'MY STORY' AND OTHER SOURCES: AN 'ORAL APPROACH' TO THE INDONESIAN REVOLUTION *)

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IKHTISAR.

Dalam suatu penelitian yang sedang berjalan mengenai Peristiwa Tiga Daerah yang terjadi di karesidenan Pekalongan pada awal 1945, pendekatan lisan (oral approach) telah berhasil menemukan banyak bahan-bahan baru mengenai sejarah daerah pada awal Revolusi. Bahan ini diperoleh dengan wawancara dari kurang lebih 175 orang, bekas pemimpin maupun anggota badan perjuangan, juga orang dari golongan santri (kyai-kyai) dan bekas tentara pada waktu itu. Sebenarnya istilah "wawancara" kurang tepat, lebih baik istilah "pertemuan" yang dipakai, karena pendekatan lisan ini tidak memakai angket-angket, atau sampel-sampel tetapi tergantung pada hubungan pribadi yang telah diciptakan terlebih dulu. Yang diwawancarai tidak dapat dianggap hanya sebagai "informant" atau "interviewee" saja. Oleh karena itu pendekatan yang berdasarkan serangkaian pembicaraan tidak formil ini lebih bersifat omong-omong saja, dimana pengkisah juga harus diberi kesempatan untuk menjadi pewawancara. Pendekatan ini sangat individuil, pewawancara harus betul-betul memasukkan diri dalam segala hal yang menyangkut kehidupan pengkisah. Sedapat mungkin agar pewawancara dianggap sebagai keluarga sendiri dan yang didatangi akan merasa bebas dan terdorong untuk mulai mengingat dan menceritakan kembali kejadian-kejadian dua puluh sembilan tahun yang lalu.

Tentu saja kisah-kisah yang diperoleh dari golongan bekas pamong praja, yang pada waktu itu menjadi sasaran utama dari amarah rakyat akibat dari tindakan pengumpulan padi yang masih bertumpuk-tumpuk dilumbung desa, semuanya akan menyangkut hal ini. Di daerah karesidenan Pekalongan kaum pamong praja yang tidak "didaulat" lari semua. Dan justru dari golongan santrilah yang diangkat secara mendadak menjadi camat, wedana dan bahkan bupati, bisa diperoleh cerita yang menarik juga. Nasib kaum Indo Belanda pada waktu itu ngeri sekali, kebanyakan yang masih tinggal disekitar pabrik-pabrik gula dibunuh semua. Dari orang yang bersangkutan, mengingat kembali kejadian-kejadian semacam ini adalah sangat menyedihkan dan pendekatan yang dipakai sangat menentukan hasil pertemuan. Pendekatan lisan ini tidak berarti bahwa semua bahan dikumpulkan secara lisan, tetapi bahan-bahan tertulis seperti surat-surat, buku harian, dokumen-dokumen dan bahkan beberapa memoir telah berhasil dikumpulkan.

Salah satu diantaranya adalah *Ceritaku*. Sebagai hasil dari pendekatan lisan tersebut, memoir ini sebenarnya merupakan respons terhadap pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang diajukan dalam bentuk tertulis, tetapi apa yang dihasilkan adalah merupakan semacam babad modern yang menceritakan suasana dan kejadian di Tegal mulai pada akhir zaman Jepang sampai dengan bulan Nopember 1945. Walaupun bukan asli dari Tegal, pengarang *Ceritaku* mulai tahun 30 an sudah terkenal aktip dalam pergerakan nasional di daerah. Dalam kisah *Ceritaku* diceritakan keadaan pada akhir zaman Jepang yang sungguh menyedihkan, terutama dengan pulangnya romusha dari Jawa Barat. Perkembangan politik di Tegal sesudah Proklamasi dikisahkan, dengan titik tolak sebagai pertentangan yang timbul antara pemuda dan kaum pamong praja mengenai pembagian padi dan pengibaran bendera, sampai akhirnya terjadi penculikan-penculikan terhadap pegawai tinggi, dan pemerintahan kabupaten Tegal diambil alih oleh kelompok ex-Boven Digul.

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Walaupun pendekatan lisan ini lebih berdasarkan pribadi peneliti dan juga penggalian sejarah mengenai sebuah kejadian itu sekarang bisa dianggap peka, tetapi sumber-sumber tersebut akan hilang bilamana tidak digali sekarang. Oleh karena itu penelitian semacam ini perlu sekali. Tanpa sumber-sumber sejarah daearah historiografi zaman Revolusi tidak akan lengkap. Pemandangan dari daerah harus dicocokkan dengan gambar-gambar lain dari kota besar. Indonesia merdeka tidak akan dapat dicapai apabila orang-orang yang tinggal di daerah-daerah tidak berjuang tanpa pamrih, dan mati tanpa diketahui.

INTRODUCTION

"Most Indonesians apart from the young don't bother to write things down, and seldom keep written records". A number of generalisations similar to this one have probably been heard by those who have embarked on research of the Indonesian revolution. One reason why the youth in the revolution never wrote things down was simply that there was little paper available to write on at the time.

To the extent that this kind of comment is true-and this paper aims to show that in part it is not-it is suprising that it was not until last year that the National Archives began taking an active interest in oral history of the revolution. Naturally enough the people chosen to be interviewed as part of the Oral History Project were mostly well known national figures, and the primary aim was to preserve, by tape recorder, their memoirs of events between 1945 and 1950 before it was 'too late'. For a number of reasons it may not be possible to use such material while those interviewed or others connected with them are living. But at least the history has been recorded on tape for future historians of the revolution to use.

Another kind of 'oral approach' has recently been used in the study of the *Tiga Daerah* (Three Regions) Affairs, which took place during the latter part of 1945 in the residency of Pekalongan, on the northwest coast of Central Java. The research was carried out using an 'oral approach', that is by contacting those people who were in the area at the time and were in some way directly involved in the events which took place.

This 'oral approach' has four special characteristics. Firstly it discards all the paraphenalia of social science research, such as questionnaires, random samples, and the formality necessitated by the use of a scientific methodology. Secondly this approach presupposes and in fact depends upon a close rapport with the person. He must not be considered merely as an "informant" or an 'interviewee'.

Thirdly it can be characterised as a series of informal conversations the aim of which is to discover what the person knows, but with this must be interwoven the other aim of building up a personal relationship. The role of the conversation is extremely important. Apart from enabling the interviewer to establish the rapport mentioned above, he must convey something of what he knows about the subject and particularly with whom he has already talked. Lastly it involves disciplined note taking either during or as soon as possible after the meeting.

In this paper we will attempt to highlight some of the problems involved in research into the Tiga Daerah Affair, in which over one hundred people were personally approached between 1971 and 1973. In describing the kinds of sources that were collected and their usefullness it should be noted that the oral approach does not mean that all the information was obtained orally. Many different kinds of written records-memoirs, documents, letters - were obtained directly as a result of this study. A few general comments on the validity of this approach will conclude this paper.

THE STUDY

The Tiga Daerah Affair has been discussed in Mr Djoko's paper and only needs to be briefly summarised here. The disturbances in the residency of Pekalongan following the Proclamation of Independence on 17th August 1945 had their social origins well back in the colonial period. The residency itself is characterised by its geographical isolation from the Central Javanese hinterland, its long northern coastal border, and large immigrant Arab and Chinese populations in the coastal towns. The region is also distinguished by the very early colonial economic and administrative presence with the building of Dandels road in 1808, and the establishment of the sugar cane factories by western enterprise in the late nineteenth century.

By 1920 the seven sugar cane factories in the *kabupaten* (regency) of Tegal were using 25—33% of the total cultivable land of the regency for growing sugar (Geertz, 1963, 74). The Dutch trained civil servants, the *pangreh praja* considered the sugar cane factory areas to be 'hardship' postings, which were especially difficult to administer with the high crime rate, gambling and prostitution centered around the Sub-District towns.

During the Japanese occupation, the pangreh praja's unpopularity increased for two related reasons. As the economic situation deteriorated both the forced rice deliveries supervised by the *priyayi* officials and the shortages of cloth caused considerable economic hardship.

The recruiting of romusha or corvee labour for projects within the residency and elsewhere also increased the unpopularity of the local officials who especially with their wives were widely suspected of corruption, particularly through the distribution of cloth.

The Proclamation in effect lifted the lid off this already activated volcano of social unrest. Within days the urban *pemuda* (youth, especially politicized youth) were at loggerheads with the priyayi officials in the regency capitals. The latter's attitude to the declaration of Independence varied from hesitancy and doubt to downright rejection of pemuda demands to fly the *merah-putih* (red and white, Indonesian flag), without an order from 'above'. The leaders of the newly formed *badan perjuangan* (struggle body, armed resistance organisation) were powerless to stop the increasing

number of clashes between the pemuda and the local Japanese garrisons, climaxing in a massacre of 37 pemuda in front of the *kenpeitai* barracks in Pekalongan on October 3, 1945.

The subsequent removal of all Japanese personal to the neighbouring residency of Banyumas left a power vacuum which was unifilled, as in the other parts of Java, by the arrival of the Allies towards the end of September. By the second week of October an almost complete breakdown of civil administration had occurred in the rural areas, with the local officials having to flee for their lives from the *rampok* (robber) bands and *gerombolan* (bandit gangs) who roamed the countryside. The leaders of the newly formed local national committees (KNI), the army (TKR) as well as the badan perjuangan mentioned above were powerless to stop this increasing anarchy. Over forty Eurasians were killed in a massacre at Slawi south of Tegal on 11th October. The resident's attempt to impose law and order failed, partly because the army had no bases outside the towns, and partly since the police had disbanded themselves.

Towards the end of October an uneasy peace had been restored with new officials, often from the Muslim group, chosen to fill the vacuum left by those who had fled, who had been killed or who were in prison. An *algojo* (bandit) by the name of Kutil (which in Javanese means both 'a wart' and 'pickpocket') controlled the countryside south of Tegal. By the middle of November the *perjuangan* (struggle, resistance) in the three kabupaten of Brebes, Tegal and Pemalang had been loosely coordinated by the Federation of Resistance Organisations of the Three Regions. A new Resident was appointed, but only took office for three and half days in early December before the army threw all the leaders in jail. In a subsequent army action hundreds of people in the Tiga Daerah were jailed for interrogation. A trial was eventually held in Pekalongan fifteen months after the affair but because of the first Dutch police action no verdict was reached. Kutil who had been sentenced to death for murder, was finally executed before a firing squad on 5 May 1951.

There are various interpretations of this complex affair. One version sees it as a left sponsored or organised revolt to overthrow the legal residency government, another as a part of the wider social revolution squashed by the army and neglected by the national Sjahir government, and yet another as a local anti-pamong praja and police 'disturbance'.[1])

WHY AN 'ORAL APPROACH'

Surprisingly very little has ever been written about the Tiga Daerah Affair. It has remained quite neglected even in Indonesian

[1]) The various references in Indonesian to the Tiga Daerah Affair reflect this variety of interpretations; it has been called a movement *(gerakan, pergerakan)*, a disturbance *(pergolakan)*, a revolt *(pemberontakan)*, a struggle *(perjuangan)*, but usually the more neutral word affair *(peristiwa)* is used.

sources where it is usually only mentioned in passing. [2]) Obviously one is faced with a different set of problems in an oral approach to these kinds of events than when one is recording the memoirs of a well known national leader. Firstly one has to find out which of the leaders are still living and where they are now. Then they have to be contacted. This can often only be done through friends, and needs almost unlimited time and mobility.

A broad classification of the people approached is given in the table in the appendix. They can be considered as belonging to four broad groups, ex-officials who were working in the area at the time, the nationalist and pemuda leaders, the Muslims and the army group. The pamong praja since they were almost all graduates from either of the two training schools for Indonesian officials (Osvia or Mosvia) still have strong organisational ties through their ex-students association if not through similar priyayi backgrounds and education. Likewise ex-members of the 17th regiment which was stationed in Pekalongan at the time have strong ties of loyalty keeping them in contact with their officers through the *anak buah* relationship (Anderson, 1972, 43). Most of the Muslim group who were active at the time are still living in the area and can be easily contacted. On the other hand the group of nationalist leaders, because of the nature of the badan perjuangan of the early revolution, have few organisational ties, except a vague sense of being in the perjuangan, to keep them in contact in later years. Despite this and the fact that most have moved to other areas, all the important leaders who are still alive were finally located.

Of the priyayi officials approached, most had in some way experienced the *daulat* actions of October 1945, which were traumatic experiences which will not be easily forgotten. [3]) Usually the Sub-District office was surrounded by an angry crowd or rampok band demanding that the surplus padi still stored in the village rice barns be distributed. The District Officer of Belik, a mountain town south of Pemalang, remembers one such encounter (in a taped interview):

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[2]) These sources include apart from those mentioned elsewhere in this paper) Kementerian Penerangan, *Republik Indonesia Propinsi Jawa Tengah* pp. 26 - 27; Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, *Sejarah Revolusi Indonesia*, vol. 2, pp. 64 - 69; Kementerian Penerangan, *20 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, vol. 1, pp. 159; *Mahasin* (a magazine published by the kabupaten of Pemalang) I, 1 (1971), passim; Muh Nuh, "Peristiwa Tiga Daerah" parts I, II and III in *Penelitian Sedjarah* III, 1 (March 1962) pp. 29 - 32, III, 6 (June 1962) pp. 31 - 36 and IV, 7 (September 1963), pp. 41 - 43; Suputro, *Tegal Dari Masa ke Masa* ,p. 62; L.M. Gandasubroto *Kenang-kenangan 1933 - 1950*, p. 38; A.H. Nasution, *T.N.I.*, vol. 1, p. 141.

[3]) 'daulat' from the Indonesian word *mendaulat* meant "the deposition, humiliation, kidnapping or murder of hated officials or other representatives of authority, usually carried out by groups of armed pemuda" (Anderson, 1972, 334).

"I entered the yard on horseback, and saw the sharpened bamboo spears *(cocolan)* hidden in the fence. Feeling rather timid *(kecil hati)* I dismounted and met the people. They were all asking for padi. I told them 'it doesn't belong to me, it belongs to the government'. But they wouldn't listen any longer. So I told them to go ahead and distribute the rice, but it was their decision not mine. They formed a committee and I advised them not to have any village officials on it." [4])

Other officials did not get off so lightly. To the south of Belik in the neighbouring Sub-District of Moga, the *camat* was lucky to escape with his life. Here is part of his acount (from notes taken during an interview):

"I didn't feel I had anything to hide, so I went to meet the crowd at the kecamatan office. An argument had broken out with the secretary and he was overwhelmed. I tried to calm the crowd down, but that only seemed to make things worse. While trying to get away I was wounded in the mouth with a sharpened bamboo spear. Some one hid me behind a rice hulling log, where I lay for a couple of hours until a neighbour came and smuggled me to a nearby rice barn. I slept there for some time and then passed out from loss of blood, until early the next morning. I crept out and walked along the road to Pemalang, but fainted again. Luckily someone found me and took me to the local hospital". [5])

In the town of Lebaksiu south of Tegal, the Sub-District Officer would not agree to distribute the surplus rice as requested by the local KNI before seeing his immediate superior first. On Friday 12th October he set out to travel the nine kilometres north to see the District Officer in Slawi, with his wife. Here is her account (from interview notes):

"We left in a *dokar* (horse drawn cart) after breakfast around 9 p.m. I wanted to see the doctor in Slawi as I was seven months pregnant. I took along my three other children, aged four, three and two. Pak Suhodo (the camat) was going to discuss the distribution of rice so the people wouldn't be so troublesome (*muluk*). Near Kajen we were stopped, and he was taken from the dokar and killed with bamboo spears in front of us. Someone helped us to Haji Nahwari's house nearby where we stayed for the rest of the day". [6])

It is probably not a coincidence that this occured the day after the massacre of a large number of Eurasians in Slawi. In response to rumours about Nica (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) attrocities and on an order from the resident Mr. Besar, a series of actions was initiated by the urban pemuda groups to intern all Eurasians. There was no time to save those in Slawi, Balapulang and Banjaratma south of Brebes. The Slawi victims included an Ambonese nurse and two Bataks. The widow of one of the latter now lives in Tegal, and describes what happened to 39 Eurasians in Slawi on 11th October 1945 (from notes made after the interview):

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[4]) From transcript of taped interview with the ex-wedana of Belik in Temanggung on 25.5.73.

[5]) Notes from an interview with the ex-Sub-District officer of Moga in Jakarta on 2.11.71.

[6]) Notes from an interview with Mrs. Suhodo in Slawi on 29.4.73.

"In the morning we were taken from our house near the (sugar cane) factory, and kept in a room there all day. At about 4 o'clock in the afternoon we were taken to where a large crowd had gathered, where we were put in an order. My husband Sinambela was number eight, his cousin Mahoedin Pane one before him. Each person was taken onto the stage in front of the crowed, people kept shouting 'Kill him' *(dibunuh)*. Then the person was blindfolded, taken down and killed. I was at the end with another Indo girl named Meri, the wife of the lurah of Kalisapu. I was already on the stage when someone shouted out that I was not an Indo, but Javanese. It was a friend of my brother, he helped me down, together with Meri and we went to the lurah's house". [7])

As an essential part of the response to Independence at the local level, experiences of events such as these are indelibly imprinted on the minds of those who suffered at the time. Recording this kind of material, requiring as it does people to recall sad and agonising times in their lives can be painfull for both the interviewer and the person concerned. The emphasis of the oral approach is on building up a conversation first and allowing the person to gradually come around to the events which are important. Note taking during such conversations is obviously impossible, just as it is impossible to remain untouched and uninvolved oneself, however careful one must be later in judging the accuracy of the stories.

In Pemalang where the wives of the top officials were put under house arrest, the widow of the bupati tells this story (from notes made during the interview):

"I took the family heirloom with me (to the place of detention). It was a small *keris* (Javanese dagger) called *Mbah Tapah*, and it had miraculous powers (*keramat*). Every night a ceremony was held and the keris was washed. The water was sent the next day to the prison, for the guards to drink so they would not be too harsh, and for the prisoners so they would feel calm (*tenang*). [8])

Whereas accounts from the priyayi officials are usually variations on the one theme — the daulat actions — with similar interpretations, it was found that most members of the nationalist group had their own special story, as in fact did most of the Muslim group, and it is important wherever possible to tape these interviews. Here is the account of the meeting between the new santri bupati and the people of Tegal, in the city square *(alun-alun)*, from written answers (which became a sixteen page memoir) to questions by the deputy chairman of the Tegal kabupaten KNI at the time:

"After opening the meeting I asked Kyai Haji Abu Sudjai to come foward. As he stepped up onto the platform, the crowd was immediately quiet. People were amazed to see such a tall good looking person, simply dressed in long trousers, a white shirt and wearing a black *pici*. He spoke fluently in a quiet clear voice occasionally using a Dutch word (which he pronounced correctly) or quoting verses from the Koran. It was the first time that Tegal had seen what their new bupati was really like. The Muslim group was obviously satisfied. [9])

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7) Notes from an interview with Mrs. Tiurlan in Tegal on 2.4.73.
8) Notes from an interview with Mrs. Rahardjo in Jakarta on 12.12.71.
9) Memoir (written answer to questions), unpublished.

The Tiga Daerah Affair is sometimes referred to as Kutil's movement. One of the colourfull and controversial characters from a working class background to enter the stage of history during the early Revolution, almost everyone knows something about Kutil, and his family still live in the area. In 1937 Kutil (his real name was Sachjani alias Amat Saleh bin Ahmad) had been a candidate in the election of lurah in a village near Talang south of Tegal. The ex-lurah who was elected then recalls:

> "Kutil had maybe finished second grade of village primary school. He could read and write a little, but his hand writing was quite illegible (*nggak karuan*)" [10].

Kutil it will be remembered was put on trial for murder in 1946 and sentenced to death. In the light of this is important to note the opinion of the same lurah, someone who had no interest in defending Kutil:

> "If Kutil wanted anything his wishes were obeyed immediately. He never used violence or killed anyone himself. There were many who were killed at that time. If the people were asked 'Is this man to be killed or not?' the reply was always 'Kill him.' But if Kutil said 'no' the person went unharmed. People were generally afraid of him because he was thought to be cruel (*kejam*)" [11]

Kutil's Chinese chauffeur also remembers:

> "I never got any wages, as Kutil never had any money. If we ate anywhere I always paid. He always travelled by himself, carried a colt revolver and sat beside me in the front seat". [12])

The material obtained in both these conversations was noted down informally at the time and afterwards added to.

Another event of importance during the Tiga Daerah time was the capture of the commander of the TKR regiment stationed in Pekalongan. During the Japanese time Kyai Haji Iskandar Idris had been *daidancho* (commander) of the Peta batalion in Pekalongan. He writes:

> "From the information I had obtained, it was possible to meet Kutil. I was armed with a sword and a pistol. At Banjaran (Adiwerna) we were stopped and told to wait. Someone came and said he could take us to Kutil. We had to hand over our weapons and go blindfolded. I was suspicious and was going to refuse but though better of it". (Idris, unpublished).

With Iskandar Idris at the time was the emissary from the provincial government Sayuti Melik. The leader of AMRI *(Angkatan Muda Republik Indonesia)* in Slawi, who later become chairman of the Tiga Daerah Working Committee in Tegal, and a friend of Sayuti's from Boven Digul, recalls (from a transcript of a taped conversation):

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10) Notes from an interview with the ex-lurah of Kajen Talang on 9.2.73.
11) *Ibid.*
12) Notes from interview with Kutil's former chauffeur Kho Ie Sin in Tegal, on 21.2.73.
K. H. Iskandar Idris, *Sedikit Catatan Sekedar yang Saya Alami* dan *Ketahui*, a memoir written at the request of the army (unpublished).

"The situation (around Adiwerna) at that time was bad because of a particularly fierce *(galak, liar)* group of pemuda from Ujungrusi led by a person named Hamidun. Everyone was very scared of them. We got word that Sayuti and Idris had been captured and were probably going to be killed. I told the pemuda to take a jeep and get them at any cost. They returned with some of Hamidun's anak buah and the prisoners who were tied together, hands behind their backs. I untied Sayuti and took off the blindfold. I was very angry with him for getting himself into such a situation. 'As a politican (*orang berpolitik*) you don't know what the revolution means. You can't just go around the counstryside as you like observing people rebelling,' I told him". [13])

On the army (the other group in the sources chart in the appendix), much interest has been shown in collecting material on all periods of the revolution by the military history branch of Diponegoro Division in Semarang. This includes a series of questionaires sent to all ex-leaders of the badan perjuangan in the residency of Pekalongan in 1959, and two typed transcripts of interviews with the former acting commander of the TKR who took over after Iskandar Idris was captured, and who led the army 'clean up' *(pembersihan)* against the Tiga Daerah. Unfortunately the military history section has moved several times and the material is not open access as in western libraries. The Tiga Daerah Affair is discussed briefly in both the histories of the Diponegoro Division. The first published in draft form entitled *Sedjarah Tentara Nasional Indonesia — Komando Daerah Militaire VII Diponegoro (Djawa Tengah)* was never circulated, and the more recent version *Sirnaning Yakso Katon Gapuraning Ratu* was published in two volumes in 1971. Unfortunately no primary sources are quoted in either account, the first of which Anderson relies on quite heavily in his summary of the Tiga Daerah Affair in *Java in a Time of Revolution.*

MY STORY

Of all the memoirs written as a result of this oral approach to the study of the Tiga Daerah Affair the most exciting is My Story — Some Events Surrounding the Proclamation of Independence In and Around Tegal *(Ceritaku — Percikan Peristiwa Bersejarah di Sekitar Hari Proklamasi Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Daerah Tegal dan Sekitarnya).* This 135 page beautifully hand written account of the first four months of Independence in Tegal was compiled over several months in 1973, as a result of a series of conversations and a list of questions. The author, a leader of the local resistance organisation the *Barisan Pelopor* (Pioneer Corps) in Tegal, was born in the village of Kedung Winangan near Kebumen in 1914, the son of the village head. He was educated at the village school, then went to Jakarta where he tried his hand at journalism, working on the newspaper *Pemandangan.* He gave this up after a few years because, as he put it, 'too many of my stories were being rejected by the editors'. In 1932 he went to West New Guinea as

[13]) Transcript of taped interview with the ex-AMRI leader in Jakarta, on 26.3.73.

a member of the Red Cross unit of an exploration team from the Batavia Petroleum Company. On his return he worked for some time in the company's laboratories before moving to Tegal in 1935. He had been a member of the Indonesian Scouts *(Kepanduan Bangsa Indonesia)* in Jakarta, and was secretary of the local branches of two of the pre-war political groups, *Partindo* and *Gerindo*. During the Japanese occupation he became an active leader of the Barisan Pelopor, which became the largest and strongest of Tegal's pemuda groups during the Tiga Daerah Affair. After the revolution he joined the civil service, rising to become a District Officer near Pekalongan, where he now lives in retirement.

My story is divided into three parts, the first of thirty-four pages discusses some general aspects of the last year of the Japanese occupation, which was characterized by the growing messianic beliefs — the *kepercayaan seumur jagung* — the polarising of pemuda attitudes to the Japanese, and increasing social discontent. Among the pemuda it was generally thought preferable to join a Japanese youth or para military organisation than stay in one's village and risk being recruited for the romusha, although experiences in the compulsory training camps that the Japanese ran for the *Seinendan* (Youth Corps) and *Heiho* (Auxilary Forces) recruits in the residency were very severe. There were still those who believed that by cooperation, the Japanese would be quicker to honour their earlier promise of independence, although the mayority now considered these promises to be meaningless. But even this group did not dare to openly show their hostility, as this would have been suicidal *(menentang berarti bunuh diri)*. The situation towards the middle of 1945 with regard to the romusha is described as follows:

> "The training of all the youth and para military groups — even the village heads — was stepped up. The patrols of the coast by the Keibodan were increased day and night, they were treated almost like prisoners. The streets were full of living skeletons then suddenly the town seemed full or corpses. Each day there were more, five then seven then ten more lying just where they had died under the bridge, in the Chinese cemetery, in the *alun-alun*, by the side of the road, on the rubbish tips. The situation got to be so bad the local officials didn't have time to dig separate graves. All these deaths were the result of one kind of sickness-hunger. The clothes of the dead were full of lice. Most of those dying were not from the Tegal area — I don't know where they were from but it was clear they were romusha returning home from West Java."

Against this background the excitement and intense relief that the news of the Japanese surrender brought is almost unimaginable to us today. One of the Barisan Pelopor leaders had managed to keep a radio hidden from the prying eyes of the kenpeitai throughout the entire occupation, and the first news of the surrender came in this way:

> "I arrived at my friend's house (on the night of 15th August 1945) a little after 8 p.m. and looking through the back window, saw him surreptiously tuning the radio set. So I tiptoed to the back door, so as not to be heard, then knocked loudly and shouted 'Mosh moshi (hello hello) is the owner at home?' My friend, thinking it was a Japanese patrol, jumped

up and raced to the door. 'Oh its you, by yourself, come in, I'm trying to get the news'.
That's what I came for, anything new?'
'Wait while I try to get a cleaner band'.
He started to fiddle with the radio then someone started talking. 'What station is that?' I asked. 'Saigon or Hanoi' he replied, 'its English with a Chinese accent, I'm trying to get Australia'. He fiddled around for a while and eventually found another band. Someone was speaking English quite slowly, the voice was clearer, I asked him where it was. 'Its Australia, probably Melbourne, he replied.
I complained to myself, 'what a pity I never learnt English ..... my own fault'.
Suddenly my friend sat up and moved quickly to the radio, straining every muscle, trying to catch the news. I could only stand there watching him, cursing to myself, why was I so stupid that I never learnt English, I could be helping to translate this!
Seeing the expression on his face my heart suddenly beat faster, what on earth was wrong?
'No ..... what? ..... it can't be ..... heavens!' he said,' the Japanese ..... the Japanese ..... they ..... they've surrendered!"

For most of the uneducated urban pemuda the Proclamation or *Proklamasi* which followed two days after the Japanese 'surrender' was a new word in their vocabulary, and a difficult one to pronounce properly. Some said 'prolokamasi' others 'plokramasi" others 'prokramasi' or 'peroklamasi' which were all variations of this new and exciting word on the lips of the uneducated pemuda in Tegal.

The second part of *My Story* sets out in more or less chronological order the events from the Proclamation up until the march of a large crowd on Tegal looking for Nica agents on the 4th November. The narrative includes the disarming of the Peta battalion by the kenpeitai and the latter's surrender, and the attitude of the local officials, leading to an open clash between the latter and the pemuda leaders and the eventual kidnapping of the mayor and the police chief of the town late in October.

The pemuda anger with the local priyayi officials was due to their attitude to the Proclamation. At a public meeting with the mayor on the 11th September, the latter had calmly said that he had not received any orders or instructions from the Japanese administration about Independence. Nowhere was the Proclamation mentioned, not even in the latest issue of *Kan Po* the Government Gazette, and the mayor produced a copy before the stunned pemuda and went on to say that it was dangerous to believe all outside news. *My Story* describes the sugsequent pemuda reaction:

"Interrupted by shouts and cheers and clapping one of the audience told Mr 'Sicho' (as the pemuda mockingly referred to him, continuing to use his Japanese title) Soengeb that the pemuda could no longer believe what he said, because it contradicted the Allies, did the mayor have to wait for an order about such a defeat? Independence didn't come by an official order ..... Mr. 'Sitjo Soengeb was stunned ..... the meeting was now in a uproar. Cries of' we've had enough' *(sudah cukup)*, 'a waste of time' *(percumah)*, once a slave always a slace' *(budak yang tetap budak)* were coming from the back of the hall. The mayor rose from his seat, his hand shaking, his face alternative shades of red and white, sweat pouring off his brown. Before he could speak there were more cries

from the back of the hall, 'what more does he want?" *(mau apa lagi)*, 'let's go home' *(mari kita pulang)*. At first one or two then everyone was leaving, and the meeting dissolved in chaos ..... and from that day on the mayor had a new name amongst the pemuda in Tegal — Tan Sung Eb".

This way the final humiliation the pemuda could bestow on a high priyayi official, a Chinese nickname!

The last part of *My Story* deals with the events after the 4th November, the election of a new bupati (described above) and the arrival of an emmissary from the provincial government to 'legalise' the appointment of the new officials. A Working Committee is also elected which is dominated by the ex-Boven Digul group, and which included as secretary the author of *My Story*. This Working Committee apparently had two separate functions. The first was as the government executive to advise the bupati, who would act always in consultation with it. It was the second function, the coordination of the various perjuangan groups, which the Working Committee seemed to devote most of it's time, and which caused it to become known as the Tiga Daerah Working Committee (*Badan Pekerja Tiga Daerah* — BP3D) and subsequently by the end of November, the Federation of Resistance Organisations of the Tiga Daerah (*Gabungan Badan Perjuangan Tiga Daerah* - GBP3D). The Working Committee had no time to consider the ordinary functions of Government:

> "As a secretary of the Working Committee I was supposed to be drawing up working agenda, but three days after its formation neither the chairman or any of the members had come near me. Then on the 12th November someone asked if I had started work yet. So I made up a program which included the allocation of tasks, finalising the combining of the city and kabupaten administrations, and the new status of the KNI".

As a tactic to try and capture Kutil, the Working Committee appointed him as police chief for the kabupaten of Tegal. It was thought that if he moved to the barracks with his anak buah he could easily be arrested. But Kutil was clever, and refused to move from his base at Talang so the plan backfired.

The auther of *My Story* is finally disillusioned with the Tiga Daerah group after being told that he is stupid *(bodoh)* to be spending his time preparing agendas on local government problems which are never discussed, he should be issuing proclamations as in Brebes. Following this rebuff he decides to leave Tegal, and goes to Magelang with his pemuda until the end of the Tiga Daerah Affair.

In his conclusion the auther says that it was the stalemate or vacuum in local government due to the lack of strong central government action to convince local officials about the Proclamation which was an which was an important factor in the background to the events in the residency of Pekalongan. The Tiga Daerah Affair is analagous to a ship trying to sail without a compass, helmsman or captain. There are those today who would claim they were steering the ship, but at the time they were only passengers. This lack of a strong unifying leadership was the greatest weakness of the Tiga Daerah struggle.

The necessity of using what has been called an 'oral approach' has of course its disadvantages. It is very dependent on the skill of the interviewer in making the all important initial approach. It often takes a disproportionate amount of time first to find and then establish the personal rapport necessary before people will want to talk openly with you.

The nature of the Tiga Daerah material, and how it is viewed today directly affects the willingness of people to talk. One can only guarantee that the names of persons will not be mentioned, although this was in fact seldom requested specifically by those approached. On the other hand using pseudonyms somehow spoils the flavour and authenticity of the story, for despite Smail's comment that "in the study of local social history men seldom play an important personal role in the course of events" (Smail, 1964: 110), I believe individuals are important in Indonesian local history. Such studies may help to fill important gaps in the biographies of later well known national figures. In the Tiga Daerah Affair, people such as M.H. Lukman, the one time Attorney General Suprapto, the minister for Youth and Development Soepeno, B.O. Hutapea and Ali Murtopo all consider the affair to be important in some way to themselves. Twenty nine years since the affair is it still too early to be writing its history? As Kahin reminds us (in support of the writing he did during the revolution), a leader's perception of events will change significantly over the years according to the "changed political context, different ideological climate and altered social values" (Kahin, 1970: vi). Who today in Indonesia will want it said in print that they kidnapped a high official for refusing to recognise the Proclamation in 1945? During a movement which may now be considered by some as subversive?

On the other, hand despite these hazards and sensitivities, this kind of oral approach to the revolution at the local level has produced many new sources during the study of the Tiga Daerah Affairs, some of which have been discussed in this paper. We have argued that these sources would not have been obtained in any other way, for example by using formal questionnaires in a single interview. Besides there are no alternative sources, for example newspapers, for this kind of local history of the early revolution. The national press was naturally more preoccupied with the now famous confrontations with the Japanese and the Allies in Bandung, Ambarawa, Semarang and Surabaya which occured at the same time, and the local weekly press has not survived.

John Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution 1945 - 1946* (Ithaca, Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1964).

G. McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, Cornell University paperback, 1970).

CONCLUSIONS.

The 'oral approach', as this paper has tried to show can provide new atmosphere and colour which is basically different from the provincial capitals during the early revolution. It may also provide more accurate insights into the Japanese period where actual social conditions at the village level have yet to be described in detail. Secondly this kind of approach uncovers new material which enables us to fit local histories with other views of the Indonesian revolution. It may help to balance a somewhat romantic, elitist, centralist and city view of the pemuda which lacks the *rakyat* element. Almost all of the pemuda in Anderson's account are urban educated most of whom later obtain high positions.

Thirdly this approach may help to overcome the onesidedness of the centralist elitist approach which overlooks the abyss of discontinuity and lack of ideology created by the vacuum of authority in the major part of Indonesia. The long lasting and usually underestimated effect of this vacuum of authority crisis which began after the second world war is only now receiving the attention it deserves (Nawawi, 1973).

Anderson of course admits that the Indonesian revolution is "incomprehensible ..... unless one can somehow get inside it ..... by talking only with the people in the top strata we miss a great deal of what really happened" (Anderson, 1970/71: 65). The sources collected using an oral approach in the Tiga Daerah study give us many new insights into those who are content to remain anonymous, who fought without any thought of personal gain *(berjuang tanpa pamrih)*, the people without whose loyality, idealism and sacrifice *kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Indonesian Independence) could never have been achieved.

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APPENDIX

Sources from the Tiga Daerah Affair.

	Officials [1]	Nationalist [2] group	Army	Muslim	Other [3]
Total number approached	51	56	17	8	41
Number of meetings					
one	3	9	4		1
3 — 5	4	7	1	1	
more than 5	2	4	2		
requested written questions	1	3			
wrote a biographical memoir or account	3	4			
kept letters	3	5		1	
kept diaries	1	3		1	
other documents	1		1		
interviews and written questionnaires collected by the army		3	5		
Taped interviews	6	15	2		

Notes on the table:

[1]) Includes those who at the time of the affair were in the pamong praja, the breakdown is as follows: one ex-resident one ex-bupati, one ex-patih, 9 ex-camats, 5 ex-wedanas and 2 ex-pamong desa from Pekalongan Residency and includes 6 officials from the neighbouring Residencies of Banyumas and Semarang. It also includes four Pekalongan court officials.

[2]) Includes those who were elected as officials during the Tiga Daerah, and includes anyone who claimed to have been a 'member' of one of the badan perjuangan, including the National Committees, but not the BKR.

[3]) Includes widows, children or relatives of leaders now dead, onlookers who played no active part at the time, or who happened to be in the area.