the language of the Revolution (and after), *pemuda* meant a youth dedicated to the anti-colonial struggle. *Badan perjuangan* (struggle organizations) were the characteristic armed youth militias, outside the Republican Army, which were usually, but not always, loosely aligned with particular political parties.

⁹ BPRI (Badan Pemberontak Republik Indonesia, Republic of Indonesia Rebel Corps), created late in 1945 by the colorful youth leader and skilled broadcaster Bung Tomo, was unaffiliated with any political party. Its main strength was in East Java. Hizbullah (Army of Allah), formed at the end of 1944, was originally a small group of young Muslims trained by the Japanese to help fight the Allies. In the autumn of 1945, it underwent a substantial expansion, and represented increasingly a largely urban armed youth-wing of the Islamic political party Masjumi. Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Youth), created on November 10, 1945 out of the amalgamation of several regional leftist youth groups, became the powerful armed youth-wing of the Socialist Party, which at that time included a broad range of leftwing political activists. Bungkus's chronology is a little confusing. Some members of these groups were eventually incorporated into the regular military, but only long after the TKR had become the TNI, i.e. in the spring of 1947.

¹⁰ Re-Ra—Reorganization and Rationalization. Nickname for a comprehensive plan drawn up in March 1948 by Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman and Army Chief of Staff Col. A. H. Nasution on the basis of the lessons supposedly learned from the Republic's defeat in the First Clash with the Dutch (July–August 1947). It aimed at demobilizing the independent militias, while recruiting some of their former members into the TNI. The Army's size, too, was to be drastically reduced, to match the weaponry actually available. Hostility to the plan, which was sometimes aimed at armed groups opposed to government policy, was one factor leading up to the Madiun Affair of September 1948 (for which see notes 29 and 31 below).

*Bungkus: One or two. We didn’t really understand what they were saying. You see, our leaders mixed up languages. Any way they liked. So, for example, when they yelled at us “Bagero!” it came out as Bageeeroo!*¹¹

We all: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: The important thing, djaré (Javanese, they say), is that Bagero means no good ... no good. So we didn’t do it (what we had done wrong) again.

AD: So there were Japanese also joining up?

Bungkus: Yes. Eh ... no. They were ex-Heihō, ex-Peta, ex-Kaigun. These [organizations] were now dead, but their language lived on. So these guys’ style was still the Tennō Heika (Japanese term for the Emperor) style.

2. The Early Revolution

BA: Who was your commander at first?

Bungkus: If I remember right, he was Pak Rasad, Pak Rasadi. A major. A former Daidantjō (Battalion Commander) in the Peta.

BA: A major?

Bungkus: Pak Rasadi, if I’m not mistaken. I forget. But by then, he (*beliau*, respectful) had already died on the battlefield (*gugur*). *He was killed over there (points) at Pasir Putih*. At that time I’d already been assigned to the Surabaya front, which ran from Sidoardjo up to Bangil—Bangil because by then the Dutch had moved up there.¹² I was then in the barracks (*pradjuritan*), *asrama* (dormitory), in Situbondo when things started to happen. We got a report about three warships, *kok*—if I am not mistaken, carrying English flags.¹³ I had only arrived back from the front a week or so beforehand. We were supposed to go to Pasir Putih to prevent them [from landing]. But what could we do? There were these warships full of troops, and all kinds of weapons. But what types we didn’t know. All we had were the guns we then called *djuki* (general Japanese word for “gun”) left behind by the Japanese, if I’m not mistaken. If we fired off a round, we were bombarded by the warships’ cannon and forced to scatter. That was how direct combat began, with the entry of Dutch forces into Pasir Putih. That’s where we were attacked by aeroplanes from Malang, which crossed the Argopura range and then *nokèk* (Madurese, “swerved,” “veered”) [north]. So our battalion fell apart, and we lost one whole battalion ... eh ... company. From Pasir Putih [the enemy] pursued us to

¹¹ Indigenization of *bayakero* (imbecile), the favorite term of abuse towards subordinates in the Japanese military and in the armed groups trained by the Japanese during the Occupation.

¹² In mid-November 1945, after the killing of the British Brigadier-General Mallaby, Louis Mountbatten’s Allied forces in Surabaya opened a general onslaught on the city by air, sea, and land. The poorly armed Indonesian youths and military put up a stiff, costly resistance, but were eventually driven out into the countryside. When the British did not try to pursue them seriously, a semicircular “front” was created by the Republic, running from Krian to the south-south-west of Surabaya over to Sidoardjo on the east. This front held until the Dutch, replacing the British, felt strong enough to launch their First Police Action in July 1947. Bangil was a strategic rail-junction south of Surabaya, hitherto under Republican control.

¹³ Bungkus misremembered here. All British forces had left the Indies by the end of 1946. These warships were Dutch.

Situbondo, to Pradjèkan, and after that to the South.¹⁴ The upshot was, to make a long story short, we were scattered all over and without leaders, so we decided to head off to Pak Magenda's battalion in Bondowoso, the Andjing Laut Battalion. But we couldn't meet up with them because they too were being hammered by the Dutch. The question for us was: where had these Dutch forces come from? It seems that after the Dutch seized Pasir Putih, they divided their forces into two, with one column heading for Bangil and the other to the east, towards Banjuwangi and Bondowoso. From Situbondo to Bondowoso and Djember. That's how it was, *kan? Nah*, the units that went west battered our people in Bangil and destroyed them. It was at that point that I felt at my wit's end where to go next. So I spent about a week trying to find my comrades till I was successful. *I spent about a week or two around here, after we were smashed in Pasir Putih, because the Dutch had also broken the defensive line of the Surabaya front and finally took Bangil. I waited a while, looking for my comrades. Finally I ran into quite a number of them. In the end, there were about sixty-five of us.* You know, in those days there were a lot of TKR boys here in Besuki. But the Dutch had already entered (and occupied) the [sugar?]-factory here. A whole lot of them. But we just stayed quiet. After that, a pamphlet from General Spoor in Batavia was circulated (by air drop), ordering the TNI to surrender its arms to the soldiers of Queen Wilhelmina.¹⁵ *Lho*, we didn't pay this much attention, *kan*. The problem was how to link up with our comrades. "*Ayo, run!*" So we ran. But we had no leader. Our leader was dead. Many of us had been killed. *Wah! We didn't want to surrender [our guns]. Then what should we do? I said: "Assemble the unit. Ayo, let's run off to the mountains."* Yes, the term I used was "*run off!*" What else? (laughing)

We all: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: I hadn't then heard of the term "*guerrilla*," so didn't understand what guerrilla war was all about. There were about sixty-five of us, with just a few guns. So we had to hunt for others abandoned in the woods. Then what? *But then we were really confused, because we used to have commanders for our squads, commanders for our platoons—in those days they were called sections. But now, there was not a single one. We were all more or less the same rank, kok.* Imagine, we then had only four full corporals and a bunch of privates, and we had no commander for our platoon. What should we do? Imagine, no commander! So how could we know where to march? Well, we had to learn. "*Ayo, let's just do it this way, elect someone.*" I don't know if this was democracy or not. The important thing, this was our first time. Finally, we settled on a corporal we trusted, who had trained with us and who had the most leadership ability. His name was Pak Kasmaun. *It so happened that it was Pak Kasmaun who was elected. Because he had [an air] of authority. As far as his knowledge (kepandaian) was concerned, well, of course his education was only SD eh ... SR.*¹⁶ Said Pak Kasmaun: "If it is unanimous, fine, I accept.

¹⁴ This is the standard spelling on road maps, though Pradjèkan would be all right too. Bungkus used a Madurized version of the name, i.e. Kradjèkan.

¹⁵ Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch armed forces during most of the Revolution. A veteran of the special colonial military KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger), with long experience in political intelligence, he controlled both the revived KNIL and the regular Dutch army (KL, Koninklijk Leger) forces sent from Holland.

¹⁶ SD—Sekolah Dasar, Primary School, is a contemporary term; SR—Sekolah Rakjat, People's School, was a term used during the Revolution and long after.

But on one condition: in battle I will be your commander, but you boys have to hunt for your food yourselves." *Ha-ha-ha-ha! That's what he said.*

BA: Really?

Bungkus: Yes, exactly that. It was quite something. My earlier experience [was different], I mean we had our barracks here, in Tampuran. There was then a lot of smuggling going on. So that every time we returned to the barracks, there was always food waiting for us. There was a food quota (djatah). Where did it come from? From the company commander. Lha, if Pak Kasmaun was appointed platoon commander where would we get rice from? (Laughs). Anyway, we then had a long discussion, and eventually we formed some squads, and last of all a platoon, a section.

Arief: Can I ask you, Pak, how big a platoon was at that time?

Bungkus: Twelve men, at that time. We'd formed a platoon with a commander, but now what? "Hold it there, don't let's become guerrillas [yet]. What's important is to find a [higher] commander first." "Who should we join up with?" "But we [should go] where we control the area." Finally, after looking for contacts here and there, we found what we were looking for, some Andjing Laut units in Bondowoso, which still had proper units. Their commander was Radèn Sutedjo, a captain.¹⁷ So [we said], "Okey-lah. Ayo, let's join up with them and become Andjing Laut, not Red Ants any more."

BA: So from Red Ants you got promoted to be Sea-Dogs?

All: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: So we looked around and eventually met up with some of our previous leaders, who were boys of Pak Magenda.¹⁸ They were in Bondowoso. So we joined up with them. They said: "Ayo, your mission is in Besuki. Go and fight there, alongside us, under the Bondowoso base command of the Sea-Dogs ... "

BA: Wasn't Pak Magenda Menadonese?

Bungkus: No. He was from Sanghie-Talau (the string of small islands between the northern tip of Sulawesi and Mindanao in the southern Philippines). He looked like a Portuguese or Dutch *peranakan*.¹⁹ Very tall.

BA: But eventually he went into intelligence?

Bungkus: Yes.

AD: At that time wasn't Besuki a Residency?²⁰

¹⁷ Radèn was then a title which still had some social importance. It signaled distant, diminished, royal blood.

¹⁸ A. E. J. Magenda, born in 1919, had been in the Peta. During the First Clash/Police Action he commanded Battalion 26, part of Brigade III, with headquarters in Malang.

¹⁹ It is not clear what Bungkus meant by this. *Peranakan*, when attached to words for Dutch, Chinese, Arab, or Portuguese, used to connote primarily people from foreign countries who were born in the Indies—Creoles, so to speak. But it was also used for people of mixed foreign-Indonesian descent—Mestizos, in effect.

²⁰ Until close to the very end of the colonial period, the Residency (under a Dutch "Resident") was the largest unit of the territorial bureaucracy. Below that level were Regencies or *kabupatèn*, Districts or *kewedanaan*, and Subdistricts or *ketjamatan*, all manned by native administrators.

Bungkus: Yes, that's what they say. I didn't know this when I was still in school. The Resident used to have his offices here, near that office-building over by the corner. (Points) In what is now the police station ... Then somehow, maybe because there were many rapid changes in society, the Dutch government set up a new administrative center in Bondowoso ...

AD: You mean it was at that point that Besuki became a subdistrict?²¹

Bungkus: Not exactly. After the administration moved to Bondowoso, the area around here was run by district-officers (wedana). As I remember it, in those days there were only four subdistricts in each district, but nowadays there are a lot. When I first got back here (released from prison) I was very confused. In the old days I knew Banju Glugur, that area over there to the west of this kampung, as part of Besuki. But now it has become a subdistrict of its own. And Banteng over there ... Sumbermalang too.²²

BA: On the Andjing Laut, were the men Madurese?

Bungkus: Well, 85 percent were local boys, I mean people from the Residency of Besuki. The rest were from Malang, and some from Central Java. There were Chinese too.

AD: Really? Who, for example?

Bungkus: The Ling, but he had already been killed in combat (gugur).

BA: So he died during the fighting with the Dutch?

Bungkus: Yes, he took a bullet in the area south of Pasuruan, let's see ... hmm ... where?

AD: In Tosari?

Bungkus: No.

AD: Klakah?

Bungkus: Below Klakah.

BA: In the Ranu Pané mountain range?

Bungkus: Yes.²³ It was when we came down from the mountains and were attacked by the Dutch in the ricefields. In that battle ... Aduh! What was the name? Sometimes I forget, and sometimes I remember. Or the name disappears, but then sometimes it comes back to me later. Anyway, many of our boys were killed there.

Arief: What rank did you hold then, Pak?

Bungkus: I was still Private First Class. So anyway, we got orders from the battalion commander to be activated into regular platoons, with Pradjurit Kepala (Head Privates, the top rank for privates) as heads, in charge of security in our area, Besuki.

²¹ During the Revolution, Besuki ceased to be the capital of the Residency of that name, being demoted to the position of a subunit in the new Residency of Banjuwangi. Today it is a district in the *kabupatèn* of Situbondo.

²² Banju Glugur is in the subdistrict of Besuki, in the present-day *kabupatèn* of Probolinggo. "Banteng" is short for Djatibanteng in the same subdistrict. Sumbermalang is in the subdistrict of Wringin, in the *kabupatèn* of Bondowoso.

²³ This "yes" does not seem right. The Ranu Pané range is far to the south, near Mt. Semeru, and in any case is much higher than Klakah. Perhaps Bungkus thought I had said Ranujoso, which is indeed "below" Klakah.

But, tactically speaking, Pak Sutedjo, Radèn Sutedjo, was in Bondowoso, while the battalion commander (Magenda) was away in Djember. He was a major, but both men had been in the Peta. So we started to be guerrillas. The Dutch didn't know about us then. But finally the Dutch did send some *krotjo-krotjo* (Javanese, "rank-and-file") guys to smash us, they were from the Marine Brigade. So, we took up our position in Dales.²⁴ In the upper part of Widorokajun (on the border between the *kabupatèn* of Probolinggo and Situbondo).²⁵ *Nah*, at that time the local people, wow! (*sic*) really got in our way. The story is like this. Local people round here who were *ambruk* (Javanese, "ruined") by all the fighting would join up with us there, even though we were attacked four times a week, night and day, from the sea and from the air. So we always worried that if they went on doing this, not only were we endangered, but our tasks couldn't be carried out efficiently. To say nothing of safeguarding the *Rakjat* (in revolutionary parlance, "the People"). We took the fact that they wanted to join up as an honor to us their servants (*abdi*), but we didn't know what to do with them. My thinking then was: "*Pak*, wouldn't it be better like this? If we start from the fact that generally the local people, with the exception of the notables (*tokoh-tokoh*), are not suspected by the Dutch, why don't we get together with these people and urge them to go back home, and there find a way to make a living? '[If you get a job] in a factory, go ahead! Any kind of work in fact, go ahead! Just so long as you don't betray us.'" Eventually, we did have a meeting and laid out our thinking for them. These local people agreed, but they wanted a promise from us. This promise was that wherever they went, we would protect them. We cautioned them that any language which could bring death, like say, "wipe out the enemy spies," should be avoided as very dangerous. We told them they had to be very careful. So they said, "That's fine with us." The long and the short of it was that they went back home. As for helping them, we would do it through outposts, and the local people would help us by the same channel. But this system didn't last very long, because in [early] 1948, we were withdrawn from the area as part of the *Hidjrah*.²⁶ Pulled back into Republican territory. So Besuki was emptied. Still, we left behind some people we trusted. So that if once in a while we came back in, there would be a way to do it successfully. "You want to join the [colonial] police? Go ahead. But remember your obligations as ... what do you call it? ... servants of the Republic." Now, the story goes, I was by then in Kediri.

AD: *Kok*, Kediri? How did you get all the way to Kediri?

²⁴ Dales lies at the foot of Mt. Ringgit, in the *kabupatèn* of Situbondo, between Panarukan and Patjaron.

²⁵ Elsewhere in the interview, Bungkus pronounced the name Widoropajung, which was the name of a village in the subdistrict of Besuki in the colonial era. Maybe the name was later changed to Widorokarjo, the name that is given at the end of section 3 below.

²⁶ During their First "Police Action," the Dutch made large territorial gains in the most fertile and prosperous parts of Java. Battlefield success determined the conditions of an agreement mediated diplomatically by a three-state commission (represented by America, Belgium, and Australia) and signed by the belligerents on board the USS *Renville* in the harbor of Djakarta on January 17 and 19, 1948. The Republic was required to withdraw its military forces from all areas behind the so-called Van Mook Line, established unilaterally by the Dutch. (See map.) The movement of Republican troops left behind the Line into drastically narrowed Republican territory was ingeniously termed "*Hidjrah*" (i.e. Hegira), alluding to Muhammad's famous escape from Mecca to Medina (622 AD) and promising a later triumph analogous to the Prophet's eventual capture of Mecca and conquest of the whole Arabian Peninsula.

Bungkus: The story is like this. We were withdrawn from the front to Malang, via ... what was it called? ... Sidaju, inside the Republic's territory, then for a short while to Madiun, but were finally transferred to Kediri.²⁷ Once in Kediri, I was stationed at East Sumbermandjing (probably a village in the subdistrict of Sumbermandjing, Turèn district, *kabupatèn* of Malang).

AD: Ooo ... on the [mountainous] border between Malang and Kediri.

Bungkus: Then we moved again, this time to West Sumbermandjing—in the area of South Gondanglegi.²⁸

AD: But weren't there also troops there from Lumajang who *hidjrah*-ed to Malang?

3. The Madiun Affair and the Second Clash

Bungkus: I don't know about that. I never met any. *Nah*, while I was there, I was taken aback by news of a Madiun Affair ... a disturbance (*pergolakan*).²⁹ *Wah*, how could it have come to this?

AD: Did you hear about it from the radio?

Bungkus: Hah?

BA: From the radio?

Bungkus: No. By then it had already begun.

AD: The [Second] Clash [with the Dutch]?

Bungkus: Right, the [Second] Clash.³⁰ At that moment, we were really taken aback. How could it be? So I asked around why it had happened. Before this, we had never had a problem with the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), because we were always side by side at the front. Together with [the] Islam[ic fighters] into Surabaya. So I always took my hat off to them. There were never any conflicts. After that, I heard that the trouble had arisen from a misunderstanding. It was like this: what I heard was that when the Dutch were about to launch their Second Clash, the government organized a meeting with all the political parties, saying that there was a ... what do you call it? an *optie* (Dutch, "option"), a proposal from the government, that if the Dutch attacked,

²⁷ Sidaju is located at the foot of Mt. Welirang, near the hill-resort of Trètès, in the subdistrict of Pandaan (*kabupatèn* Pasuruan). Since being ruined by the construction of "country" villas owned by wealthy residents of Surabaya and Malang, it has been renamed Taman Dayu.

²⁸ This village is identifiable (in colonial times) as one located in the subdistrict of Pagak, Pagak district, *kabupatèn* of Malang, in the zone southwest of Mt. Semeru.

²⁹ The reference is to the Madiun Affair of September-October 1948, a half-hearted "rebellion" by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia) against the Republican government headed by President Soekarno and Vice-President-cum-Prime Minister Hatta. The Affair had its immediate origins in violent conflicts between military units in the city of Surakarta (Solo). A brief, but savage, civil war ended in complete defeat for the Communists.

³⁰ What the Dutch called their Second Police Action was launched on December 19, 1948 and was intended to eliminate the Republic for good. Soekarno and Hatta were captured, and all significant towns in Java occupied. But the Indonesian military, learning from their defeat in 1947, began an impressive guerrilla war.

how about we let them through without resistance, right through to [the Republican capital of] Jogjakarta. But some of the people from the political parties rejected this idea. "We should resist [the Dutch] to the last drop of blood in our bodies, because the only capital we have is Jogjakarta." They couldn't accept [surrendering] it. That was the story. So the government didn't manage to coordinate a consensus, and the government representatives, *kan*, were unsuccessful. This rejection meant that the government-organized meeting was a failure. *Suddenly, out of the blue, kok, there was a deadlock* (Bungkus uses the English word.) *Lha*, then, to my surprise, it happened, and this is what I couldn't understand. After all, when you're struck, you have to fight back, no?³¹ But to call it a rebellion, no, I think that's not possible, since the PKI didn't establish a [new] state, *kan*? If at that time Musso was called this-and-that, I wasn't too convinced. In other words, it wasn't clear to me. *Nah*, when the shooting started—the fighting between the army and the PKI—Pak Magenda, in command of my battalion, the Sea-Dogs, decided that, rather than participating in a civil war, we should abandon our position, and head back to our original "pockets" in the countryside. So I set off from Kediri. On foot ... *What Pak Magenda said was: "Wah! What the hell is this? Wong, the boys are all ready. The important thing is that we face the enemy. This problem is Jogjakarta's." [We said:] "Pak Magenda, what kind of activities have been going on, [so that] suddenly there has been a split (perpetjahan) in Madiun?" So we were persuaded to go back to Besuki instead.*

AD: Why didn't Pak Magenda want to face it?

Bungkus: *Madiun? Because Pak Magenda was a leader, kan? So he knew that it was basically a misunderstanding. How could it be that one wasn't allowed to defend Jogjakarta? Maybe that was it. Many people wanted to defend Jogja to the last drop of their blood, because at that time Jogja was our only capital. But there were others with the "Just let it go!" mentality. That was the problem. It seems Pak Magenda thought it over carefully and decided that those who wanted to defend Jogja were right. What we should do was to confront the enemy—the Dutch! So we started to be guerrillas ... So we marched out of Kediri.*

AD: When was that?

Bungkus: In 1948. As soon as we got there, we Sea-Dogs set to work. But a strange thing happened. It was a real mess (*tjilaka*). When we reached our "pockets," it turned out we couldn't reappear, just like that, among the local people. We had to stay in the woods. Because the pockets were in the hands of the Dutch. The local people had also been taken in by the Dutch. It took quite a while for us to regain their trust and clear things up with them. In the end, however, the situation became like what it had been before [the Dutch attack].

AD: Where were these "pockets"?

³¹ The Madiun Affair proper opened when, on September 18, 1948, local leftists in Madiun, headed by the erratic second-tier Communist Soemarsono, took over the city on their own bat and radioed a call for leftists elsewhere to do the same. The next day Soekarno made a radio speech in which he denounced Soemarsono's move as the first step in a treasonous "Soviet" plot to overthrow the Republic. The top Communists, who were on a propaganda tour upcountry, found themselves presented with a *fait accompli* and felt they had no choice but to go along with Soemarsono. Party leader Musso (recently returned from East Europe) then "struck back" with a radio address denouncing Soekarno and Hatta as former collaborators with the Japanese.

Bungkus: In Besuki, right here in the surroundings of Besuki. So if we wanted to go into town to mess things up for the Dutch, here is where we'd assemble. If the KNIL people questioned the locals where the "extremists" were, they'd answer "up in the mountains." But actually we were here. That's how it was.

BA: Did you return to your "pocket" before the Second Action?

Bungkus: No, after it started.

BA: So at the time of the Madiun Affair, you hadn't yet started back?

Bungkus: No, we hadn't. After the Madiun Action (*sic*) had already begun, and there was activity (armed Communist resistance to the government) ... we didn't want to get involved. The main thing is that we had our own way: "Let's get out of all this." I didn't know what happened later on [in Madiun]. I didn't know anything about it beforehand [either].

BA: In those days were you interested in politics, or you couldn't care less?

Bungkus: I didn't ... um ... I was still ... not ...

BA: You couldn't care less?

Bungkus: Yes. The main thing for me was serving the State, and safeguarding the People (*menjelaskan Rakjat*), that was all.³² But I wasn't against the parties. Around here we had Hizbullah, Pesindo, as well as BPRI. [My idea was] we'll all assemble again on the front lines, assemble as neighbors (*tetangga*). Like that. So after they (the Madiun people) came back, it was OK. No problem. We didn't poke into their affairs. The important thing was to return to the front, so ... "Let's all go together." The story then is this: In those years, the fiercest fighting came in response to the attacks of the KNIL. There were a lot of battles in different places for us Seals, as the boys of Bakar (probably, in full, Abubakar). Eventually what happened was the Three-State Conference.³³ Then there was a ceasefire. Our area changed. *Ya*, it went from Widorokarjo to the west, with the Dutch here, and we there, up till November 1949. The units had all been reassembled by then. We were already working with the Dutch, carrying out joint patrols, operations, together, to keep the peace. That same month, the Sea-Dog Battalion was transferred to Makasar. That was when we left Java. It was the time of the Kahar Muzakar Affair. Once the Kahar Muzakar Affair was declared to have died down, we were sent on to deal with the RMS.³⁴

³² *Negara* (the State) has to be understood in the context of the Revolution, where it was common shorthand for the beleaguered Republic. *Rakjat* then had a connotation that covered both "ordinary people" and "the nation."

³³ An understandable confusion. The Second Police Action, effectively repudiating the Renville Agreement, created such an international uproar that the United Nations voted to reconstitute the Three-State Commission (keeping its original membership) as an official United Nations Commission for Indonesia, with instructions to arrange: a ceasefire, the release of all prisoners, the restoration of the Republican government to Jogjakarta, free elections for a constituent assembly, and the transfer of sovereignty to a Federal Republic of Indonesia before the end of 1949.

³⁴ Bungkus's memory failed him here. He confused the onset of the long "Islamic" rebellion of Kahar Muzakar (August 1951 to early 1965) with the brief Andi Abdul Azis Affair of April 1950. Azis, though a Buginese aristocrat, was a captain in the colonial army KNIL. Learning that Republican troops under Colonel Alex Kawilarang were being sent to Makasar, and suspecting their mission was to dismantle the

4. The Early 1950s

AD: Wasn't Soeharto in charge?

Bungkus: No. The Kodam Commander³⁵ was Pak Gatot Subroto. He was [still] a colonel then. He was in charge of Ambon, Seram, and Buru. Actually Ambon then wasn't yet a Kodam, it was handled by a regimental command. I was stationed on Buru, Seram too, it must have been 1952 or so. In mid-1953 the government gave me one month's leave, not counting travel time.

AD: In other words, in all, more than a month?

Bungkus: Right, more than a month. During this leave, I finally got the opportunity to get married, after my wife and I had been engaged for several years.

AD: When did you get engaged?

Bungkus: Some time after '48.

AD: After you'd gone back to the "pockets?"

Bungkus: Yes. There you have it, life is full of ups and downs. Our leaders said: "A soldier is the servant of his nation and his state. So don't calculate [costs and benefits]." Wong, from the time I joined the TKR in '45 till November '49, I never received any salary. I don't know ... Anyway in November '49 I got a fifty rupiah "honorarium" from the government just after I was transferred to East Indonesia. It was the time of RIS, and I got fifty rupiah.³⁶

BA: You mean you really didn't receive any payment all that time?

Bungkus: No, never. But in those days ... it's hard to imagine. For us the main things were food and our mission on the Surabaya front. That was all.

AD: Where did your food come from?

Bungkus: Lha, I don't really know. Our company commander was the one who knew. I never asked. But the food was just boiled tofu and tempé. The main thing was to have a gun in your hand. Now about the salary, I promise you, bapak-bapak, I'm not making it up, it was really

puppet (federal) State of East Indonesia (NIT, Negara Indonesia Timur), he seized the city on April 5. But the NIT government failed to support him, and he was put under arrest in Jakarta two weeks later. The Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS, Republic of the South Moluccas), a separatist movement of Protestant Ambonese dominated by ex-KNIL personnel, was proclaimed on April 15, 1950. Fierce resistance to Republican troops lasted from July to November on the islands of Ambon and Buru, and was sustained in neighboring Seram until 1956.

³⁵ An anachronism. At that time there were as yet no Regional Commands (Kodam). The country was still divided into only seven very large T&T (Tentara & Territorium). Gatot Subroto (Javanese) succeeded Alex Kawilarang (Menadonese) as commander of T&T VII (East Indonesia) in early 1952, and was "couped" by his Menadonese Chief of Staff, Joop Warouw, in the wake of the famous October 17, 1952 Affair (failed quasi-coup) in Jakarta.

³⁶ By the terms of the final agreement on the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, Indonesia was to be a federal state, with the Republican areas forming one component, and various other "states" created by the Dutch between 1946 and 1949 forming the rest. While a few of these latter states did in fact have some real social-political basis, they were generally regarded as Dutch puppets, and in 1950 there was strong pressure for their liquidation. Thus in August 1950 the RIS (Republik Indonesia Serikat, Federal Republic of Indonesia) was replaced the unitary RI (Republik Indonesia, Republic of Indonesia).

like that.³⁷ I never got a salary. And I never demanded one. But if we had a mission to the front, our commander didn't give us an order to go, instead he protested. Why? It was his policy, like this: "Boys, you can't go to the front. You have to take turns guarding the barracks (asrama). The functions are equivalent." It's no lie. I'm not making it up. It's really true. And we didn't demand it either. It was only when we were on the front lines that we got a salary. Lha, it was only then that we really understood what our whole job was. It wasn't only at the front, guarding our asrama was also important. "Now then, just imagine if our comrades are having fun (asjik) confronting the enemy on the front, and our asrama is destroyed! You see, it's all the same [mission]. If [our asrama is destroyed], we won't be able to fight on." We hadn't thought about it before. But over time we began to understand. We had to take our turn.

Bungkus: Anyway, [as I mentioned] because I had this chance, I got married, and took my wife with me to Ambon, and then back to my duties on Seram. In 1953 or so, [the members of] my battalion, the Sea-Dogs, were all withdrawn and attached to [the] Diponegoro [Division in Central Java]. We were stationed in Salatiga.

AD: Why was that? Why not back to [the] Brawidjaja [Division in East Java]?

Bungkus: We did want to go back to Brawidjaja, but it seemed that we weren't liked (tidak disenangi) in the Brawidjaja. Because at that time there were a lot of Dutch extremists. A lot of people were against us.³⁸

AD: [You were] in Srondol?

Bungkus: What in Srondol? Anyway, our number was changed from 701 to 448.³⁹ But we kept our Andjing Laut name. Then we became part of an Infantry Brigade. Around that time the Kodam commander was ... *aduh*, I forget his name. The guy who replaced Pak Sarbini.

BA: Bachrun?

Bungkus: Hmmm ... Burhanuddin. Pak Burhanuddin. Later on, when I'd been there for quite a while, he was replaced by Pak Sarbini ... eh Pak Harto, if I'm not mistaken.⁴⁰ Then, after graduating from the SKI (Sekolah Kader Infanteri, Infantry Cadre School), I

³⁷ We all felt odd being politely referred to as "fathers" by a seventy-five-year old man, especially since our group included one woman and one starting-teenage boy.

³⁸ What Bungkus meant by this phrase is unclear. A possible explanation is "a lot of Dutch-financed extremists were there." It was then widely believed that the Darul Islam Muslim "extremists" (rebels) in West and Central Java (but not East Java!) were secretly supplied with arms and money by the resentful Dutch, even though all Dutch troops had been withdrawn from Indonesia three years earlier.

³⁹ Bungkus was rightly confused by Arief's question. Battalion 448 was actually quartered at Ngebul just outside Salatiga. It later played a major role on October 1-2, 1965, taking over the city in support of the September 30th Movement. The unit stationed at Srondol, closer to Semarang on the Salatiga-Semarang road, was Battalion 454, which Lieut.Col. Untung, titular head of the Movement, had commanded before being transferred to Djakarta in February 1965, and which played a central role in the September 30th Movement operations in Djakarta. (Close by in Ungaran, on the same road, was the HQ of Tjaduad's [see below] Brigade 1, till it moved to Djakarta in 1963, becoming the capital's Kodam Djaya Brigade 1. Its commander was then Col. A. Latief, who also played a key part in the September 30th Movement.)

⁴⁰ Soeharto indeed succeeded Bachrun as Diponegoro Divisional Commander in 1956.

was transferred to the Tjadum, the General Reserve (General Reserve, often termed Tjaduad, Army General Reserve).⁴¹

BA: Which later became Kostrad?

Bungkus: Not yet. It was then still the new[ly formed] Reserve.

BA: But before that, were you recruited into the Banteng Raiders?⁴²

Bungkus: It was like this. While in the Reserve, I was upgraded by being recruited into Banteng Raiders I in Magelang. At that time, the [ordinary?] Reserve people wore green berets (as Kostrad does till now), but I myself [was put in the training unit that] wore red ones.

AD: The Reserve was in Magelang. Is that right?

Bungkus: No, in Salatiga. The General Reserve was an assemblage of troops who had recently returned from Garuda I and II.⁴³ So that each regiment had some parts of the Reserve within it. Later they were put under unified command as Banteng Raiders I, with headquarters in Magelang. That's how the story goes.

AD: Were the Garuda people sent abroad to fight?

5. The Tjakrabirawa

Bungkus: Yes, in the Congo. That was Garuda I (actually II). When they got back, they became battle units, and then Banteng Raiders I. So in Semarang, there were two units, one of the Reserve's Green Berets and one of Red Berets, the first in Sronдол, the

⁴¹ Tjaduad (Tjadangan Umum Angkatan Darat, Army General Reserve) was inaugurated in March 1961 with Soeharto as its first commander. It was planned by General A. H. Nasution, the Army Chief of Staff, as an elite, airborne force directly under the Chief of Staff, to be deployed against regional rebellions and, if necessary, foreign enemies. It was to be recruited from all over the archipelago, so as not to be entangled in local politics or ethnic rivalries. Tjaduad was upgraded to become Kostrad (Army Strategic Command) in February 1963, and Soeharto became its first commander.

⁴² The Banteng Raiders were formed in June 1952 by Ahmad Yani, then a brigade commander in western Central Java. They were elite units recruited and trained to fight the Darul Islam rebellion. At the time of the Renville Agreement, many strongly Muslim *lasjkar* (militias) had refused to *hidjrah* to Central Java, unlike the regular Republican army. They established a strong presence in the mountainous interior of West Java. In August 1949, their charismatic leader S. M. Kartosuwirjo proclaimed an Islamic State of Indonesia, with its own army, in competition with the Republic. (The rebellion lasted until 1963.) In late 1951, Battalion 426, within a Central Java brigade led by Soeharto, mutinied and joined the Darul Islam. This battalion had originally been composed of Hizbullah irregulars from Klaten, half way between Surakarta and Jogjakarta, and had played a ferocious role in suppressing the Communists during the Madiun Affair. The battalion spread the word of Darul Islam in western Central Java, gained substantial support, and long eluded attempts to crush it. Yani's Banteng Raiders proved to be the most effective force against it and the Darul Islam wings located inside western Central Java. Banteng Raiders I was mostly composed of Battalion 454.

⁴³ These were elite forces, put together to help the UN "keep the peace" in, successively, post-Suez-crisis Egypt in 1957 and the Belgian Congo in late 1960—the violent post-independence time of Patrice Lumumba, Joseph Kasavubu, and Moise Tshombe.

second in Mudjèn.⁴⁴ At that time, I don't know why, it was, *kok*, like I was being pushed into it, suddenly I "flew off" (*melesat*) to the Tjakrabilirawa.⁴⁵ *Nah*, it was there, I remember well, I got to know how *ndjlimet* (Javanese, "complicated," "difficult") an Army Evaluation (*kir*) could be.⁴⁶ Before, you were given this or that test, then off you went. They didn't use psychology, they didn't use this and that *tètèk-bengék* (Javanese, "trifles," "bullshit"). I mean, calculating all kinds of things over a whole month. Imagine! But that was the training for the Tjakra, you had to make calculations, look at pictures (probably Rorschach tests). *Ndjlimet!* [I said to myself:] What kind of soldier did they want me to become?

BA: Did you know that Untung was commander of the Sronдол battalion at the start of the 1960s?⁴⁷

Bungkus: Oh yes. But he was good man. *At that time Untung had already become a Green Beret, so he belonged to the paratroops. A battalion. But, later on, Pak Untung was assigned to make a parachute drop into Irian. When he survived Irian, he was sent back to his Diponegoro battalion. Meanwhile, I had been pulled out for the Reserve, and later joined the Banteng Raiders in Magelang. Then I was transferred to Djakarta. In the Tjakra my battalion commander was Ali Ebram. A lieutenant-colonel. When the whole structure of the [initially skeletal] Tjakra Regiment command was finally in place, Pak Ali Ebram was moved up to become the regimental chief of staff. Untung was brought in to replace him as battalion commander.*⁴⁸ *That's the story.*

BA: So you first knew him where, in Sronдол or Djakarta?

Bungkus: Oh, in Djakarta. I didn't know him yet [when he was] at Sronдол.

BA: Did he help you get into the Tjakra?

Bungkus: No.

AD: Can you tell us a bit how you were "pushed into it," into the Tjakra?

⁴⁴ In the 1950s, Mudjèn seems to have been a village just outside of Magelang. It has since been incorporated into the expanding city and is known as the Military Academy's Trainer Complex (Kompleks Pelatih Akademi Militer or Kompleks Panca Arga [i.e. Pantja Arga]).

⁴⁵ This was the grandiose name given to the Presidential Guard Regiment formed in July 1962, after several assassination attempts against Soekarno.

⁴⁶ We are not sure what "*kir*" means here. It is a standard abbreviation for *perkiraan* ("estimate") in a contemporary list of Indonesian military acronyms. But more likely it is an Indonesianization of the Dutch *keur* ("selection"), referring to passing medical inspection.

⁴⁷ Lieut. Col. Untung was, of course, the titular head of the September 30th Movement (1965), which, while proclaiming it was acting to save Soekarno from a coup plotted by a "Council of Generals," killed six senior generals and declared the formation of a Revolutionary Council to rule the country ad interim. It lasted (in Djakarta) less than a day.

⁴⁸ Untung was actually continuously with Battalion 454 from around 1954 to early 1965. After it was upgraded to Paratroop-Airborne status in 1961, he led one of two companies from the battalion that participated in high-casualty parachutings into Dutch-held West Irian (i.e. western New Guinea) as part of Indonesia's attempt to pressure the Dutch into surrendering the last part of the old Netherlands Indies still under their control. Untung, alongside "Benny" Moerdani (later the second most powerful man in Soeharto's dictatorship), was personally decorated for "highest valor" by President Soekarno. He was transferred to head Battalion 1 of the Tjakra regiment in February 1965. Furthermore, Ali Ebram was then promoted to head of Tjakra intelligence, not its chief of staff.

Bungkus: Well, the *kir* were really pretty easy. In fact, I’d already told them I’d suffered from hemorrhoids and dysentery. So I was checked out at the military hospital in Semarang. The next day I was told I was healthy. So I passed.

AD: Who told you?

Bungkus: Pak Sudigdo. *Beliau* (respectful “he”) was the commander of my regiment.

BA: *Bapak*, did you go into the Tjakra alone, or along with friends of yours in the same regiment?

Bungkus: Yes. There were people from my regiment.

BA: How many were sent?

Bungkus: From Central Java, the numbers of us who passed were enough to form a company ... more or less.

AD: How many was that, *pak*. About one hundred?

Bungkus: Normally, 145. But at that time, it was less. Because it was still new. But it was called a company, because there was a company commander in charge. The enrollment [complement] was short. Then we were activated as replacements for the Military Police at the (presidential) Palace.

AD: Just one company?

Bungkus: Yes, we were really *klenger* (Javanese, “ready to faint”).

We all: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: Usually in the military we got a rest period once every twenty-four hours. But in the Palace, we were on duty twice as long, 2 x 24 hours, because we had all kinds of duties to carry out, here, there, and everywhere. Assignments from the regiment, from the battalion, from the Palace ... On and on. To say nothing of going [with the President] to Bandung, Bogor, and to Bali.⁴⁹ The way the units were brought into the Tjakra wasn’t regular. Imagine, for example, a squad of men coming in from outside Java ... So I wondered: *kok*, why did they take in one squad (*regu*) from this battalion, another from a different battalion, and so on? So the people brought in were simply individuals who had passed the tests. This was the case with men from the Army, *lho!* From Central Java, it was just the same. Sometimes just five men were brought in, sometimes seven. Once, we received just two from the Red Berets in Bandung.⁵⁰ It was crazy, no?

AD: Why did the numbers vary so much? Was it just a matter of who failed the tests?

Bungkus: Yes. Sometimes in one company only three or four men passed.

⁴⁹ References to two Presidential palaces—one dating back to the time of the Dutch Governors-Generals, in Bogor, south of Djakarta, the other a new one, built at Soekarno’s orders, near the sacred springs of Tampaksiring in Bali.

⁵⁰ Earlier references to Red Berets are not clear. But here Bungkus plainly refers to the RPKAD (Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat, Army Paratroop Regiment), formed initially as an elite unit in the Siliwangi Division of West Java in the early 1950s, but later greatly expanded, upgraded, and put directly under the Army Commander.

AD: So that's why the numbers kept changing?

Bungkus: Yes. The Tjakra grew in size as additional people were brought in, so it was a mix, there were guys from Bandung and Sumatra ...

BA: So in the Tjakra you didn't run into some old acquaintances?

Bungkus: There were a whole lot I had never met. But among the men from [the] Brawidjaja [Division of East Java], I knew many from the time when we were all guerrillas. But in that one company [of mine] only seven passed. Imagine!

AD: It must have been tough.

Bungkus: It was the same for the guys from the Navy, it was like that. The Tjakra was supposed to recruit selected people from the four services—the army, navy, air force, and police. So you could say that the Tjakra was [officially] the eldest son of the four services. The idea was that the four battalions of the Honor Guard would include [mixtures] from the four services; there were also people from the Military Police and the DKP (Detasemen Kepolisian, Police Detachment). But the reality was that each service had one battalion of its own.

AD: How many men were there altogether in a battalion?

Bungkus: As I remember it, since the Tjakra was supposed to make up a Regiment, a battalion should have had over seven hundred people, but in fact the number was less. At best six hundred or so. But there were cases where the numbers were less than half.

BA: *Pak*, were you quartered in the huge Tjakra Barracks on Banteng Square?

Bungkus: As I recall, in '62 I was stationed in Tanah Abang II, my unit was the Kala Hitam.⁵¹

AD: So the Tjakra's living quarters were split up?

Bungkus: That's right, the boys from the Navy had their own place, temporarily quartered in a Navy barracks. It was the same with the boys from the police. But they went on duty at the Tjakra. The reason was that the Regiment didn't yet have a place of its own, *kok*, though they were planning one on Bandung Street ... in Pasar Minggu somewhere. But it was only a mess [not a full barracks]. It was supposed to be built specially for the Tjakra, but it was still unfinished when the Event occurred. It happened not long after I returned from duty in Eastern Indonesia, served in the Infantry [in Central Java] and finally joined the Tjakra. What happened came quite suddenly, out of the blue, and I didn't understand what was going on. I had no idea about it beforehand. But in the afternoon of September 30, I was given a briefing by the commander of my company.

6. September 30–October 1, 1965

BA: Dul Arif?

⁵¹ Kala are the fierce, fanged legendary monsters whose heads are carved on most temples of pre-Muslim Java. They are there to guard the sacred interior of the shrine. So the Kala Hitam may simply mean Black Kala. But Arief Djati suggests the name may actually mean Black Spiders, or even Black Scorpions (*kala-djengking*).

Bungkus: Hmm ... He was my company commander, commander of company C. The briefing was given to the platoon commanders, in a place ... I didn't know where. Before I realized it, we were in a rubber garden. *Nah*, some of the people there were men I didn't know. They were in mufti.⁵² *Kok*, lo and behold, I ran into Captain ... um ... he was a captain in command of an Airborne battalion ... a Green Beret ...⁵³ Ah yes, Pak Kuntjoro.⁵⁴ There were also some troops from the Brawidjaja [Division], and many others, platoons with their commanders.⁵⁵ What was going on? I had no idea. Only after being assembled were we given an explanation. It wasn't in Lubang Buaja (Crocodile Hole). I don't know where Lubang Buaja is ... People have said that we were in Lubang Buaja, but my memory is that we were gathered in the middle of a rubber garden.⁵⁶ There was a small hamlet nearby. So there were some houses. *Lha*, at the start of the briefing, Pak Dul Arif said: "Our Battalion Commander [Untung] has assigned me the task of handling the departure of Tjakra units for a mission. There's this group of generals, called the Council of Generals, which is about to make a coup against President Soekarno. That's how it is, *kan*? Our mission is to foil it." There was no further explanation. That was the gist of it. "So we have to get ready, and then go and *nangkap* ('arrest,' 'capture') them (the Generals)." What we thought was: "Of course! It's close to October 5."⁵⁷ For sure something's going to happen on the fifth." Like that, *kan*? By the time I got back to barracks, it was late afternoon. I'd just taken a bath, if I'm not mistaken, when the order came to assemble the men. Two companies. One of them would be led by the commander of Company I ...

BA: Dul Arif?

Bungkus: No, someone else. Pak Soewarno. Then Pak Dul Arif's company would be led by Pak Dul Arif himself. The first company then went off to Senajan (Stadium) because Bung Karno was to attend a gathering of ... um ... technicians, if I'm not wrong.⁵⁸ The other was to be sent off where, I didn't know. You know, in the military you're not allowed to ask. That's why military orders, *kan*, are hard to "read." Then lo and behold, we were back at that place. *Lha*, I was surprised to see a lot of troops, maybe thousands, in fact there were even Raiders.

⁵² We were not sure how Bungkus intended the word. When he was still in the military (early 1960s), it would have meant "civilians" or military men in mufti. But in the 1990s it acquired a popular new meaning, "gangsters," "hooligans." But probably he meant "in mufti."

⁵³ By this time, "Green Berets" meant paratroops attached to Kostrad.

⁵⁴ Captain Kuntjoro Judowidjojo was deputy commander of Untung's old Battalion 454/ Banteng Raiders I/ Kostrad, which on October 1 secured the area around Merdeka Square (the presidential palace, the defense ministry, etc.) and the national broadcasting center for Untung's group.

⁵⁵ The Brawidjaja troops were Battalion 530/ Kostrad, based in Madiun, under Major Bambang Supeno.

⁵⁶ The Air Force base in Djakarta (Halim) covered a huge area, of which only a small part was then in use for hangars, operational headquarters, landing strips, training grounds, and so forth. The rest was still a mix of small rubber gardens, village hamlets, scrub, and so on.

⁵⁷ October 5 is Armed Forces Day. Typically it features a huge procession, with displays of weaponry and columns of elite combat units brought in specially for the occasion from outside Djakarta. Suspicion that this rare concentration of military power in the capital might be used by some generals to make a coup was fairly widespread at the time.

⁵⁸ Soekarno gave a televised speech to the National Conference of Technicians in Senajan Stadium at around 10 pm, September 30.

BA: Exactly where was this, *pak*?

Bungkus: In the rubber garden. The place where we had met earlier, *kan*? But then it was only commanders. Now all the troops were there. A lot. So we assembled. Then ... *lho, kok*, I ran into some diggers. Quite a few. That set me thinking. What are these diggers doing here? What have they got to do with [a?] military activity (*kegiatan*). It's not normal, *kan*? In the middle of the night, there was another briefing, for the platoon commanders. It was only then that we got a concrete idea of our mission. It was that there was a Council of Generals about to make a coup, while we, the Revolutionary Council, would safeguard Bung Karno, by foiling ... what do you call it? the Council of Generals' operations.

BA: Who gave you the briefing?

Bungkus: Company Commander Dul Arif. That was why I had no doubts. The proper army procedure was for the briefing to come directly from the company commander. He said: "I have been ordered by the Battalion Commander himself to give this briefing. Our mission is to foil the planned coup by the Council of Generals." Then we went over our targets one by one—seven generals in all. That's how it was, *kan*? Since their homes were in different places, different squads were to go to each home to confront them. The plan was to capture them dead or alive. This, you know, was a typically military order. Military orders aren't of course modern, but straight to the point.⁵⁹ If there was a choice, perhaps we would pick "live." But if there was a confrontation, we would destroy them (*hantjurkan*), and no further questions asked. Now the next issue was, which units would actually be sent to each target? On this there was some back and forth, till the majority voted for the Tjakra—this meant Pak Dul Arif's Tjakra company—on the very appropriate grounds that his men had the closest relations with the President. The Raiders, however, were quite distant [from Bung Karno], so they would fall under suspicion.⁶⁰ That's how it was, *kan*?

AD: Were only Tjakra and Raiders men there, *pak*?

Bungkus: Aside from people from the Army there were some ... what do you call them? ... from the Navy.

AD: The Marines?

Bungkus: Yes, the Marines.

BA: So there were no civilians around?

Bungkus: No, no civilians, just troops.

BA: No one from Kostrad?

Bungkus: None.

BA: So most of them were Raiders?

⁵⁹ We were unsure what Bungkus meant by "modern," but rather hoped that he was referring to the typically verbose, opaque, and euphemizing official rhetoric of the New Order.

⁶⁰ The idea was that if, say General Yani, the Army Commander, saw Raiders coming to his house in the middle of the night, he would know something was wrong because they were under his authority. The Tjakra, however, answered to the President/Commander-in-Chief.

Bungkus: Yes. Then the meeting decided on how responsibilities would be shared, with the Raiders only acting as auxiliaries, while the mission itself was assigned to boys from the Tjakra. I was assigned the task of taking care of General M. T.—what was his rank? Lieutenant-General?—Harjono.⁶¹ I was put in command. Everything was done on the basis of what was available. Whether we were happy about it or not. We were to make sure we got them. If, for instance, a [death] occurred, that was outside my control. (This seems to mean that his orders were to take “his” general, dead or alive. If there was armed resistance, he had no choice but to kill.)

BA: *Pak*, I would like to ask you why Soeharto was not targeted? After all, he was an important senior general.

Bungkus: Indeed, it is a big question. But at that time, I personally didn’t think to ask it.

BA: And no one else asked the question?

Bungkus: No, no. [Besides] the people there said that Soeharto was a real military man (i.e. not “political”) ... I didn’t really know, but in any case, at that time my thinking didn’t go that far.

AD: And no one else raised the question?

Bungkus: No. No. No one. We were focused on how to carry out our orders. So if something wasn’t mentioned, no one would ask. Then the story goes like this: After we were finished with our preparations, we set off, and our orders were short and simple. We were only fifteen minutes on the road. And another fifteen at the site [on Prambanan Street in the elite Menteng area of Central Djakarta]. But the mission was successful—*lah*. There was only one snag, when shooting broke out at the house of Pak Pandjaitan.⁶² When our men entered his house, they were shot at. So a fight broke out. If this hadn’t happened, there would have been no fight. Mission accomplished, we brought them back. We then were to deliver them to Pak Dul Arif, who was in charge.⁶³ This meant that I would be free [of further responsibilities]. But it turned out there was no ... what do you call it? ... military organization covering both our missions and base-area control, [allowing] the same organization to take over the generals [after we brought them in]. None at all. *Nah*, so we turned them over to the territorial command. It had its own name—just as my unit, commanded by Pak Dul Arif, was called Pasukan Pasopati—and it was Pringgondani.⁶⁴ However, it turned out

⁶¹ Harjono was then Deputy III (Finance) to Army Commander Ahmad Yani.

⁶² Pandjaitan was Assistant IV (Logistics) to the Army Commander.

⁶³ Army Commander Yani and Pandjaitan died at their homes, while Harjono was mortally wounded. Their bodies were brought back to Halim, along with S. Parman (Assistant I–Intelligence), Suprpto (Deputy II–Administration), and Sutojo Siswomihardjo (Head of the Army Prosecution), who had not resisted capture and were still alive. Minister of Defense General Nasution had managed to evade capture by leaping over his neighbor’s wall.

⁶⁴ Code name for the operation to seize the generals. Named after the invincible arrow of Ardjuna in the Javanese version of the Mahabharata. Pringgondani is the realm of Ardjuna’s nephew, Gatotkatja, the one hero of the Mahabharata who can fly. The name indicated that Air Force people would be in charge of the September 30th Movement’s operational base.

Pak Dul wasn't there, there was someone else, from some military organization ... not involved in the capture [of the generals], something territorial.⁶⁵

BA: So Pak Dul Arif didn't accompany the missions to capture the generals?

Bungkus: Oh no, he was waiting, coordinating. The targets were quite far away from one another, you know.⁶⁶

BA: Did you have any communications equipment?

Bungkus: No. We didn't know the generals by sight, but we had photographs. But there it is, because we didn't know what was going on, once our mission was fulfilled, that was it.

AD: After that, you were just dismissed? Or?

Bungkus: Oh no. We were supposed to wait for further orders. *Nah*, the military is like that, you can't just head off home. And the company commander was still around. But he was [somewhere] outside that hamlet. And we were in the midst of the rubber garden.

BA: But did you know what happened to those generals who were captured?

Bungkus: As far as I remember, I knew. *Wong*, two were already dead, Pak Yani and Pak Pandjaitan. The rest were still alive. Even M. T. Harjono was still alive, as a matter of fact. The others, Pak [Su]Toyo, Pak [Su]Parman were alive, unscratched. The only ones who had died (*gugur*, died in battle) were Pak Yani and Pak Pandjaitan. Pak M. T. Harjono was wounded, but at that time I thought, if his wounds were properly treated [he would also live] ... But in the situation as it was, well ...

BA: Did you observe what happened to the generals who were still alive? Or had you gone somewhere else?

Bungkus: I didn't at that time know what happened later. I don't know what the orders were. Sometimes in the military they can change a lot. Anyway, about nine in the morning, as I happened to be headed towards the hamlet, the generals were shot.

AD: Who did the shooting?

Bungkus: I don't really know. What is clear is that they were all in uniform ...

AD: The unit?

Bungkus: They were a mixed lot.

AD: So you couldn't identify them?

Bungkus: Right, and I didn't know them. But they were military.

⁶⁵ This was Major Soejono of the Air Force, who was in charge of the "territory" of Halim.

⁶⁶ The outskirts of Halim, where "Pasopati" assembled, were about seven miles from the center of Djakarta. Six of the targeted generals lived quite close together in the elite Menteng area. Only Pandjaitan lived in the suburb of Kebajoran Baru.

And *sopan*.⁶⁷ There was no torture or anything like that ... The [generals] were stood up facing the hole, alive. Then shot. *Der!* [One] fell. *Der!* [Another] fell.

BA: So, *Bapak*, you saw it all yourself?

Bungkus: Yes, I saw it.⁶⁸

BA: I wonder whether you saw any civilians around.⁶⁹

Bungkus: No, there were none. But once the bodies had dropped down into the well ... You know it's standard military procedure, soldiers are forbidden to torture. Like bayoneting or stabbing a prisoner ... If you are to kill, then really kill. Don't be half-hearted about it. Otherwise, soldiers would feel badly about it later. Because the men who were shot would be left there still alive, but helpless. Then we would feel guilty, *kan?* One has to be sure they are really dead and not still alive ... so that they don't suffer any more. That's what actually happened, but later on the situation changed. After what had happened became known, people had the idea there was torture and so on. All that kind of thing. I can assure you it's completely false.

AD: Pak Ben has written about all this, exactly how the generals died; later on what he wrote was translated by some friends of mine. The basis for it was the post-mortems written up by the doctors who examined the bodies.

BA: We happened on photocopies of reports by [forensic] doctors from the University of Indonesia, and others. It turned out that there was no torture of any kind [contrary to what Soeharto claimed after October 5]. So it was a lie cooked up afterwards.

Bungkus: Yes, the truth was of course exactly that. I respected those generals, those fathers (*bapak-bapak*), they were tough, tough like [real] soldiers.

BA: By that morning you still hadn't had any sleep, is that right?

Bungkus: I did sleep a little, right there in the woods. That night, I moved to Halim [presumably the part in regular Air Force use]. In the morning, I was ordered to return to my unit. My mission was over.

BA: That morning, did you listen to radio RRI? There were various announcements.

Bungkus: Yes, in the morning, if I remember correctly. It was pretty much what I had been told earlier. The RRI was given instructions [to broadcast] along the lines of what I had been told ... The Revolutionary Council, the Council of Generals ... Like that, *kan?*

⁶⁷ *Sopan* normally means "polite," "well-behaved," but here we took it to mean the opposite of "barbarous" and "sadistic."

⁶⁸ Here Bungkus seemed to have contradicted his earlier statement that he had not watched the killing of the generals who had survived the attacks on their houses. But the accounts can be partly reconciled if we remember that he had said he heard shots being fired as he was on his way to the hamlet. It makes sense to think that on hearing these shots, he turned round and ran back to find out what trouble was afoot. He would then have seen the results of the shooting.

⁶⁹ We asked this question because in the "official version" of how the generals died, it was alleged that large numbers of people from Gerwani (see below) and the PKI's youth affiliate, the Pemuda Rakjat (People's Youth), participated. Another part of the huge Halim airbase had been used for some time to train volunteers from the political parties and their affiliates for action in the Confrontation with Malaysia (1963–66).

BA: Among those announcements, there was one which is really extraordinary, the one where Pak Untung stated that from that moment on the highest rank in the army would be Lieutenant-Colonel (his own rank). Everyone holding higher rank would be demoted to that level, and those who supported [the Revolutionary Council] would be promoted one or two ranks.

Bungkus: Indeed, there was such an announcement. I heard it. But my *kawan* and I were not excited (*tergiur*).⁷⁰ Not interested. So we didn't pay it any attention. For me the main thing was that my mission was finished. No matter what happened next, it was up to our superiors to decide. The only thing that rather startled me was that they said the Dewan Djendral ... Eh ... the Dewan Revolusi would take over the leadership [of the country], because I remembered that we still had a President ...

BA: In all that time, did you see the President in person?

Bungkus: No, not there. From the time that he went off to the ceremonies in Senajan I didn't see him again.

BA: So you didn't see him even at Halim?

Bungkus: No. *Pak* ... Oh, this is my fourth child. In those days she was still a baby, now she is a grown woman. She now has grandchildren. Her husband died of cancer ...

BA: *Pak*, officially wasn't Untung your commander? After all, he was commander of the battalion.

Bungkus: No, not like that. Untung was indeed Commander of Battalion [1] of the Tjakra Regiment, but before I moved to the Tjakra, I had no connection to him, never met him. When he was in Sronдол, too, I never knew him.

BA: What was your impression of him?

Bungkus: What I saw was that in those days Pak Untung was known as a real soldier. Obedient. Disciplined, excellent. I mean, apart from politics.

BA: No, I meant as a human being, a man.

Bungkus: Excellent. Excellent. What I mean is, it was as if he knew how to act differently in different situations, like father to his children, but like a commander to his subordinates, when he needed to. If one of his boys broke discipline, then they would be punished. But if he was instructing them, he'd be like a father to his kids, very good.

AD: Did he ever punish you, *pak*?

Bungkus: Me? Never! I never got a dressing-down from Pak Untung. But from Bung Karno, plenty of times.

7. With Soekarno

AD: For example?

⁷⁰ Bungkus used the word *kawan* all the time as he talked. But it was often unclear whether he meant by it real friends, members of his unit, the military in general, or even "comrades" in the leftist political sense.

Bungkus: (laughing) It was pretty funny. Early one morning, there was a changing of the guard, the first one—I think was a Friday. I got out [of my vehicle] onto the street and took a look at the Palace. I could see that there was a Police Detachment on guard, it was, *kan*, part of the Tjakra. They told me: “*Bapak* (the President) is coming to the guest-house (English).” (Here Bungkus turns to us:) What’s happened to it now? It’s gone, isn’t it? It was then on the right hand side of the Baitulrahman Mosque. I was fully ready for duty. Yes, there [the President] was. Still in ordinary clothes. Bung Karno was very particular about things. By the time he walked out the back entrance, the boys were ready at First Alert (*Siap Satu*), *kan*? And there was Bung Karno. He carefully inspected their weapons, bullets, he checked everything over. My heart was beating *deg-deg-an* (onomatopoeic). If the boys were lying (i.e. they really weren’t on First Alert), I’d be in big trouble. But no. He opened everything, nothing was amiss—good! After that, he would usually go back to the Palace, and I would go back to quarters too. But not this time. Instead, he *mlipir-mlipir* (Javanese, “circled around”) into the rear of the guard-house. The boys had just finished their meal and hadn’t yet cleaned up. They were rushing off to stand guard. Then Bung Karno scolded me: “What’s this?” “Left-over rice, *pak*.” “I can’t believe it!” So I told him, *kan*: “The boys have just finished eating, they were in a hurry and didn’t have time to clean up.” “Hey, you (*kamu*, very rough)! Don’t you know where this rice comes from? The Government bought it for you, bought it from grandmothers and grandfathers, who grew it with their blood and sweat. They’ve waited seven months [for it to ripen]. The Government bought it for you to eat, and you throw it away. Imagine!” That was Bung Karno’s way when he was angry. “It’s not that the Government doesn’t want to feed you (*kamu*). But you should have pity for those who grow the rice.” That was Bung Karno. Because he was Commander-in-Chief ... President. We were completely in the wrong. Then after walking around a bit, he called out: “Come here, guards (*saudara-saudara pengawal*), how come you have Kalimantan (Borneo) here? *Wah*, don’t you know Kalimantan is an island? How come Kalimantan is here? Take a look at this!” Some coffee had spilled and dripped down to form a puddle on the floor in the shape of Kalimantan! (laughs).

We all: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: Omigod, [I said to myself], he’s angry again. “How many beans are there in the coffee you spilled? How many months did it take to look after them? The people who planted this coffee are old grandfathers and grandmothers, and you don’t appreciate it. That’s enough, clean it up!” “Yes, *pak*.” So I cleaned it up myself. When the boys were lined up, it was my turn to scold them: “Father President is angry.” “*Aduh*, I was in such a hurry,” they said, each one of them. That was the first time [he was angry with me]. Another time, it was morning again, early morning guard duty, and I had to go to the toilet. You know, in and around the Palace there were vases of flowers, some of them quite tall. Inside there were some plants, which they said were from Japan, but I myself had no idea. They didn’t produce flowers, but they had almost round leaves, and yellowish hairs on the stems. I thought to myself, if they stay in the sunlight, what a shame! They’ll rot. I had gone downstairs [to the toilet], so I picked them up and took them with me upstairs. I didn’t realize that Bung Karno himself had moved them down. I had no idea. I felt quite calm. The next morning, at the changing of the guard, “*Kok*, here they are downstairs again!” Without so much as a thought, I took them back up once again. I didn’t realize that Bung Karno was already at the window. “Hey, so it’s you (*kamu*) who brought them up? I brought them

down at five o'clock so they could catch some ultra-violet [rays]. And now you've brought them up again. It was you, wasn't it?" "Yes, *pak*." "What were you thinking of?" "The stems are full of water, so I was afraid that they'd rot in the sunlight." "Good [thinking]! But I wanted them exposed to the ultraviolet [rays]," said Bung Karno. *Waduh*, the wrong thing again! "Yes, sir!" It looked like he was laughing. That was how I got Bung Karno angry with me. Over flowers, over food ...

8. In Prison

AD: After the September 30th Movement, how long was it before you were arrested?

Bungkus: When I was arrested? ... Actually I wasn't [yet] arrested. They told me to go back to [Tjakra] Headquarters. Then I went to prison, like that ... for the next thirty-two years (actually thirty-four).

AD: In what month did your interrogation begin?

Bungkus: That same month (October 1965), if I am not mistaken. After all (*wong*), it was only ten days later. After the interrogation, I was put in prison. They went on interrogating me in the military prison on Guntur Street. Every member of [our] company was interrogated. *Katut* (Javanese, "swept up") [with me]. Nobody was [left out ...]

AD: Every single one?

Bungkus: Yes, and after interrogation, put in prison. I was released, let's see, when was it? ... yes, in 1999, in the time of [President] Habibie.

BA: There is one aspect of what happened which still puzzles those who want to understand what really was going on. We are trying to grasp the role of the unit commanders. Perhaps, *Pak*, you can help. [For example] Pak Dul Arif disappeared without a trace. He wasn't tried and wasn't mentioned in the press. Can you tell us a bit about him, how long you knew him, and what actually transpired.

Bungkus: The truth is that from that moment I never saw Pak Dul Arif again. But I heard *slenthingan* (Javanese, "rumors") that he had been arrested.

BA: Did you hear these rumors in prison?

Bungkus: Yes, I heard them in prison. But later it was said he had disappeared. I don't know if he was "processed" (tried, in secret probably) or not.

AD: What is your own guess, *pak*?

Bungkus: I really don't know. The fact was simply that Dul Arif disappeared, no one saw him again. But what is sure, there was a captain, Captain Suradi, who said he knew where Dul Arif had gone. Then he disappeared. Like that.

9. Dul Arif (1)

BA: What kind of man was he?

Bungkus: Fine.

AD: To his men?

Bungkus: Fine. All of them, Pak Untung, Dul Arif were leaders, not [just] commanders. But, *wong*, in battle, they dared anything. If one of the men did something wrong in battle, they’d dare to slap his face.⁷¹

AD: Did you ever hear stories about Pak Dul Arif’s bravery in battle, during the Revolution?

Bungkus: In those days he was just a corporal, but the style of his leadership was good.

AD: Where?

Bungkus: In Bondowoso, Besuki, Djember.

AD: *Lho*, so he was from the Sea-Dog Battalion too?

Bungkus: Yes!

AD: And Madurese?

Bungkus: Yes.

AD: So he knew you from way back?

Bungkus: Indeed! After all we were from the same TKR cohort.

AD: But wasn’t he on a different front?

Bungkus: Yes. At that time he was in Company 1. I was in Company 4. He never lost courage; basically, he was a brave man. In dealing with armed gangs⁷² of any kind, he was always brave.

BA: But Pak Heru told me that Pak Dul Arif served directly under Pak Ali Moertopo when both were in the Banteng Raiders in the fight against Darul Islam.⁷³ Is this likely to be true or not?

Bungkus: On that I can’t say, I don’t know about Ali Moertopo. What I do know is that during the guerrilla war, he [Dul Arif] was in Company 1 of the Sea-Dog Battalion, the boys of Pak Magenda. The commander of this company was Pak Yusuf (?). But we went to Ambon ... everywhere ... together.

BA: But later, was the fighting you did against the Darul Islam in Central Sulawesi or West Java?

Bungkus: Well, that happened after our Battalion had become Battalion 448. Pak Dul Arif was also in Battalion 448.

⁷¹ This was a habit inherited from the Japanese military, where superiors were quick to slap not only Indonesian recruits but also their own Japanese subordinates.

⁷² *Grombolan*—the term the pre-Soeharto State typically used for rebels of any kind.

⁷³ This “Pak Heru” is ex-Lieut. Col. Heru Atmodjo, of the Air Force, who in the immediate pre-October 1965 period was effective head of Air Force Intelligence, reporting directly to Air Force Commander Omar Dhani. He had trained as a pilot in Bakersfield, California in the mid-1950s, and in 1961 spent another year in the US taking an intelligence course. The Soeharto group regarded him as a key conspirator, and he was tried and imprisoned for a long time. Ali Moertopo was head of intelligence in Soeharto’s Kostrad on October 1, 1965, and soon became notorious as head of President Soeharto’s personal Opsus (Special Ops political, and especially “black,” intelligence) network.

BA: Oh really?

Bungkus: *Lho, yes! The Sea-Dogs became Battalion 448 after being transferred to Central Java.*

BA: Then 448 must have been a Madurese battalion ... (Everyone laughs)

Bungkus: (laughing) Yes, the Andjing Laut Battalion ... eh ... Battalion 448 was mostly Madurese.

AD: *Where did you get to know Pak Dul Arif?*

Bungkus: *I knew him from my unit. We were both originally from the Sea-Dogs.*

AD: *From the beginning?*

Bungkus: *Yes, we were bosom friends (kawan saja sehidup semati) as the boys of Pak Magenda. Pak Dul Arif was then a corporal, and I a private first class. So he was always with me when we were fighting as guerrillas.*

AD: *Was he also from Bondowoso?*

Bungkus: *Yes, he was a local boy from Bondowoso.*

BA: *So he was also of Madurese descent?*

Bungkus: *I don't know where his family originally came from, but he was definitely Madurese. I'm not sure if he was a "Java Madurese" or another kind.⁷⁴*

AD: *When you spoke with him, what language did he use?*

Bungkus: *Kind of a mix. Sometimes Madurese, sometimes Javanese, and sometimes Indonesian. A jumble really, but the main thing was we understood each other. After all (wong), he was a kawan. But there is a secret here: if [a woman] has a pretty face, usually she will be a Madurese (laughing) ...*

We all: *Ha-ha-ha.*

AD: *So when you talked together about personal secrets you would use Madurese?*

Bungkus: *Yes ... and then we would laugh. Here is a story about this. When I had moved to Djakarta, I happened [one time] to be at Pasar Senen (Monday Market), by the three-way intersection, where the middle road heads down to Tanjung Priok [Harbor]. Right at that spot there was a stall selling dawet (syrupy drink made of shredded coconut and either rice or sago) owned by a Chinese. The signboard said Dawet Probolinggo ... eh ... Pasuruan. He had two girls helping him. Really nice-looking. Anyway, we were sitting there chatting about these girls using Madurese. But, kok, when we looked up at them, they were always smiling. I began to get suspicious. So I asked the owner, "Bapak, where are you from?" "From Pasuruan." I got even more suspicious. "How long have you been in Djakarta, bapak?" "Just three months." "Do you know Madurese?" "A bit. That's why my girls were smiling just now, because they understood what you bapak-bapak were saying." Wah! I was dead.*

⁷⁴ The brutal, interminable wars of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century had largely depopulated the easternmost part of East Java. In the nineteenth century it was repopulated by poor migrants from the hard-pressed island of Madura, just to the north. "Java Madurese" would refer to descendants of these migrants, who mostly had never been to Madura itself.

We all: Ha-ha-ha!

Bungkus: So I said, "Sorry, neng, I was just having a bit of a joke. Atèn tempurón (Madurese, 'so sorry!')" "Don't worry, pak! I was happy listening. [I could tell that] Bapak loves the Madurese language. I understood what you said." Aduh!

(While the tape was being changed, I asked Bungkus about a story I had heard from Heru Atmodjo about Ali Moertopo and Dul Arif. Ali would take his men through a village, and if he spotted a pretty girl he liked, he would signal to Dul Arif to hide a captured Darul Islam gun either in her home or in that of the village chief. The troops would pass through a day or two later, and "find" the weapon. Then the father or the village chief would be threatened with arrest or worse as a clandestine Darul Islam rebel. Finally, the girl would be turned over to Ali in exchange for "leniency." Bungkus's reply to Arief Djati's question, below, also shows his reaction to the Heru story.)

Bungkus: If that is the way Pak Ali Moertopo behaved, I can't accept it.

BA: But do think it is possible that Pak Dul Arif was at one time one of Ali Moertopo's boys? With the Raiders?

Bungkus: No. No.

BA: So he was never in the Raiders?

Bungkus: No. His battalion was [only??] an Infantry Battalion, and he was never separated from it. He was really loved (*disajang*) by his battalion.

AD: Why?

Bungkus: Because of his strong military discipline and his bravery. In every mission (*tugas*) he was out in front.

BA: Was Battalion 448 ever part of the Banteng Raiders?

Bungkus: Not as a unit. But some of its men, like me, did serve with the Raiders ... Banteng Raiders I. Not in Sronдол but in Magelang.

AD: Magelang? Then what was [its] zone of operations?

Bungkus: At the beginning, still in 1948, the zone of operations of Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam was in West Java.

BA: You don't mean the outbreak of the [Battalion] 426 rebellion?

Bungkus: No, that was different. It came later than the DI surely?

BA: But 426 was tied to the Darul Islam, no? After all, they [too] were former Hizbullah.

Bungkus: Well, as you know, all the Hizbullah people leaned towards Kartosuwirjo. Anyway, Dul Arif was still with me then when we faced the Darul Islam ... in West Java, Central Java–West Java.

BA: Where in West Java?

Bungkus: Around Genteng. On the border. Not in West Java, but on the border [between West and East Java]. Around Tjilatjap ... To the west of that was Siliwangi territory.

10. In Sumatra (1)

BA: At the time of the PRRI, were you sent off anywhere?⁷⁵

Bungkus: Let's see ... when did it break out?

BA: The fighting started officially in February 1958.

Bungkus: Yes, [I was sent] to Sumatra.

BA: Medan or Bukittinggi?

Bungkus: The unit that destroyed the PRRI was my battalion, 448. We were the shock-troops (*setut*, from the Dutch *stoottroepen*).

BA: But there was RTP I (Resimen Tim Pertempuran, Regimental Combat Team) sent to the Batak area and Medan, and RTP II, assigned to Padang, wasn't there?

Bungkus: Bukittinggi!

BA: But where were you, *pak*, assigned?

Bungkus: Around Bukittinggi. I helped smash their units at Lubuk Sikaping, Lubuk Linggau, and on to Lake Maninjau. After that to ... what was the name? ... Muaro or Rao, I forget the name (probably Muaropanas, in the *kabupatèn* of Solok). After that, but before Battalion 448 went home in the 1960s, in 1959, I was summoned by the Commander, along with three others, and told to present myself in Salatiga. *I received an interlocal phone call from Salatiga, from regimental headquarters, telling me to enroll in the Magelang SKI (Infantry Cadre School). Since this was a direct order from the commander, off I went. After a year in school, I was transferred to the Reserve, in Salatiga.*

11. Who was Behind "October 1"?

BA: Now on the question of the propaganda campaign claiming that the whole September 30th Movement was managed behind the scenes by the PKI, and also on the issue of the Special Bureau.⁷⁶ Were you surprised? When you heard about this, *pak*, did you feel "*Waduh, kok, how could this be?*"

Bungkus: No. I ignored it, because, as I saw it, there were no facts to back it up.

⁷⁵ The CIA-backed regional rebellion of early 1958 by the PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) in Sumatra, in tandem with the Permesta (Universal Charter Struggle) in Northern Sulawesi.

⁷⁶ The official line after Soeharto came to power was that the September 30th Movement was master-minded by the Communists through a top-secret "Special Bureau," outside the party hierarchy and directly responsible to Party leader D. N. Aidit. The job of the Special Bureau, headed by Kamaruzzaman, a.k.a. Sjam, (Su)Pono, and (Su)Bono, was to infiltrate the military and recruit officers and men to the Communist cause.

BA: What I meant was, when power passed to Soeharto, four or five days after the Affair, the newspapers and the radio were already saying it was all a PKI plot. When you heard about this, *pak*, did you feel "*Waduh, kok*, how could this be?"

Bungkus: Well, if you mean was I taken aback, yes, I was taken aback. But then I started to think, *kok*, let it be. The people who acted were military, *kok*. The [Indonesian] military has never taken orders from any outsiders, *kok*. In addition, there was this term, "The PKI Rebellion." This made even less sense to me. The PKI never rebelled. Furthermore, if the PKI at that time was really ready for a rebellion, one year wouldn't have been nearly long enough to destroy it. Most likely it would have gone on for a long time. *Wong*, the PKI had a huge mass behind it. *Wong*, the Darul Islam, which was only one group, took years to suppress, *kok*. Kahar Muzakar was the same. *Wong*, it took Harto twelve years to suppress [Kahar]. If he thought it would be that easy (crushing a PKI rebellion), he was out of his mind. So I got the idea that it was a slander, to find a scapegoat.

BA: Pak Bungkus, when you were in the military, were you and your comrades often warned about the Communist threat?

Bungkus: No. The thing is this, in the military at that time there was a ban on military people being involved in politics. But we had to ... what do you call it? ... know about politics. But we were not allowed to join any political party. All the parties under the legal protection of the government—it was for us to shape them (*membina*) and safeguard them. Yet of course we could evaluate which were good and which bad. Speaking frankly, the two which were most active in helping the State at that time were the PKI together with the military. The PKI also sacrificed a lot of its people in the struggle to create the Republic of Indonesia. This is my honest opinion. But I was not a party man.

BA: What about the claim that there was a Special Bureau?

Bungkus: My idea is this. If the PKI rebelled, how stupid they would have been. If they didn't rebel, it is quite possible that they would have won the next election.

BA: But supposing the PKI was afraid that Bung Karno's death was not far away. This is the Soeharto line, that the PKI [leaders] thought it better to strike first rather than be pre-empted.

Bungkus: I don't believe so. The PKI wasn't stupid, and its leaders were not idiots. The only thing is that, if it was true, I mean if, for example, there were arrests planned by the PKI, then in my view, the leadership was *keblinger* (Javanese, "nuts"). That's my idea. But not the PKI [as a whole]. But my feeling is that this wasn't so. I am not yet convinced. A leader doesn't stand alone, *pak*. If I were a leader you can be sure I would have followers.

BA: It would mean working for decades for something, and then having it destroyed in ten minutes?

Bungkus: Exactly (*Makanja*)! That is why, up till now, unless someone asks me my opinion, I just keep my mouth shut. If some students, or graduates (*sardjana*) come to see me about this, I ask them, "What do you want with me?" "We want to know, *pak*." "Look, you students (*kamu*) certainly know what happened." "It's not that, *pak*," they say, "in school we have [the official line] forced down our throats all the time (*ditjekokin*

terus)." "Well then, if you don't believe what you are told, I will give you a picture of what really happened."

AD: From the start of the '80s, they showed the film about the September 30th Movement in all the schools. I experienced this myself as a schoolboy.

Bungkus: What many of the kids ask is about Lubang Buaja. I said long ago, that in my view "Lubang Buaja" is the king of (*radjanja*) slanders. What is true is that some generals were shot and dropped down a well.

BA: Nowadays there are many stories going round that the real mastermind of October 1 was Soeharto. *Pak*, do you believe this or not?

Bungkus: What?

BA: That the man behind everything was Soeharto. Does this make sense to you or not?

Bungkus: After I was put in prison, I had no right (as an NCO and a prisoner) to evaluate Soeharto's role. And I couldn't blame anyone for my imprisonment, like saying that my superiors were to blame. That I couldn't do. After all I was a servant (*abdi*), obedient to the orders of my superiors. That's all. This is what goes with life in the military. The Sapta Marga and the Sumpah Pradjurit.⁷⁷ But around 1975, if I am not mistaken, one morning, or one evening, I forget, I turned on the radio. It was an old radio that I'd borrowed. And I was able to tune in to the BBC, *kok*. What their report said was that before the G30S (September 30th Movement) happened, a middle-ranking officer reported to Soeharto that there was going to be an action to arrest the generals. The name of this officer was Colonel Latief. This made me think that, if the story was true, the Event should not have happened, and those men wouldn't have died. Then what did happen? I began to have doubts. Maybe there was a shrimp behind the rock (*udang di balik batu*, idiom for "something fishy").

BA: What kind of shrimp?

Bungkus: *Wong*, the shrimp was that he was told. The shrimp had *njlempit* (Javanese, "worked its way") in behind [a lot of] rocks. If Latief really reported to Soeharto, why did Soeharto do nothing? Why didn't he contact the generals [and warn them]? Why did he just keep quiet? If it had been me ...

BA: Maybe he was thinking that this way he could become Army Chief of Staff, replacing Pak Yani?

Bungkus: Well it could be, unless all he had in mind was to kill using a third hand. But as I thought about this, I objected [to being used as a killer]. But I'm not making any accusations. But maybe that was what he had in mind. In the morning I asked Pak Latief: "Pak Latief, did you really do that (go see him)?" Up to that point I had never spoken to him in the prison.

AD: So it was because of the radio that you decided to break the ice?

⁷⁷ Sapta Marga (The Seven Pledges)—code of ideology/honor for officers, formulated in the mid-1950s. Sumpah Pradjurit (Soldier's Oath), a pledge of allegiance and obedience to state and nation, the head of state, and military superiors.

Bungkus: Yes. He then told me this and that. "What's the proof?" I said. "Here, this is my *pleidooi* (Dutch for 'defense speech')." He meant his (*beliau*, very respectful) defense speech. [He said]: "At my trial I asked the judge to summon Soeharto as a witness, but father judge (*pak hakim*) refused. Let's see, what page is that on ... ?" I should believe him because it was all written down.

BA: Soeharto once gave an interview to a German newspaper, in which he said that it was true he had met Latief on the night of September 30 in a hospital, but that he knew Latief had come to kill him. But it didn't come off. This means he admitted publicly that he met Latief that night. I myself recently had a chance to talk with Pak Latief in Djakarta about this. So I asked him: "Pak Latief, by the evening of October 1, what did you feel about Soeharto?" He answered: "I felt I had been betrayed." This means that in the morning of that day Pak Latief believed that Soeharto supported him. Then suddenly everything was turned upside down. So he felt he had been used.

Bungkus: Could be. Yes, it could be. As far as I am concerned, when I heard the radio report, I started to have doubts about Soeharto. Was it possible everything was planned by him? If he was really sincere in his show of respect for the generals as Heroes of the Revolution, but then they were dead, and he knew about it, had been told about it, beforehand, what did it all mean?⁷⁸ Then I got information ... what had really been going on? ... that these generals, Pak Yani, Pak Parman, were fine people, and I knew myself they were excellent soldiers. Yet there they were, dead. So people guessed, I mean they remembered something that happened when Soeharto was Commander of the Diponegoro Division. It was said that he was involved in smuggling. Word of this reached Bung Karno. Bung Karno then summoned Nasution and bawled him out. Nasution himself got furious and dismissed Soeharto, who then went to study at the SSKAD (Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat, Indonesia's Staff and Command College, in Bandung). That was the story, they said. Pak Yani was right, punish according to the law, without respect of rank, because this kind of behavior stained the reputation of the military. So he (Soeharto) was punished. In that case, the people who died on October 1 were actually the enemies of Soeharto, people who had objected to Soeharto's behavior, to his smuggling. It could be, I thought, that to get rid of these people, the only way for him was to use a third hand. If you think all this over, it doesn't feel far from the truth, it's only that it is hard to find concrete evidence.

BA: *Pak*, did you know Ali Ebram?

Bungkus: He was commander of my battalion in the Tjakra, he was a Major then. Later he was replaced by Untung.

BA: Is it right that after that he headed Tjakra Intelligence/Section 1? Under Sabur?⁷⁹ I hear he is still alive. Is he really?

⁷⁸ Shortly after the bodies of the generals were found and brought up from the well (October 3), Soeharto proclaimed them Heroes of the Revolution. Monuments were set up, and almost every town had some streets given their names. Until he made himself full President, and Soekarno was safely incommunicado under house arrest, Soeharto continued to use the "revolutionary" rhetoric of the Soekarno era.

⁷⁹ Brig. Gen. Sabur, originally from the Military Police, was the first and only Commander of the Tjakrabirawa Regiment.

Bungkus: Yes. Yes. But we've never met [since my release].

BA: I wonder whether he too was Madurese.

Bungkus: No, Javanese.

BA: Are you sure?

Bungkus: He came from Jogja[karta]. Jogja or Solo. He was my commander from when I first entered the Tjakra, when we were just some small units, and the full battalion had not been formed. When that happened, and there was a Deputy Regimental Commander and a full staff, he did indeed move to head Section 1. Our direct superiors were those who built the regiment, Pak Sabur and his deputy Pak [Maulwi] Saelan. It's true, they were my direct superiors.

12. Torture and Trial

BA: In prison, was there a feeling that the soldiers were treated worse than the civilians?

Bungkus: Not really. During interrogation there was always torture. The first thing was always torture. The way I myself was tortured was really hard (*berat sekali*).

BA: Was this normal in the military at that time? For example, in Sumatra, if the RTP captured someone, did they torture him right from the word go?

Bungkus: I don't know. *Wong*, I had never seen anything like it before, until I myself was tortured. I was arrested, interrogated, beaten up, and burned.

BA: You never saw anything like this before?

Bungkus: No, I never saw torture like that before. But it was very hard being tortured as I was. This always brings me back to the blessing (*karunia*) of God.⁸⁰ God's blessing is inscrutable, hard to anticipate, so in the end I became a free man again. If I hadn't been protected by God, it's quite likely that my ear would have been destroyed. This ear (points). While I was in Guntur [Street military prison], I was tortured, beaten black and blue, by a sergeant from Kostrad, who came straight into my cell. What did he do? While my hands were manacled, he forced [hot] coffee and sugar from a plastic packet—the kind issued to the military—into my ear. The pain was excruciating. My hands were manacled. That done, he said "You can go now." What came into my head was: How cruel this soldier was. I myself never tortured anyone like this. I always enjoyed a shoot-out. But torturing someone, no. Then I was summoned by the RPKAD Red Berets, three of them, all NCOs. They asked me questions. There was this Sergeant Second Class who [said to me]: "If you want to kill my superiors, you will have to step over my dead body first." That's what he said. Since my whole body was nothing but pain, *pak*, and I couldn't bear it any more, I said to him: "There's no point in going on and on like this. The men you're talking about are already dead, so there's no point." He was furious. He tortured me to the point of burning me. Burning my ear. He

⁸⁰ Bungkus used "Tuhan," the general word for the Deity, not the Islamic "Allah."

poured some tin inside.⁸¹ *Tes-tes* (onomatopoeic hissing sound). Burning-hot. But I kept on clenching my teeth, stiffening my body. Finally he left, but my body was a wreck. That night, with my head burning, it was as though I heard my thoughts moan to me, "Make your heart resolute (*tabahkan*)." Then I remembered: if I hadn't been protected by those two soldiers, what would have been left of my ear? (It seems that the other two RPKAD NCOs intervened to stop the torture.) Maybe they were agents God sent to protect me, till I ... um ... I was moved to Salemba [prison], a complete wreck, my shirt couldn't come off my back, stuck to it [with dried blood]. And after I was finally released ... You can still see the scars on my body ... Here, look! (Bungkus lifted up his shirt to show his scars.) That was my experience. The Military Police I got to know in Guntur also used to beat me black and blue. I don't know why it all turned out this way. They tried to force me to confess, but I refused to do it.

AD: Confess what, *pak*?

Bungkus: "What was going on between President Soekarno and Aidit?" "Lho, how would I know? No need to go that far, I don't even have a personal relation with my own battalion commander. These things were for the higher-ups."

BA: Weren't you tried in court? What was the process, *pak*?

Bungkus: Yes, I was tried. For criminal conspiracy. On the basis of earlier confessions of top people in the PKI. But in fact all of them [at the trial] denied that they knew me. They were people such as Sjam Kamaruzzaman, Pono, Bono. All big-shots (*orang top-top itu*). But there were a few [who said they knew me], maybe four. Then they confessed this and that [before the court.]. But I rejected everything they said. My memory is that really none of them knew me. But finally ...

BA: You mean all those brought to the court as witnesses—every single one said they did not know you?

Bungkus: None. *Wong*, there wasn't one that knew me, *kok*. There were just two who really knew me.

BA: What were their names?

Bungkus: Pak Abdurahman ... eh ... Pak Idris. Both were boys from Sumatra. I forget exactly. Both were also in prison. I knew them. They were *kawan*, but in a different company from mine.

BA: Was Sabur a witness.

Bungkus: No ... All the witnesses were good, *pak*. And, course they really didn't know me. How would top Party people know me? *Wong*, Party members wanting to meet the top guys had a hard time. Let alone me!

AD: Well, *pak*, you did know the President!

Bungkus: (laughing) In his case, we met every day. After that, I was sentenced, just like that, to death.

AD: Along with Pak Latief.

⁸¹ Tin was used in the military for some especially deadly soft-tipped bullets. The man from Kostrad must have heated it till it was red-hot and liquid.

Bungkus: No. In Pak Latief's case, it was life imprisonment. After being sentenced, that was when I got myself ready.

BA: Did you feel you were made a scapegoat, to the point of being sentenced to death? Was anyone else with the same rank sentenced to death like that?

Bungkus: All the platoon commanders were sentenced to death, *pak*.

BA: And executed?

Bungkus. Yes, all of them. I'm the only one left, *pak*. Twelve of us. Two fell ill and died, the rest were sentenced. I am the only survivor. One out of twelve. First, two, then three, and finally four were executed.

AD: When was the last execution?

Bungkus: The last was Pak Satar ... in the group of four.

AD: When was that?

Bungkus: Around 1991 (i.e. after a quarter century on death row).

AD: Were they also Madurese?

Bungkus: Satar came from East Java, Pak Surono from Central Java, Sulaeman too.

BA: None were Madurese?

Bungkus: Of the Madurese sentenced to life, there are seven who are still alive, and now free. Those who got twenty years ...

BA: Then the Madurese were the lucky ones.

Bungkus: There you have it! I don't really know. I myself wasn't that optimistic ... eh ... pessimistic; even in the face of death, I still had a big desire. Even though I was face to face with death. There was a wish to live. Whether it would be fulfilled or not would depend on [God who decides on] the course of my life ... Human beings may make it hard for me, *menggojang-gojang saja* (literally "knock me about," i.e. torture me). But it is my belief that if God blocks their way, nothing bad will happen. So I steeled my will. Still I was afraid, every night, I was afraid from 6 pm to midnight. I was afraid.

AD: Afraid to be *di-bon*?⁸²

Bungkus: Yes. At any moment ...

AD: You weren't told beforehand?

Bungkus. No. But if nothing occurred by 11 pm, I knew that my time hadn't yet come. I was safe. But at twilight, when the doors were closed, I just tried to concentrate my thoughts ... whatever would happen. That was all.

BA: Were military and civilians kept separate in prison?

Bungkus: No, for what you can call political reasons they were put together.

⁸² One of the macabre euphemisms used during the time of the anti-Communist massacres of 1965-66. Prisoners held in military or police custody would—usually at dead of night—be turned over to private gangs or mobs to be taken away and murdered. *Di-bon* literally means "lent out on credit."

13. Sjam and Co.

BA: While in prison did you ever see the mysterious figure of Sjam?

Bungkus: Sjam?

BA: Kamaruzzaman?

Bungkus: Yes.

BA: What was he like?

Bungkus: He had a big body, and looked *kereng* (Javanese, "frightening"), cruel.

AD: Like?

Bungkus: Like an Arab. He kept his mouth shut. He was from the BC. What was the BC?

AD: The Biro Chusus (Special Bureau).

Bungkus: Ah yes, the Biro Chusus, along with Pono, Bono, they kept together.

AD: Did they often talk with each other?

Bungkus: Yes, but just ordinary stuff, not about the Party. Just this and that.

BA: You mean they never talked about their role in ... ?

Bungkus: Ooo, no. He was very tightlipped. And I didn't want to [ask him]. After all, it's everyone's privilege [to keep silent], so I didn't want to ask him anything, all the more so as I myself was wrapped up in [military] discipline.⁸³ If he wanted to open up, only then [would I have asked him questions]. But I wouldn't start.

AD: All three were like that?

Bungkus: Pono, Bono, Sjam, they never mingled. Just kept silent. But if someone else was around, they would chat a bit. Maybe they were guarding their ... secrets ... each his own.

BA: Let me turn to another matter. I have heard that in the case of civilians—I don't know about the military—when an execution takes place there is always one reporter from one of the Djakarta newspapers who attends as a witness. Thus in cases like Njono, Sudisman, etc., there was always an outside witness.⁸⁴ The strange thing is that in the case of Sjam, there seems to have been no reporter to act as a witness when he was executed. That's why the gossip started to circulate that perhaps in reality he was never executed.

Bungkus: Indeed. That's why it became an issue, but it wasn't a real issue, just guesswork among the prisoners. People said that Sjam etc. were agents of the military.

BA: So they didn't hang out with the Party prisoners?

⁸³ Bungkus used the surprising phrase *di-bungkus* ("wrapped," "packaged"). We were not sure if he was deliberately punning on his name. His face gave nothing away.

⁸⁴ Sudisman had been Secretary-General of the PKI, and was tried by Special Military Tribunal in July 1967. Njono, head of the Djakarta City PKI, was tried in April 1966.

Bungkus: No. Even from men who worked under them, they kept apart, *kok*. And these people didn't want to be with them. They were afraid, afraid to say anything, for fear that it would be reported to the military. So that in the end, after Sjam was taken away ... along with Bono, Pono, Colonel Soegiono from the Air Force ...⁸⁵ In the case of these three, their fate was clear (i.e. executed). But as for Sjam, everyone was in doubt whether he was shot or sent off some place else. There was no trace of him, *kan?*

BA: Or maybe he was moved to America?

Bungkus: I don't know. Of course this is ...

BA: So there was no one in the prison who could be certain that he was really dead?

Bungkus: No.

AD: What about the other three?

Bungkus: In the case of others, there were reports that they'd been taken away to that place, to that region for execution. But even then, no one knew where their bodies were buried.

AD: Where did Sjam come from?

Bungkus: I don't really know. It was said that he had an adopted son in Djakarta. Some said he was from East Java, but I don't really know.

BA: From Tuban?

Bungkus: So they say.

BA: The son of a *modin* (mosque official)?

Bungkus: I'm not sure. At one time Sjam was said to be alive and roaming around (*gentajangan*) in Tuban.⁸⁶ But whether this was Sjam himself, or his adopted son, I don't know

BA: I've heard it said that someone saw him going around [in Banten] in the '70s. But it isn't clear if the story is to be believed. It is like this with a mysterious figure, there are a lot of stories, but with no guarantee that they are true.

Bungkus: That story I never heard. The nub of the matter is that after a man was taken away by the military, that was it. What was done with him [Sjam]? ... With the others, we had some idea, vague mentions in the newspaper ... but with Sjam it was as if he had been swallowed up by the earth.

AD: Still it is odd. I mean, usually there is some solidarity among prisoners because they share the same fate. In that case, why was it that no one wanted to speak much with Sjam, and why, even if he was a close-mouthed man, did he not for once tell his story?

Bungkus: I can't guess. He himself was never open, or talked [frankly]. Even with his own friends.

⁸⁵ Probably Bungkus meant Air Force Major Soejono, mentioned earlier, who was indeed executed.

⁸⁶ At Sjam's trial, he was identified as born in Tuban and the son of a *modin*.

BA: How was it with the other military prisoners, did they ever talk frankly among themselves about what had happened?

Bungkus: *Lha*, yes, quite freely. As you know, at that time the G30S prisoners were kept in our area, while others imprisoned after "Tandjung Priok," and "Lampung," as well as the students, were held in a different [block]. But in the daytime, we were free to mingle ... go visiting (*andjangsana*). No problem.⁸⁷

BA: I was thinking about nighttime, when the prisoners were returned to their cells. Say the military, did they talk freely among themselves about what had happened?

Bungkus: Well, there was a regulation, three people per cell.

BA: Did they mostly chat together, or keep silent?

Bungkus: I am not sure about the nights. Sjam shared a cell with Pono, and ... let me think ... Pak Ruslan.⁸⁸

BA: Do you mean the Ruslan from Surabaya?

Bungkus: Yes. Ruslan Kartawidjaja.

AD: How about the soldiers?

Bungkus: They were pretty open, but you know how it is. They didn't want to talk about their leaders (*pimpinan*). "This leader was like this, like that." No. We always maintained our forbearance (*toleransi*), and respected each other. But the privates spoke very frankly, didn't act as if they were keeping secrets.

14. Military Culture

BA: Before October 1, were there ever get-togethers among the soldiers where they talked about certain generals who were corrupt, or bad in some other way?

Bungkus: I can't evaluate that, I don't know whether there were corrupt officers or not.

BA: My question is rather: was there any feeling among the lower ranks that they had been abandoned in poverty by their superiors, while the brass had a good life?

Bungkus: The truth is that it would have been hard to know. Relations between superiors and subordinates were *supel* (understanding on both sides). Whether there was corruption or not, whether the high-ups took care of the lower ranks ... I think generally there was no conflict, no big differences [on duty]. But outside (off-duty), I don't know if there were guys who ... *ketjèk duit* (Javanese, "had their hands in the till"). But for sure in the case of commanders of line units—not the staff, *lho*—the relations were good, there were no problems, no big differences in treatment.

⁸⁷ Bungkus is referring to the bloody Tandjung Priok Affair in September 1984, when troops gunned down many members of a Muslim crowd angrily demanding the release of two men charged with assaulting two security personnel thought to have deliberately defiled a local mosque. A sizeable number were arrested, aside from those who were shot. The Lampung affair in 1989 was a bloody clash between the military and a small militant Islamic sect.

⁸⁸ A veteran Communist from East Java. He was under sentence of death, like Sjam and Pono.

BA: You know, I was a student in Djakarta between 1962 and 1964. The one person in Djakarta who owned a Lincoln [Continental], the most luxurious American car, was Pak Yani, and his car was white. So if they saw this car driving around Djakarta, everyone knew it was Pak Yani. Second, in the announcements made to explain the motives of the September 30th Movement, there was a section saying that the group had acted to combat generals who were corrupt, who ignored the lower ranks and abused women. These were effectively accusations against the senior officers. My question is whether, before the September 30th Movement, such accusations could often be heard among the lower ranks?

Bungkus: I never heard anything like that. In military circles, we tended to think that if one of our superiors had a car, we weren't envious, we just thought it was maybe because he had a big salary. The main thing was whether he was a decent superior to his subordinates or not.

BA: But in general, Pak Bungkus, do you remember cases of commanders who were disliked?

Bungkus: They were always good. The only type of commander in those days who was said to be no good was the egoist (*egois*). They weren't popular. There were some people like this, but usually junior in rank, like platoon commanders, not among the company commanders. But in cases where the commander wanted to be flattered, he would be strongly disliked and wouldn't last long with the unit. But if he was a good man, it wasn't so. And if it was clearly recognized that they were corrupt, then it's possible they'd be in big trouble (*tjilaka*), *kan*?

BA: I would like to ask in more detail about what you have just said—that in reality relations between superiors and inferiors were very close and warm (*akrab*). Suppose, for example, an officer in charge told an NCO under him to find him a woman for the night, would the NCO go off to find one or would he feel that this was outside his military responsibilities?

Bungkus: Actually this kind of thing never happened. But suppose it did, it was all right. But it rarely happened.

BA: Do you mean there were no limits to the commander's orders, no disciplinary justification for a subordinate to say: "I can't, *pak*. Getting women for you, taking other people's property, there is no basis for this in military regulations, so, sorry, *pak*, I can't do it, because it is outside my duties as a soldier."

Bungkus: No. There were rules for the military. Every soldier had an ... um ... attitude (*sikap*) that if an order seemed likely to harm (*merugikan*) the performance of his duties, he wouldn't carry it out. "*Pak*, I can't carry this order out."

BA: Would the commander accept this?

Bungkus: Yes, he would. Because in the old days sometimes our commanders would give test-orders to their subordinates.

AD: Could you explain?

Bungkus: For example, you might have a company commander saying "I forgot my belt in my hurry to get to the office in time for roll-call." He would then call in one his boys. What he wouldn't say was: "Go fetch my belt!" Not at all. [It would be] "Please,

dhik (Javanese, 'little brother'), help me out. I forgot my belt. So I'm not properly dressed." If he did it this way, there would be a problem, because he would have spoken unofficially, personally. So what he'd have done wasn't proper. But because the order had been preceded by a sign of politeness (i.e. "please," "little brother"), so: "Yes sir, I'll go right away." But afterwards his boys would joke, "You see, *pak!* Next time, don't be in such a hurry, *dong* (ironical Djakarta slang, 'please!')." But if the order was not preceded by a sign of respect, [for example,] "Go get my belt!" it would be impolite, rude.

BA: So that was how it would be done?

Bungkus: Impolite. But if he said, "Please go get my belt. I was in too much of a hurry. I'll feel uncomfortable in front of everyone." "Okay, I'll go get it. But next time, *bapak*, don't be in such a hurry." If the request was answered like this, it would be impolite, and the soldier could be detained. So, even joking, one had to maintain respect for rank. But sometimes the soldier would refuse, if there was an order like what you mentioned. There's a limit to where the power of command [legitimately] functions. But if the soldier is willing, then that kind of order would be carried out.

AD: What about an order to find a woman?

Bungkus: *Wah*, that could be an abuse of command. It can be refused. Like this. "It would be better if *Bapak* looked for one himself, but watch out, *lho*, not to get *dipenthung* (Javanese, 'beaten up')." There were plenty of cases, sometimes, where orders would be rejected. For example there was a regulation that if the order came from a superior, but not in the chain of command, it shouldn't be obeyed. For example, if a major of another unit came to me—an NCO with my own men—and said, "Move your men up there!" I would ask him, "What unit are you from, Major? If you're not from my unit, I can't do it. The men I'm in charge of are from my own unit." Only if I were transferred to his unit would he be entitled to order "Move your men up there!" That would be different, I mean, I would already have been transferred. But if he simply ordered my men to move up there then, even if he were an officer, I'd say to him: "Hold your horses, *pak!* If some of my men get killed, who will be responsible?" But usually, if I was put temporarily under someone's command outside my unit, I'd already have received a written order [from my commander] saying that for 1x24 hours I would be attached to the other officer.

BA: When you were being tortured, Pak, did you get the feeling that it was being done on orders from above, or without the man's superiors knowing?

Bungkus: Generally, at that moment, he spoke as if he was doing it on his own, but I don't know, maybe he talked like that so as to *ngerok* (Javanese, "scrape out") some secrets. In my opinion, his orders were outside the regulations. So maybe everything he meant to achieve by his violence didn't originate with him, and wasn't an expression of true feeling ... Some time in the '80s ... Eh, when was the film about G30s launched ... put on the screen (*ditayangkan*)?

AD: Around '84 ... '83 or '84.

15. October 1—The Film

Bungkus: Well, at the end of the '70s, I was visited in my cell by a captain from Kopkamtib.⁸⁹ A captain, or a first lieutenant. In mufti. He came to see me in Tjipinang [prison]. He said: "Bung (brother) Bungkus, what's your opinion?" "What about, *pak*?" "The government wants to make a film, a sort of documentary." "What kind of film?" "A film about G30S," that's what he said. "What's your reaction?" "Lha, you ask for my reaction, but I can't give you any reaction." "But more or less?" "If you, *bapak*, say it's been agreed upon, then I take it as agreed upon. A documentary, generally speaking, is an educational film about real life. Authentic (*otentik*). If it's not authentic, it's no go. What if it's manipulated (*direkajasa*)? Then that's what is called slander. At the time of the G30S, who had film to record it? As I remember it, there wasn't a single reporter who knew what was going on. So any film about it, *pak*, won't be authentic, *lho!* It won't be a real documentary. Just a manipulation." "No, no! What I mean is this: the government is going to pull together all the pre-trial interrogation reports (*berita atjara*) and summarize them into a single story line." "Aduh, *pak*! Sorry, *pak*! That's slander once again. What a person says when he is being tortured, beaten, and burned, you know ... well, C becomes A. So I can't agree if this film is going to be called a documentary."

BA: So what did he say?

Bungkus: What he said was: "So?" "It's up to the government. If the government wants to do it, just go ahead. I am a convicted prisoner. If you ask my opinion, that's fine. I can't do anything [about it]. But if you want me to agree to the idea, no. I can't do it." Then I asked him what kind of military people would be involved. "The government will select some members of the military. Trained specially by the army." "Wah, that'll be even worse. It's a sensitive matter. All the more so if members of the military are trained by people from the Tjakra to play their parts. If it's just a question of shooting a film, even cowards can act brave. But it's quite a different matter with men who were really there. No matter how brave ... if they were at that time—like me, for example—trained with the strictest discipline and firmly intent to serve the State, they would still be afraid and have feelings of love and pity ... it would be a pity, one would feel sorry for them. No one said a word. But if it's just some guys who know they are to be photographed looking macho (*gagah-gagahan*), that's up to [the government]. The style is different. Arrogant, conceited. That's why I say, it's up to the government." Can you imagine a proposal like that?

BA: Then he left?

Bungkus: Yes, that was it.

BA: Why do you think someone from Kopkamtib was prepared to come to get your opinion? A bit mysterious, no?

Bungkus: That's what I thought. *Kok*, he came looking for *me!* But then again, our company commander wasn't around, huh? ... And I was one of the NCOs who was close to the company commander. It must be that, no? In our company I was close to

⁸⁹ Kopkamtib (Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban), the dreaded, all-powerful Command for the Restoration of Security and Order, set up in October 1965 under Soeharto, and not abolished until twenty-three years later.

Dul Arif. That's what I said more or less, then I added: "But it is up to the government." I guess, *kok*, this man came to see me because I was commander of a platoon who was close to the company commander. Dul Arif.

AD: Because you were old friends?

Bungkus: Maybe. I can't evaluate that. Then, some time around the '80s, the film was shown in the prison, but I paid no attention. It was a big thing, you know, very crowded, because it was the first time the prisoners got to see a film. That morning ... a neighbor of mine [asked me to go with him]. Of course I didn't go to see it: "Better to get to work than see a film there's no need to watch. If it's a *silat* (Indonesian martial arts) film, I'll go see it." "It was really *kungfu-kungfu*.⁹⁰ Really! That's why it was sadistic, cruel, etc. etc." "Hang on a second, what's this *sadis-sadis* you're talking about?" "The G30S film was really cruel." "Huh? How do you mean?" "People were slashed with razorblades, and stuff." I didn't offer any comment since I hadn't gone to watch. But I promised [my friends] that I would go see it the following year. The people showing the film were silent. I said: "My friend Pak Satar and I—at that time he hadn't yet been executed—will give our comments afterward." "You (*kowé*, intimate Low Javanese) do it," said [Pak Satar]. So we watched the film. The story was about Lubang Buaja. So I said: "Come on (*ayo*), who wants to ask any questions?" "Me, Pak Bungkus." "Hold on, there's one condition. [Just] ask about Lubang Buaja. Anything beyond that wasn't my job, and I won't answer. What for? *Wong*, I don't know anything about it. *Ayo*, Lubang Buaja then! Yes, who are you?" "Pak, how did the well get dug?" "I'll answer one step at a time. I didn't dig any hole. It was an old well, as far as I know, so there was already a hole. But it wasn't in use." "Pak, were there really people being slashed with razorblades?" "Who were doing the slashing? Do you really believe what you saw?" "There were Gerwani there too, *pak*, dancing."⁹¹ "Hang on there! Don't you know where Gerwani was located? Sure you do, in the city [Djakarta]. But this happened far away from the city, [in] a tiny *kampung* with five or six houses in the middle of a rubber garden. *Lho*, how could there really be Gerwani wiggling their hips?" "So what was really going on?" "Everything on the screen is false. I reject the whole film. The one thing in it that's true is that generals were shot ... down the well. 100 percent [true]." "How could that happen, *pak*?" "Just think about it for a minute. What you saw here was [a scene taking place under] beautiful walls. But at that time, it was a wood full of bamboo, grass, and a *kampung*. Getting in there wasn't easy. What I remember, remember to this very day, is the sougning of the wind through [the trees], the sounds of birds chirping, cocks crowing, babies crying in the middle of the wood. And at 9 o'clock, the sound of gunfire. The generals were being shot."

BA: Suppose someone asked you who fired the shots, what unit, could you answer?

⁹⁰ The doubling of the borrowed word *kungfu* gives it a disdainful tone, as with *sadis-sadis* below.

⁹¹ Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Movement). Founded in the 1950s as an independent, leftist, puritanical, feminist organization. Over time it was pulled into the PKI orbit, and by 1965 was usually taken as the women's affiliate of the Party. Soon after the collapse of the September 30th Movement, the military-controlled press started printing lurid "confessions" of female prisoners, claiming that they had seen or participated in the gouging out of the generals' eyes and the slashing of their genitals, as well as orgies, by Gerwani women. These faked stories were effective in whipping up the hysteria that helped make possible the vast massacres of Communists and others on the Left between mid-October 1965 and the end of the following January.

Bungkus: It was all military, but I don't know which unit.

AD: Not the Raiders?

Bungkus: Raiders, or some others, yes, there were a few Raiders there.

BA: Maybe Tjakra, *pak*?

Bungkus: No. All that my men did was capture [the generals] and turn them over to the commander. He then turned them over to the [Air Force] officer with the territorial responsibility.

BA: At Halim?

Bungkus: Yes, Halim. "I didn't know what had happened. But look, at that time, the people there were silent (*bisu*, 'dumb'). There was no one there wanting to sing. *Kok*, sing! Even those who spoke were almost like mutes. They didn't know what they should say. *Lha*, if you see something like this film, and for years have heard what [nonsense is in it], imagine what it feels like! That's true. And then, *kok*, there are the razorblades! Don't ask about razorblades, ask about guns, *dong*! I had two different guns, a pistol and a long-barrel. Why would I need a razorblade?" That's what I said. "*Kok*, but there were sickles there?" "*Kok*, why are you asking about sickles? Look, it was a rubber garden. Give me a break!"⁹²

16. Untung

BA: Did you ever see Untung again?

Bungkus: It was like this—it was before he was executed. He'd already been captured, *kan*? It so happened that one night some people came in[to the prison]. I was in a special block of the jail, a place for prisoners regarded as really dangerous. This happened in Salemba, before I was moved to Tjipinang. *Kok*, early the next morning, *kok*, there was Pak Untung, with a thick beard, his hair turned a bit reddish, you know, hands manacled. He was bathing at the well, *pak*. Just imagine, pulling the pail up with his manacled hands. Water was scarce. But I couldn't say a word, just cast him a glance. In fact, it was Pak Untung himself who spoke. What he said was this (in Low Javanese): "*Bèn dhisik lé! Pokoké sing tabah aé! Mulai lingsiré djaman idjik ono.*" ("It's over, kid, the main thing left is to stay resolute. When its twilight falls, a [new] (era) will come."⁹³ We are in the right ...") That's what he said. I still remember it. He was right in front of me when he spoke.

AD: But at the time of G30S, *pak*, did you ever meet Untung alone?

Bungkus: Yes, as I said, I met him after he was captured.⁹⁴ About two days later his trial started, and then he never came back to the prison. It was really strange, *kok*, he was put on trial and then, *kok*, disappeared.

⁹² Government propaganda unscrupulously insisted that the sickles peasants use for farming were signs of their complicity with the Hammer-and-Sickle PKI.

⁹³ Javanese reckon a calendar day begins at dusk on what we would call the previous day.

⁹⁴ Bungkus misunderstood the question, thinking we were still asking about the period when he was in prison.

BA: No, *pak*, what we meant was on September 30. Before things started happening. Did you ever see him then?

Bungkus: No, never.

BA: You mean the highest-ranking military man you saw was only Dul Arif?

Bungkus: Yes, Dul Arif.

BA: Not Sabur?

Bungkus: Oh no. Sabur was elsewhere, at the Regiment [HQ]. He had his own office. A long way away. Even Pak Untung was no longer in our barracks. He was quartered in our (Tjakra) housing complex. A long way off, too. I saw others from another regiment, other offices. Far off. A long way away. I met him once in a while, when I happened to be on duty at Senajan. He would come by to keep an eye on us, but after giving us some advice, he would leave.

BA: You know, I was once given a cassette tape which they said was a copy of the original one made during his interrogation. I think it was pasted up by military intelligence, because it was very chaotic. But they regarded it as evidence. The point of the cassette was to prove that Soeharto’s version of things was true. What surprised me when I listened to it, and this is why I want to check it with you, *pak*, is that Untung’s voice was very high, almost like a woman’s, at least on the cassette.

Bungkus: No idea.

AD: We mean, when he was giving orders on a routine basis, was Pak Untung’s voice high?

Bungkus: No. Pak Untung was very calm.

BA: No, I didn’t mean was he upset, angry, or not.⁹⁵ The question is whether his ordinary voice was high-pitched. High-pitched almost like a woman’s?

AD: Sort of *njempling* (East Javanese, “high-pitched”)?

Bungkus: No.

BA: Maybe that’s useful. If we knew, maybe we could show that the tape was a fake.

Bungkus: When Pak Untung spoke, he would often use Javanese, calling his men *tjah*, *lé*, “Don’t do that, kid”—that’s how he spoke.⁹⁶ Not *tjep-tjep-tjep* (onomatopoeic), all in a big rush ... Like this: one ... two ...

BA: When he got married, did you attend the wedding?

Bungkus: No. All I heard was that he had married the daughter of a *hadji*. I heard Pak Harto presided over the wedding. It was in the area of Purwokerto.

BA: Yes, around May (1965).

⁹⁵ *Suara tinggi* can mean “raised voice,” as well as “high-pitched,” and this was how Bungkus understood the question.

⁹⁶ *Tjah*, short for *botjah*, Low Javanese for “child,” usually “little boy.” *Lé*, short for *kontholé*, Low Javanese for “his scrotum,” common affectionate term of address to small boys.

Bungkus: I don't know. Also, I never met his wife.

BA: How about the boy from Irian he adopted?

Bungkus: I never met him. Maybe he found the kid when he was parachuted into Irian. So if you want to talk further about Pak Untung, talk to ... Have you ever spoken with Pak Ali Ebram?

BA: Not yet. They say he is still alive, but I don't know where.

Bungkus. Yes, Pak Untung was like Pak Ebram. *Wong*, he was very Javanese, *kok*.

17. Dul Arif (2)

AD: Pak, [about another person], what was Pak Dul Arif like?⁹⁷

Bungkus: How to put it? He was *klèntjèp* (East Javanese, "kept his mouth shut"). And he thought that no one who was not Madurese could understand the language.

AD: How could Pak Dul Arif get to know Ali Moertopo?

Bungkus: I don't really know. But *my* sense is that, maybe, Pak Ali Moertopo had been [during the Revolution], they say, but I'm not sure about this, a commander in the Hizbullah in Central Java, with a unit that was in Brebes. At that time (early 1950s), the commander of his regiment was still Pak Ahmad Yani. Lieut. Col. Ahmad Yani. The area was a Darul Islam zone. Now then, Pak Dul Arif, *kan*, was member of a combat battalion ... a combat platoon ... that in those days often moved all over the command area hunting for the DI. Maybe that was when he first got to know Ali Moertopo ... Pak Dul Arif was the most active of all, *pak*.

AD: Scouring the area?

Bungku (speaking slowly, hesitantly): Eh. If anything came up, Pak Dul always gave it his closest attention.

BA: How about his brains?

Bungkus: Ooo ... he was very sharp... But [he wanted] to make sure that armed gangs (*grombolan*) didn't hurt the feelings of the village people.

AD: Then go after [the Darul Islam] right away?

Bungkus: Ooo ... his nickname then was *Si Kuda* ("Horse").

AD: Meaning?

Bungkus: Well, horses are quite small, but when they move off, they can keep it up.⁹⁸

AD: So he could keep it up (had great stamina)?

Bungkus: Yes. So he was a great favorite of Pak Yani's, because of his bravery on the battlefield.

AD: Do you have any stories about the relationship between Yani and Pak Dul Arif?

⁹⁷ First Lieutenant Dul Arif commanded Company C in Untung's Battalion I. He was in charge of the mission to get the generals, dead or alive, in the wee hours of October 1. He vanished completely after the "coup" collapsed. See more below.

⁹⁸ The typical horses one finds in Java are pony-sized in European terms.

Bungkus: No. What I know is only that in an area they call Karangtjongkèh, there was an intense twenty-four-hour battle.⁹⁹ Pak Dul Arif refused to retreat. "Rather than let the other side break through to the battalion [HQ], let's fight to the last man."

AD: Where was this, pak?

Bungkus: In Karangtjongkèh. You haven't heard of it? But Yani got to know of it, and after that Pak Dul Arif's name was engraved in Yani's heart as a fine boy, a first-class soldier.¹⁰⁰

18. Sumatra (2)—Madura

AD: Did you and he ever use Madurese in talking over a mission—to make sure other units couldn't understand what you were talking about?

Bungkus: Ooo ... Hmm ... When we were in our unit together, and because most of the boys were kawan (ex-Sea-Dogs), we felt quite free to use Madurese. But in those days, if we sent a message by [field]-telephone, a Russian model—this was SOE in every operation—to other units, we used mixed language. For secrets, however, we used Madurese. All the same, while I was in Bukittinggi we really had our pockets picked.

AD: Kok, how could that happen?

Bungkus: We were communicating [by field-telephone] within our unit, and using Madurese. What we didn't know was that on the PRRI side there were people who were fluent in the language. And our lines were tapped ... tapped on White Stone (Batu Putih) Mountain. We were making for Lubuk Sikaping ... All of a sudden, we were in Rao, or maybe Muaro ... Anyway, on the way to Lubuk Sikaping. Nah, there something happened. It was at an old fortification left by the Japanese. Nah, close by there was a village through which a [PRRI] Brimob unit was passing. That's when they tapped into our line. So they knew where we were, and attacked us first. We were hit by their bazookas. We were at our wit's end. So, using Madurese for security turned out to be useless. [We learned] that in this Brimob unit, which was cooperating with the PRRI, there were boys from Pasuruan. Aduh! What a mess! What language could we use [for security]? Wong, even using Madurese, we were caught with our pants down.¹⁰¹

19. Dul Arif—Djahurup

BA: There is a section of the tape of our first discussion which isn't very clear. So let me ask you the same question again. After October 1, Pak Dul Arif was never again mentioned in the press, nor was he tried. How could he just "disappear" like that?

⁹⁹ There is a place with a similar name in the *kabupatèn* of Tjilatjap—latitude 07'27" degrees south, longitude 108'32" east. This is about ten to fifteen kilometers south of the town of Bandjar near the border between West and Central Java.

¹⁰⁰ Implies that Dul Arif served under Yani in the Banteng Raiders in the early 1950s.

¹⁰¹ Brimob, originally Moberig (Mobile Brigade), was a heavily armed police force created in the early Revolution to serve the Prime Minister directly. It was widely regarded as better educated, and less thuggish, than the Army's elite units. Bungkus felt his pockets had been picked when he realized that the other side included "boys" from the heavily Madurese old sugar capital of East Java, Pasuruan, who understood his "secret messages" perfectly.

Bungkus: This is the story. We had finished our mission to capture the generals, and were waiting at the Halim airfield. But we had no idea where Pak Dul Arif was.

BA: But he was your company commander! How could he just vanish?

Bungkus: I don't know if he disappeared on his own, or was taken away by someone. But after that, he wasn't around.

BA: Did you ever meet someone who said that he had met Pak Dul Arif after October 1?

Bungkus: Never. But finally I heard that he was kidnapped. It was like this. At that time I was already in Tjipinang [prison], but then I was summoned back to the base (pangkalan) by the regimental chief of staff, Colonel Maruli Santoso.¹⁰²

BA: From the Red Berets?

Bungkus: Yes. So I went there. The regimental base was behind the Tjiluwung [River] in the ... what was its name? ... Hotel Nirmala. Pak Maruli said to me: "We need further information from you (anda, formal pronoun), so there will be an interrogation in another place." So I was taken away in a truck, with no idea of where we were going. Then to my surprise, I found we were going back to Tjipinang. When we arrived, "Just go inside." Then about a week or ten days later, I was interrogated. [By someone from] the Military Police. Beginning then, I [was interrogated about] many matters, and ended up being charged with makar (criminal conspiracy). "I don't care (Masa bodo-lah). Conspiracy ... whatever! What do you want me to say? What's done is done. Whatever you say, pak ... If you regard me as a conspirator, what can I do?" He said: "Your mission was not valid (sah). You mutinied against the orders of your superiors and seized (menangkap) generals." I said: "I never seized generals. I seized the Council of Generals. My orders were to seize the Council of Generals." Then I was taken to Salemba [prison] ... for five and a half years ...

BA: Really? Five and a half years in Salemba?

Bungkus: Yes, I was bombarded [with endless questions]. In the daytime, anyway, I [remember] being taken outside three times for fifteen minutes.¹⁰³

BA: Alone? Really? In solitary?

Bungkus: Yes, alone. There were others in solitary cells there too. Because the platoon commander [in the prison] regarded me as someone directly implicated.¹⁰⁴

AD: While you were in Salemba, did you ever hear anything about Dul Arif?

Bungkus: Not then. Later, in '71, I was prosecuted in the final trial. The other trials were all over with. My trial lasted less than a month, and after that I was taken to the RTM (Rumah Tahanan Militer, Military Prison). Less than a month later, I was back in Tjipinang. Nah, it was there that I met with about three hundred comrades (kawan) from all over Indonesia ...

¹⁰² Almost certainly this man was RPKAD Col. Marokeh Santoso, who was the Tjakra's chief of staff on October 1, 1965.

¹⁰³ We are not sure whether Bungkus meant that he was allowed out of his cell in the daytime only three times (a week?), or that during daytime interrogations he was allowed to "rest" only three times, for fifteen minutes each.

¹⁰⁴ Or possibly: "Because I was a [former] platoon commander, I was regarded as directly implicated." The syntax here is confusing.

AD: *You recognized them?*

Bungkus: *Yes, there were military people, militiamen, party people, people suspected of this and that, people from the mass organizations, they were all in there. Now among them was a captain. His name was Suradi.¹⁰⁵ He's dead. So I asked him, "Pak Suradi, I'd like to know exactly where Pak Dul Arif's shadow (bajangan) might have gone in Central Java? Weren't you then still in Central Java, pak?"*

BA: *You mean Pak Suradi?*

Bungkus: *Yes. He'd only recently been brought to [our prison]. [He answered:] "I don't know. But I've heard from various people that he was arrested, imprisoned, then kidnapped (ditjulik) ... and after that vanished." That's what he said.*

BA: *So he was kidnapped from his cell? In Djakarta?*

Bungkus: *No, in Central Java,*

BA: *So he managed to flee to Central Java?*

Bungkus: *Yes, but I don't know where he was caught.*

BA: *Our problem is that almost all the top leaders of the G30S are gone.*

Bungkus: *Yes.*

BA: *Pak Herman also disappeared, Pak Suherman.¹⁰⁶*

Bungkus: *Ooo ... no. He was finished off (dilaksanakan).*

AD: *Executed?*

Bungkus: *Yes. It was Pak Djahurup who vanished.*

BA: *Have I got it right? Suherman was executed, and Djahurup disappeared?*

Bungkus: *Yes. Suherman, Sakar, Surono, Supardjo, the top leaders of our unit (pimpinan pasukan), they were all executed.¹⁰⁷*

BA: *That's not what I meant, pak. [The Suherman I had in mind was] one of the top staff officers of the Diponegoro Division, heads of Section 1, 2, etc. They all seem to have disappeared.*

Bungkus: *Oh, you mean the high-ups?*

BA: *Yes, they all disappeared. Without any announcement. It seems, without being tried.*

¹⁰⁵ Captain Suradi played an important role in the September 30th Movement. At the time, he was on the intelligence staff of Latief's Brigade 1, perhaps its chief. Part of the Magelang Battalion (406) was already in Brigade 1 before it was moved to Djakarta in 1963.

¹⁰⁶ Col. Suherman, on returning from an American military intelligence course on Okinawa, took the position of head of intelligence (S-1) in the HQ of the Diponegoro Division in Semarang. On the morning of October 1, with the help of other top staff officers, he arrested the commander, Brig. Gen. Surjosumpeno, took over this position himself, seized control of both the HQ and the city, and broadcast his support for Untung's actions in Djakarta. His example was followed in other garrison towns in Central Java. After the September 30th Movement collapsed, he vanished from the news. Neither he nor his fellow top staff officers were put on trial or even mentioned.

¹⁰⁷ We know that a Sergeant Surono led the attack on the home of Brig. Gen. Sutojo Siswomihardjo on October 1. Presumably the others mentioned here were NCOs involved in the attacks on the other generals.

Bungkus: That's how it was. Wong, the fact is that it was the same with Pak Untung. One night I met him. I forget the date. Pak Untung had just been brought in ... it was in the middle of the night. I was asleep at the time, so I didn't notice. His beard had grown out. But finally there was an opportunity for me to talk with him. "How are you, Pak Untung?" He said: "Say no more, just put it all on me, tell them everything you did was at my orders." That afternoon he was taken off, tried, and then was dead. Just imagine, he was brought to court only once ... only once. Wah! ... I felt so sorry for him. I remember him taking a bath at the prison well. But at that time it had run dry. His hands were shackled, and still he had to bring up the pail [himself]. In Djakarta the water is black and full of mud. How could a man who had done such service in West Irian be treated this way? That was the only time I met him.

AD: [So he said]: "It's all my responsibility?"

Bungkus did not reply, lost in thought.

BA: What about Pak Djahurup? Where did he disappear?

Bungkus: Wah, Pak Djahurup was ... Lieutenant ... superior.¹⁰⁸ [But] he was also a former platoon commander. Yes, he disappeared. I don't know where.

BA: In Djakarta I heard from Pak Heru that Pak Djahurup is still alive, in Malang.

Bungkus: Right now?

BA: Yes.

Bungkus: I didn't know that. We were separated from the time of my arrest. But he was one of my kawan from Battalion 448, the Andjing Laut.

BA: It seems he genuinely disappeared, and wasn't kidnapped and [killed] ...

Bungkus: There you have it. He disappeared, and we never met again ...

AD: Was he also from Besuki?

Bungkus: No, from Bondowoso. Yes, I really don't know how it all came about, how from former kawan when fighting as guerillas, and then being separated for so many years, we ended up together again in the Tjakra.

BA: Now that everyone [who survived] has been released, do you still get together?

Bungkus: No. I only met one, a man from Battalion 448 in the Diponegoro [Division]. I don't know if he was involved in G30S or implicated in it. Anyway, when it was my turn to be released, to go home, he was there next to me, and he seemed very happy. Wong, as a kawan who was also released ... The rest were all dead.

BA: He must have been quite old, no?

Bungkus: He was from the Banteng Raiders, and this was the first time since then that I met him. His face was ver-r-r-y old.

BA: It seems Pak Ali Ebram is also still alive, in Solo or Jogja.

¹⁰⁸ Sentence partly inaudible. Our sense is that he meant that Djahurup's rank was lieutenant, and that he was/had been Bungkus's superior when he held that rank.

Bungkus: You know, after I was released, I once saw his picture in the newspaper, giving an interview to a reporter. They say he is still alive. I never met him again.

BA: In Central Java?

Bungkus: There or in Djakarta, kok. I heard he was living near Tanah Abang. But I don't know if he is still there.

AD: And how about Pak Djahurup?

Bungkus: No, this is the first time to hear he is still alive. Good. It means he was clever, clever at hide-and-peek (kutjing-kutjangan).

AD: Do you know if Pak Djahurup had any family in Malang?

Bungkus: Well his wife came from Central Java. But I don't know exactly where. In those days, of course, maybe 82 percent of the boys in 448 were still bachelors. Still young. So they married all over the place. Some got married in East Indonesia, as far as Seram, Buru, Halmahera. In Sumatra too, some were "caught" (ketjanthol, Javanese). In time, they weren't just "caught," but rather "got planted" (ketanam, Javanese).¹⁰⁹ (Laughs). Generally the Sea-Dogs were all very young. Those who already had wives, families, had been in the Japanese Army, Heihō, Peta, and so on.

20. The PKI and its History

BA: Do you remember which of the various lasjkar the Red Ants and Sea-Dogs felt closest to? Felt it easiest to work with?

Bungkus: Which lasjkar do you mean? Lasjkar of the political parties?

BA: Yes.

Bungkus: There were a lot of different lasjkar, pak. We were army people. So we could work with everyone. The main thing was to be close to each other so there were no problems. First things first! we should unite to kick out the colonialists ... What was the point in quarreling? Everyone should do what he could. Some showed up with slingshots! But "Ayo! Into battle" ... whatever their target was.

BA: But they say there were some who wouldn't cooperate, so the TNI had to take action against them. Some of them were punished for looting. Because, it was said, this kind of thing damaged the cause. It seems that, to survive, they took things belonging to the Rakjat. So the commander had to discipline them ...

Bungkus: Indeed, that's quite likely. But when was this, pak? In the early days, yes, I think this did happen ... when the TKR hadn't yet become the TNI. But only then. Far from looting, I was afraid even to touch something that belonged [to the Rakjat]. I was afraid of sinning (berdosa). But on the front around Sidoardjo, [our men] weren't there, so looting could happen ... As far as food was concerned, the minute we got some we ate it. Lhawong, we didn't have enough to eat. I'm not making this up, pak. Generally there was cooperation with the lasjkar. Nobody made trouble. Let alone anything to do with sex. That didn't happen.

¹⁰⁹ What Bungkus meant was that some of the boys started flirting with local girls, and then ended up marrying them and settling down in the girls' towns or villages.

BA: *Were you ever ordered to take action against a lasjkar?*

Bungkus: *No, never. We went to the front bareng (Javanese, "together"), and we returned bareng. Above all with Pesindo. It was very disciplined. I wasn't sure in those days what exactly it was, what party it was connected to, or what mass organization. But what I heard was, they said it was a mass organization of the PKI. They were the bravest (gagah).*

BA: *Well, at that time the PKI wasn't important. The big party was Amir Sjarifuddin's Socialist Party.*

Bungkus: *Yes, maybe, I didn't know much about that. The main thing is there were lots of mass organizations. And in those days they were all fine. No problems. But I didn't follow developments after the TNI came into being. But in the days of the TKR, no problems. There were the BPRI, Pesindo, Hizbullah, and all kinds of others. None of them were "naughty" (nakal).*

21. The Madurese

AD: *Pak Bungkus, are you mostly Madurese?*

Bungkus: *(laughing) Madurese, but Madurese gado-gado (mixed) ... Of course there are a lot of military from Madura.*

BA: *But [what about other Madurese who were] in prison for a long time?*

Bungkus: *Let's see, Madurese who were jailed for a long time ... Ardian is now free. Sahnun too. Let's see, who else? Oh yes, Dul Kahar. But he was a Javanese from Sidoardjo. But as for what kind of Madurese they are in general, I'm not sure—but the ones I mentioned are from Bondowoso.*

AD: *What was Pak Djahurup like, pak?*

Bungkus: *The kid (anak) was very dark.*

AD: *As brave as Dul Arif?*

Bungkus: *Generally, the boys doing the guerrilla fighting, they weren't either heroes or cowards. If they engaged the enemy, usually they refused to retreat before they were successful. But not too brave either. If they were shot at, they flattened themselves to the ground. (Laughs)*

We all: *Ha-ha-ha!*

Bungkus: *A bullet is no one's friend.*

AD: *Djahurup—the name sounds a bit Arab?*

Bungkus: *Yes, but Dul Arif is also an Arabic name. He was a big man too, like an Arab, but dark, like Djahurup.*

BA: *Pak, what do you know about the Madurese in Situbondo? Where did they come from on the island of Madura itself?*

Bungkus: *I don't know ... Perhaps from Sampang.*

BA: Not from Pamekasan?¹¹⁰

Bungkus: I don't know. But these people had been in Situbondo a long time (several generations). Only their ancestors lived on Madura itself. They themselves were born over here, and grew up as kids here.

BA: What I mean is, did they still preserve the story of their ancestors?

Bungkus: Could be. There are plenty of Madurese grandchildren who are fanatical about their family trees and their ancestors.

BA: But in your case, Pak Bungkus, if you were asked where your family came from in Madura, what would you say?

Bungkus: In my case, well I don't know much about the [family] history, but I heard we were originally from Sumenep.

AD: There the language is very polite.

Bungkus: Yes, there was also some *prijaji* ancestry somewhere.¹¹¹ But for me, all that is gone. I have mixed with people of every ethnic group (*suku*), every kind of people. So I don't get involved in that kind of thing.

AD: Djahurup's family was [originally] from where? Sumenep or Sampang?

Bungkus: From the look of him, from Sampang.

AD: Wah! They're pretty rough people.

Bungkus: Yes, Pamekasan. But in my case, as a kid I mostly played with and went around with the children of immigrants. My father worked as a laborer in a [sugar?] factory. So we lived near the lodji of the Dutch (villas and offices of colonial factory-owners, plantation managers, etc.) So a lot of my playmates were *sinjo* (young Dutch or other "white" boys). That's why up till now, if I meet someone different from me, I don't feel inferior. Chinese? Quite normal. The factory cook was a Chinese! They were all familiar to me, playing together in the area around the factory.

22. East Java's Njoto

AD: Did you ever meet Njoto, Pak?¹¹²

Bungkus: Njoto who?

AD: Njoto, of the PKI.

¹¹⁰ Madura is divided into four (now administrative) regions. They are, from west to east: Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. Bangkalan and Sumenep were traditionally centers of the Madurese aristocracy, and people there still, it is said, pride themselves on their courtly manners and speech. Sampang is stereotyped as the place where the roughest, toughest Madurese come from. We asked these questions to see if Bungkus would respond to the stereotype.

¹¹¹ He seemed to use *prijaji* in the old sense of "aristocratic," rather than the later sense of "higher civil servant," "bureaucratic with upper-class pretensions."

¹¹² Member of the PKI's Politbureau. At the time of the September 30th Movement, he was also a Minister without Portfolio.

Bungkus: Ooo ... no.

AD: They say he was from Besuki too.

Bungkus: Didn't they say he was from Bondowoso or Djember?

BA: Maybe Bondowoso, since after 1945 he was active in the [new] Residency of Banjuwangi, setting up branches of the Party there.

Bungkus: I didn't know him. Only, sometimes, parts of their names were alike, kok. Njono, Njoto. Shortened like that.¹¹³

BA: Generally speaking, the top Party people didn't come from this region. The only one whom we know worked for the Revolution here and came from here was Njoto. We were wondering if during the Revolution you might have accidentally run into him.

Bungkus: Eee ... In the old days, I never met him.

BA: It's true, he wasn't yet famous at that time.

Bungkus: I don't know. I could, perhaps, have met him. But I wouldn't have known who he was. Even if once in a while we had guests who were from the Party, a party secretary, aduh! I didn't know who they were personally.

AD: Do you keep in regular touch with Pak Heru?

Bungkus: Once in a while. He also came out of the guerilla time. But he was a "mas TRIP," a student, no?¹¹⁴

AD: The student army.

BA: Well, the TRIP was in East Java ...

Bungkus: That I don't know. But how he got into the Air Force, what the story of his "jump" [from the TRIP] was, I have no idea. I met Pak Heru [first] while on duty in Ambon, in Kodam Pattimura.¹¹⁵ "Hey, there's an aeroplane coming in, kok. But who is it?" But his way of speaking was rather different, so I felt nervous. Very high (probably High Javanese), like a high-up. I was krotjo banget (Javanese, "a real nobody"), so I felt very uncomfortable. But when we met again in Tjipinang (prison), we were equal.

BA: So he, too, is from Bondowoso?

¹¹³ In everyday speech, it is common to elide the syllable Su- (meaning "good," "beautiful," "endowed with," etc.) at the start of Javanese proper names. Thus, Njoto for Sunjoto, Njono for Sunjono. Perhaps because Su- has faintly "feudal" or "well-off" overtones, people on the Left quite often dropped it and used the shortened forms of their birth names, as if they were their real, official, so to speak, "working-class" appellations.

¹¹⁴ During the Revolution, the TRIP (Tentera Republik Indonesia Peladjar, Student Army of the Indonesian Republic) was the name of an East Java *lasjkar* composed of students and graduates of senior high-schools. (The Central Java equivalent was called simply the Tentera Peladjar. Both were usually reliable supporters of the national leadership.) It wasn't clear to us whether "mas" here was a short form of *mahasiswa* (student) or the polite Javanese word (*mas*) for "elder brother," "big brother."

¹¹⁵ In the late 1950s, this Kodam was born out of the debris of the larger T&T VII.

Bungkus: Yes. From somewhere around Bondowoso, Djember-lah.¹¹⁶ In the end, we met again ...

AD: Pak, it is getting late, so we ask to take leave of you.

We all: Thank you so much, pak. The food you gave us was fantastic.

KS: Especially the sambal (hot pepper condiment), pak.

BA: Yes indeed, pak, and the salted fish was delicious.

Bungkus: I was waiting for you from noon on.¹¹⁷ And everything was all prepared. Then finally my grandchild told me you had come and were outside.

BA: Last time we visited, pak, I forgot to ask to take your picture. May I take one now?

Bungkus. That's fine. Please do.

Click!

¹¹⁶ Bungkus is right. Heru was born in Djember.

¹¹⁷ We had badly miscalculated the hours needed to take the ferry from Sumenep to Djangkar, the port of Situbondo, and then drive from there to Besuki.