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THE NATIONAL SEMINAR OF WOMEN PEASANTS IN INDONESIA

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FOREWORD

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THE NATIONAL SEMINAR OF WOMEN PEASANTS IN INDONESIA

/Following is a translation of selected articles from various issues of the Indonesian-language newspaper Harian Rakjat (People's Daily), Djakarta. Date of issue, number, page, and author, if any, are given under individual article headings./

Table of Contents

		Page
I.	Announcing a National Seminar of Women Peasants	1
II.	The National Seminar of Women Peasants	2
III.	Intensify the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women Peasants in Order to End Imperialism and Abolish Remnants of Feudalism	3
IV.	Many More City Women Must Go into the Villages to Help the Women Peasants	8

I. ANNOUNCING A NATIONAL SEMINAR OF WOMEN PEASANTS

No. 2768, 7 January 1961 Unsigned Article
Page 2

In connection with the decision of the MPRS /Madjelis Permusjawaratan Rakjat Sementara — Provisional People's Consultative Council/ on overall planning, the Central Executive Council of GERWANI /Gerakan Wanita Indonesia — Indonesian Women's Movement/ will hold a National Seminar of Women Peasants in Djakarta during the period 17-20 January in the Gedung Wanita /Women's Building/, which will be attended by regional representatives from branches in the cities and regencies of Java and the provinces outside Java, and from labor organizations, peasant organizations, scholars in the field of economics, etc.

This is the first time such a seminar will be held, and it is intended to increase the contribution of women peasants in the struggle to attain a just and prosperous society, to carry out the Political Manifesto, to increase the standard of living of women peasants, and to carry out the Laws for Production and Land Reform.

For this, the Central Executive Council of GERWANI requests suggestions from Departments directly connected with the peasant problem, namely: the Agrarian Department; the Agriculture Department; the Department of Resettlement, Cooperatives, and Village Development; and the Department of Agrarian Affairs. Also requested are suggestions from the Central Executive Council of the BTI /Barisan Tani Indonesia — Indonesian Peasants' Corps/. Likewise, the Central Executive Council of GERWANI itself will make suggestions on the following topics: the position of women peasants as wives and producers, increasing socio-economic enterprises, development of cooperatives, carrying out the Laws for Production and Land Reform, efforts for developing education and culture, intensification of courses in BH /?/ and enlarging art groups, and the establishment of work teams in villages for carrying out overall development planning in accordance with the Political Manifesto.

This seminar will feature various types of contests and exhibitions of the work of women peasants. It will be followed by a reception on the evening of 20 January.

II. THE NATIONAL SEMINAR OF WOMEN PEASANTS

No. 2777, 17 January 1961 Unsigned Editorial
Page 1

If the aims of the August 1945 Revolution have not yet been attained, the reason is certainly not because we have greatly surpassed the performance of the peasants. On the contrary!

The August Revolution was paid for by the peasants. The August Revolution has already been nurtured by the peasants, but it has not yet fed them.

The MPRS decision urges us to be aware that changes in land, or land reform, are an absolute part of the revolution, as stated a dozen years ago. True, imperialistic authorities no longer remain and there are no feudal authorities in the villages, so that particular national development will not represent a new level of planning, but a living accomplishment.

We write this, not because we resent life, but because of our consciousness that although these land reforms have become an absolute part of the revolution, they have not been carried out yet. However, there is a true proverb that says that late is better than never.

Liberation of the peasants, who form the great majority of our people, all of a sudden will mean liberation of women peasants, who also are the majority of our women. We suggest that it will not be violent if the work output of the peasants and women rises sharply, beside that of laborers and other workers. Then we will be able — as already envisioned by Bung Karno — to move mountains!

The National Seminar of Women Peasants opened today in Djakarta. During the whole history of New Indonesia there had never been a national seminar of women peasants. This seminar is being held at a truly appropriate time. Its important meaning will not last for just a month or a year, but possibly for decades.

We extend greetings to all those attending. We congratulate each participant and we wish well for this very important seminar and hope that it will formulate appropriate tasks for women peasants, so that it will be an inspiration and obtain their support in our great struggle to abolish all remaining traces of imperialism and feudalism.

III. INTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN PEASANTS IN ORDER TO END IMPERIALISM AND ABOLISH REMNANTS OF FEUDALISM

(Essentials of the Working Paper of the GERWANI Central Executive Council at the National Seminar of Women Peasants, presented by Mrs. Kartinah Kurdi 17 January 1961)

The Seminar of Women Peasants now being held has the task of summarizing past investigations by GERWANI activists in the field as well as at Headquarters, as already reported in regional seminars. It is very important for achieving further successes in GERWANI work in villages, to attract a majority of the women peasants, who have an important role in thoroughly achieving the aims of the August 1945 Revolution.

It may be seen that the task of completing the August 1945 Revolution to the roots involves two current tasks: combatting imperialism and eliminating all traces of feudalism — two tasks that cannot be separated, although they cannot be carried out all at once. At a specific time and under specific conditions such as now, the basic enemies of our revolution are imperialism and landlords, as well as other groups that assist imperialism.

Past experience shows that women peasants have a great role to play in the struggle to complete the aims of the August 1945 Revolution and cannot be neglected. In accordance with research carried out, it can be determined that the greater part of the peasants are poor farmers and working farmers, while a minority are landowners (foreign as well as native) whose daily income comes from exploitation and enslavement of poor farmers and working farmers, and who own the greater part of the land. The rest of the village population is made up of rich farmers who own sufficient land and in a limited way carry on exploitation by establishing wages for working farmers and poor farmers, and of farmers whose income comes from the land they work themselves.

With this knowledge of village classification, GERWANI cadres can easily learn about the various forms of feudal system that still exist.

By and large, women peasants — the same as our peasants in general — are experiencing impositions and oppression in various forms by landlords. Many work without wages as servants in the houses of landlords and are subject to compulsory pologoro labor /forced labor/ — that is, the transfer of something previously associated with tradition, which has made the landlords daily hold back paddy. Also, they must send him chickens, bananas, etc. This burden has further increased with taxes on peasants. Furthermore, the "advance payments" imposition must be faced, and in regions where there are revolts, such as West Java, West Sumatra, Sulawesi, etc., the peasant becomes a victim of the cruelty

of the Dar'ul Islam and the Revolutionary Republic of Indonesia/Permesta. Many there have fled their villages and moved to the cities to become a source of cheap labor; being neglected, not a few go astray. All of this presents a clear picture that all the poverty and backwardness that strike the peasants, including the women peasants, are a result of impositions and oppression by the landlords. The primary enemy of the peasant is the landlord, and he must be opposed.

In order to be able to properly inspire the women peasants, first of all GERWANI must depend on the women peasants from groups of poor farmers and working farmers, for they are the most oppressed and backward and they form a majority of peasant women in the villages. Furthermore, it is necessary to unite women from other groups who are injured by imperialism and feudalism.

The position and rights of women peasants can be specified as follows:

(1) As mothers and wives, women peasants experience difficulties as a result of the remaining traces of feudalism that humiliate the women peasants, so that they often become the victims of forced marriages, violence, and arbitrary divorce. The happiness of their households is not secure. In the field of health, because of poverty they cannot maintain health, so that mothers die in childbirth or through miscarriage. These cases are greatly increasing, for there still is great faith in superstitions circulated by landlords.

(2) As workers, women peasants, although most productive, do not have social security in time of sickness or during pregnancy. There is wage discrimination. As yet there are no social security laws for them. The only thing they can do is to fight for enforcement of the Laws on Produce Contracts (UU No. 2/60).

(3) As citizens, women peasants have not yet been guaranteed their rights. The IGO and IGOB /Dutch colonial laws/ did not give women the right to be elected Village Head (or to other village offices). Even the presence of women in village councils does not exist. Illiteracy is still highly prevalent among women peasants, along with backwardness of culture, etc. For this reason, women are especially included in the democratization of villages.

(4) As farmers, women peasants are in the same situation as peasants generally, requiring land and an improvement in their standard of living. The right of women to own land at present is guaranteed by the Basic Agrarian Law, Article 9, but it is necessary to make it a reality.

This seminar must devote special attention to the position and special rights of poor women farmers and working farmers. They are directly active in the work of production, and in some cases have the same rights of ownership as male peasants, but conditions for women peasants are different from those for rich peasants and landlords. In matters concerning daily life within the family, the women peasants among the poor farmers and working farmers have the same rights as their husbands.

There are now several progressive laws created by the MPRS decision on land reform and by order of the President on 1 January 1961, also as regards carrying out land reform. However, what is more important for the peasants themselves, including women peasants, is that there must be inspiration and struggle on the part of organizations to have all laws and decisions carried out. This is a decisive factor. Inspiration of the peasants for us means inspiration of women peasants, especially among working farmers and poor farmers. It becomes a task for GERWANI to expand and strengthen its branches in the villages for gathering as many women peasants as possible from among the working farmers and poor farmers into the GERWANI fold.

Viewed from their number and social position, women peasants form a part of the basic strength of the revolution that cannot be lightly considered. Without them, the revolution will not succeed. Liberating them cannot be separated from liberating the peasants in general from the impositions of feudalism. They cannot free themselves from these without uniting with the strength of the anti-feudal peasants in the village and by cooperating with democratic forces.

According to past experience, women peasants form a great strength in the struggle of peasants in general. The major incidents in Tandjung Morawa, Wates, Kediri, Rawapening (Ambarawa), etc. show women peasants to be stubborn and courageous in opposing land seizure by landlords, foreign or native. In regions where there are rebellions, as in West Java, women peasants bear the burden shoulder to shoulder in defending themselves against arbitrary land seizures by landlords and the Dar'ul Islam /Indonesian Islamic Army/.

These incidents convince us that women peasants who are conscious of their rights form a strength that cannot be neglected by the peasants in general as struggling comrades to prevent deterioration and surrender. They are loyal and stubborn against the enemies of the peasants. It is the task of GERWANI to increase inspiration and develop the consciousness of the women peasants, whose number is sufficiently large in Indonesia.

This seminar must answer the question of what GERWANI will undertake in order to carry out the above tasks. What is important to remember and be aware of, is that the inspiration of these women, as with other women, cannot come from themselves, even more so since women peasants have been left very backward by feudalism. It is hence necessary to initiate various actions to raise their faith in themselves and in their unity. Here lies the importance of actions with small gains. According to past experience, many such actions with small gains can be carried out in connection with defending the rights of women.

Here we must avoid actions that will make them the enemies of the men. Efforts must be coordinated so that actions are against the common enemy, the remaining feudalism in the villages, which is the source of all unpleasantness and mutual hostilities.

To carry out such actions well, we must know the conditions, feelings, desires, and needs of women peasants in general. The term is to "go down", as worked out in this seminar. From going down, we will

know the objective conditions in the villages and the true life of the peasants. The work of going down is desirably carried on traditionally by GERWANI activists with the aim of quickly understanding the needs, desires, feelings, and aims of the women peasants.

In the design of implementing the MPRS decisions on development of the villages and the order of the President on land reform — in keeping with the Political Manifesto, which has become the broad outline of our nation's direction at present — we need to raise the ability to lead organizations and mass movements in actions to build the unity of the women peasants and peasants in general and to build cooperation with other groups and the Government.

True development cannot be carried out without land reform and democratization of the peasants. For this reason, the task of inspiring women peasants to carry out these initial aims is an appropriate task for GERWANI at this time. President Sukarno, in his book Sarinah writes: "We, the women of Indonesia, at last have our destiny in our own hands. I urge the men to be convinced of our value in the struggle, but we ourselves must be conscious. We ourselves must jump into the struggle."

As a result of traces of feudalism still persisting in the villages, women peasants are poor, backward, and beaten down, think little of themselves, etc. Here is the importance of an organization such as GERWANI, carrying on its work in the villages.

The task of this organization and of women's organizations in the villages must be clear. The task of GERWANI, in accordance with its function, is to work on special problems dealing with the interests of women peasants, which would be difficult in a general peasant organization, and to assist in the organization of women peasants into cadres, with men supporting their actions.

In giving concrete assistance in the difficulties of daily life of women peasants, GERWANI needs to activate groups and establish work teams to bring women peasants into organizations for doing very helpful gotong rojong /mutual self-help/ work.

Daily activities that can and need to be done among women must be in connection with the training of women to know: (1) that poverty is the result of impositions and not predestination; (2) that landlords and other leech-like groups are contemptible and dirty, for they do not even work themselves, and their daily income comes from exploitation and from the perspiration of the working farmers; (3) that the peasants, like other working people, are exalted, for they work, perspire, and exhaust themselves to create production for their own families as well as society; (4) that the basic enemy of the peasants in the villages is the remnants of feudalism.

In training for this, we should have a high degree of consciousness.

The role of training and information is very definite for the success of our work among women peasants. We must find a way and establish special training and information in accordance with their opportunities. In this situation we should especially consider coffee shop

gossip (rumor or slander), which must be included to encourage them to become talkative, to discuss things in detail. Among other things, we must increase the desires of women peasants themselves to overcome their backwardness. In order that all information and training be readily accepted by them, we must associate it with their daily needs, with concrete examples concerning them.

In this case, political education and love of peace are important matters and cannot be neglected, especially concerning the Political Manifesto and the Djarek /Djalan Revolusi Kita — Path of Our Revolution, from Sukarno's 17 August 1960 speech/ in order that women peasants understand the basic problems of the revolution and of Indonesian society and the importance of defending world peace.

With a revolutionary work program and activities by GERWANI members in peasants' affairs, they can be convinced that the peasant movement, including women peasants, will attain rapid progress and face a shining future.

To attain victory in the initial aims, we must break the chains of feudalism and prepare a GERWANI program. We must be stubborn in carrying out the program and clever in actions. GERWANI activists must make efforts to struggle for consciousness and ability.

Let us take the direct road to break the chains of feudalism that are restraining the women peasants!

IV. MANY MORE CITY WOMEN MUST GO INTO THE VILLAGES TO HELP THE WOMEN PEASANTS

(Speech by D. N. Aidit to the Seminar of Women Peasants)

D. N. Aidit, Chairman
CCPKI

In the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia and in my own name, I express enthusiasm and appreciation in connection with the holding of this Seminar of Women Peasants by the Central Executive Council of GERWANI, and I present greetings to all participants and wishes for great success.

This seminar is directly in keeping with the feelings of the Indonesian people, who are now greeting a national victory in the form of the decisions of the MPRS, namely, the Outline of National Direction and the Outline of Overall Development Planning, First Stage 1961-69. The current seminar represents a situation in which the Government and the Indonesian people, especially the peasants, are prepared for land reform or land changes.

A. Imperialism Cannot Help Indonesian Development

The first factor in carrying out Indonesian development is the Indonesian people themselves. It is only the comprador class, the lazy people, and the people who do not have faith in their own strength and ability who rely on foreign investment capital for development planning. Their mouths utter "anti-imperialism," but in their hearts they are very close to the imperialists; they believe they cannot win if they are not "assisted" by the imperialists or foreign monopoly capitalists. Even small children understand that the imperialists cannot possibly help the anti-imperialistic struggle of the people of Indonesia. Bringing imperialistic capital into our country means bringing thieves into our homes.

For the development of Indonesia, for carrying out the progressive decisions of the MPRS, for land reform, in brief, for what is good and useful for the people, the people themselves must fight wholeheartedly, for it is not possible to lift one's head and hope for someone else to do it. For this, it is of great importance to get on with the problems of developing the gigantic strength of the Indonesian people, which has not yet been awakened. In discussing Indonesian development, we are not looking for a nonsensical way to unleash the gigantic strength of the Indonesian people.

Developing the gigantic strength of the Indonesian people means especially the inspiration of the peasants, who constitute the majority of the Indonesian people and who are the basic strength of the Indonesian Revolution. Inspiring the peasants is only possible if the pressing need of the peasants, namely land, is fully met.

B. Make the Victory in Principle Become a Victory in Practice

Those attending the seminar surely know that long ago other courageous political groups discussed land reform and even considered land reform as sacred. The Indonesian Communists had already appeared with the slogans, "Land for the Peasants", "No one Has Rights to the Land except the Peasant", etc. For this policy and these slogans, the communists were derided, slandered, and humiliated. However, because all of this is correct and in accordance with the thoughts and feelings that are very great among the Indonesian people, the Indonesian Communists did not stop their correct political propagandizing. The peasants, especially the poor peasants and tenant farmers, firmly support the communists. The result of it now is land reform. While this reform is not fully in accordance with the PKI's policy of "land for the peasants," it has already become a policy of the Government. This is an important victory of principle.

However, although land reform has already become a policy of the Government, we must realize that between a progressive government policy and its execution there is a deep gulf and a great distance. For this, as desired by President Sukarno and expressed in his announcement to the Seminar of Women Peasants today, the people themselves, or the peasants themselves, must now inspire the struggle for the execution of the Government's decisions on land reform. We must now turn the victory of principle into a victory in practice.

Land reform can only be carried out if based on the principle, "the peasant must free himself from the landlord", meaning that there cannot be a liberation of the peasants from the bondage of the landlords if the peasants themselves — especially the tenant farmers and the poor peasants, for they are of the greatest importance in land ownership — do not work at it themselves. For this, the revolutionary movement of peasants, in carrying out land reform in general, must rely on the tenant farmers and the poor peasants. Without this support, the revolutionary peasant movement cannot possibly develop or succeed.

The women peasants are a productive force in the villages — and a very important productive force. For this reason, in carrying out land reform, the women peasants must play an active role. Land reform cannot possibly be carried out unless the women peasants play an active role. In short, any progress in the villages, however small, requires the participation of the women peasants. For this reason I believe the special Seminar of Women Peasants is very useful in its activity and very important, for it represents the majority.

C. Many More City Women Should Go to the Villages

This Seminar of Women Peasants conducted by the Central Executive Council of GERWANI is a progressive step in the process of calling forth women to the struggle for full emancipation and liberation of the women

in the villages, who are a majority of all women in Indonesia and who still live in feudal slavery, for the system of land ownership by landlords has not yet been abolished.

I hope that after this National Seminar of Women Peasants, more women in the cities, especially leaders of women's movements and women intellectuals, will go the villages to examine agrarian matters and the life of the peasants, to assist in organizing peasant movements to liberate them from the economic and social oppression of landlords, to help the tenant farmers and poor peasants obtain land or increase land use as a result of land reform, and to aid in organizing peasants into people's working cooperatives. Furthermore, the city women play an important part in efforts to change Old Indonesia into New Indonesia.

This seminar will have a great meaning in strengthening the struggle of the peasants and of all the progressive people of Indonesia to annihilate imperialism and feudalism.

Long live the women peasants! Long live the women of Indonesia! Land for the Peasants!

Djakarta, 19-1-61.

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