CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
3 1924 091 188 551

Tossed down by the rising waves!

by

Lina

Closing notes.

Year after year passed. Nearly seventeen years have gone by since I started to breath the air of freedom after being swallowed by darkness during 18 years. Only in the year 1997 the obligation to report mothly to the Military Authority since medio 1983 was stopped But for the political detainees/prisoners , although they have reached the age of 60 years they cannot get a life-long identity card like the others. Every three years they have to apply for new identity cards.

During the first years of Independence after 1945 I experienced the armed struggle against the Dutch Colonialists, although only as a courier for the geurilla-troups around Solo, in Central Java. Late on when peace prevailed I was active within the women's movement which led me to stay in Germany at the Headquarters of The Women's International Democratic Federation (W.I.D.F.) I got also the duty to attend congresses in several countries in Europe like France Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Sovyet Union also in China, India etc.

Under the old order led by President Sukarno I was active also as a journalist until 1965 when the 30 September Movement occurred.

When the New Order under the regime of President Suharto started, in the framework of 'anti-communism' a massmurder was launched killing about 2 million members of the Communist Party and its massorganisations as well as its simpathisers. Also to apply for a job one has to obtain a statement of "clear environment", it means no one in the family and relatives is involed with the 'latent danger of communism' as they are considered as 'dirty' or 'not clean'.

The anti-communistic phobia has been pressed down in schools, beginning from the elementary schools up to the universities, so this generation has been educated that communism is a latent danger. Although President Suharto was forced to resign by the mass demonstrations including students, still the New Order continued with President Habibie's one year's rule. The economic situation is still very downward with a huge amount of foreign aid. Nearly twenty million people live in deep poverty.

Such situation has been inherited by the 4rth present President Abdurrachman Wahid with the National Unity Cabinet. With the duet of Gus Dur and Megawati Sukarnoputeri as Vice President it is expected that a total reformation could be realized. The court against corruption, collusion and nepotism (socalled K.K.N.) of former President Suharto and his cronies should be carried out as soon as possible.
Ex-political prisoners/detainees have already the courage to set up a mass-organisation named PAKORBA (Paguyuban Korvan Orde Baru- Solidarity Union of New Order-Victims on the 15th of September 1999.

We hope that the new millenium will bring new hopes for our be loved caountry . . .

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. Introduction.

2. Underground work

3. Capture.

4. Living in isolation.

5. The children and hunger behind bars.

6. Cultural activities.

7. Visits of the International Red Cross.

8. Together with women criminals.

9. Brought to Court.

10. Moving to Tangerang Women Prison.

11. Release in 1983.

---***---

I. INTRODUCTION.

In Indonesian history an important but tragic event happened on the 30th of September 1965, usually called the 30st September Movement of the CPI during the 32 years regime of President Suharto (1966 - 1998). It was stated at that time, that the CPI attempted a coup d'etat against the Government, murdering 6 generals of Lubang Buaya, South of Jakarta.
On that date President Sukarno was still in power. Actually it seemed quite strange as President Sukarno always commanded for the unity among the three ideologies in Indonesia : nationalist, religious and communist, popular as Nasakom.

To achieve his mandate to restore order, he firstly [illegible] the Communist Party. Anti-communist were carried out throughout the country led by General Suharto, who in 1966 declared himself as President and put President Sukarno under detention, until he passed away in 1970.
Anything connected with communism or 'communist', such as the allied mass organizations like the Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions (SOBSI), the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani), the Indonesian Farmers' Union (BTI), People's Youth, People's Children's Leagues and the Indonesian Scientists' Union (ISI) were banned and their members put in jail or massacred in mass killing especially in the villages.

There are very many to name here [illegible] more than 10 000 and Mr. Habibie in Ireland without bodies have been buried.
During more than three months [illegible] have not yet been thoroughly investigated, the real truth remained on the 30 September Movement leading to the overthrow of President Sukarno and the rise of President Suharto.

All followers and supporters of President Sukarno were chased and arrested during '65 - '67.

It was during this period that I would like to make [illegible] I will start to tell [illegible] September 1965 [illegible] over my experiences both personal and [illegible] many years.

I. UNDERGROUND WORK.

In September 1965 I was active at the Headquarters of the Indonesian Women's Movement working as translater. At the same time as part time journalist for some newspapers, I wrote articles and short stories especially about women problems.

The organisation was active in various fields like the Defence of Women's Rights, children's right, for social welfare, training women cadres etc.

At that time the organization had its branches on nearly all islands of the archipelago with about obe million members.

Together with many women's organizations in the Indonesian Women's Congress (KOWANI) wam held trainings of volunteers in the struggle for the return of West Irian into the Republic of Indonesia (Trikora). Before that, therere was also such struggle for the return of North Kalimantan against Malaysia (Dwikora).

Such was the situation at that time, demanding women volunteers totake part in mi itary trainings.
Such was the case in 1985 at Lubang Buaya.
At tha same time we were preparing for the holding of the forth Congress in December 1965.

I stayed with my friend Lamy, who was a secretary of the Women's Movement, in a rented small house not far from the office. But many times, when we had to finish our duties, we had to stay overnight at the office with the driver and a housemaid, who prepared our meals.

In the early morning of October 1st, '65 we started our duty as usual. As most activists were at the sama time also housewives, they used to cometo the office a little later,

It was a great shock for us in hearing the information from one of our chairwomenm, who came very warly. She told us that 6 generals were kidnapped and murdered at Lubang Buaya the day before. in the framework of the 30st September Movement

It was the place of volunteers' training in particular of members of the People's Youth, Women's Movement, Trade Unions etc as usual. We decided to look ariund in the city as we didn't know anything before.

In front of the Communist Party Headquarters we witnessed the burning of the buildings and people plundering.

Arrests were done everywhere .Anybody considered as communist or sympatysers was caught. We stayed overhight in a friend's house, but we had to leave the following day.

Fortunately a relative of mine had married a certain colonel,who was already retired. I knew that he was a supporter of President Sukarno. Lamy also knew him since the time of the geurilla fight in East Java against the Dutch troups.

We were welcomed heartily. He gave us some funds to continue our struggle. We decided not to be together all the time. Only at night we returned to that place. I started to connect another friend who had gone abroud mi to attend the International Federation of Trade Unions.

Lamy had heard that our leaders of the Women's movement as members of Parliament got the opportunity to stay for awhile at the Senayan Sport Hall Complex,because their homes were ransacked by the mobs together with the apparates.

We decided to know about their whereabouts. The colonel's driver took us to that place. But approaching the appartments we stopped at a small cafeteria ,just to be vigilant. The owner emotionally said :" Ah.. at night all the women inside were taken away by the military troup. What should they have done to be trated like criminals ., ah such old women..!"

We quikly left the place. It must be naive to fall into the trap of the authorities. We tried to meet other friends if possible. Lamy had to meet one fiend and I another one.

Once more I connected Sri the women leader of the Indonesian Federation of Trade Unions (SOBSI). I was how treated for when the women delegation attended an International Congress of women workers in Bukarest, Rumania in 1963. His husband was already imprisoned in Singapore. She tried to survive by dressmaking in one of the crowded areas of Kembang , a kind of slum area.

She was willing wholeheartedly to join our group in supporting President Sukarno.

[illegible] was prohibited on viewing films in support of Indonesia's struggle against [illegible].

She was assisted by a lawyer [illegible] who was able to get a responsible position.

The building we met mostly from Italy, was also supposed to have with the money of the [illegible].

We walked for a short time, The [illegible] , previously a member of the [illegible] Union and also [illegible] union. She was an ordinary personality [illegible], unpretentious and very much interested in the children. [illegible]

Sometimes we [illegible].

We continued [illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible] wanted [illegible] we got [illegible] but [illegible] we [illegible] to [illegible] to be recognized by Caribbean or Latin American.

I received a cable [illegible] in Trinidad.

I used [illegible] but now I [illegible] it [illegible] coloured it [illegible] Also [illegible] changed

several times. from Jin , to Rin , Erna , Lina etc.
We could do so at that time, as long as we had sufficent funds for the officials in charge.
Days and months passed. What made us emotionally tense was the slanders in big letters on posters or written in big letters with chalk or charcoal on the streetwalls stating Gerwani members doing sadistic activities against the Generals at Lubang Buaya. Pulling their eyes off, or cutting their penises. Also the massmedia published all those slanders. Even mentioning that some Gerwani leaders were prostitutes.

It was certainly engeneered by the present authority under General Suharto , who arrested President Sukarno until he passed away in 1969. He was considered as loyal to communism as his slogan was the unity among the three existing ideologies in Indonesia at thet time ! the nationalists, the regigious people and the communists (NASAKOM) He never agreed to ban the Communist Party.

In our bulletin published in the beginning of 1966 when President Sukarno was legally still President, we stated that we had to fight against the fasistic regime of General Suharto who inconstitutionally took the power. Our aim was to return President Sukarno into power again.

I got the duty to widespread the Bulletin also to foreign Embassies. I did it guietly in the evening just flinging them in the maiboxes along the main street of Imam Bonjol, Diponegoro etc.

Such was our daily activities. Before being aware nearly one year had passed moving from one place to the other Well , we had still a lot of friends and supporters and sympathisers , who assisted us with their activities, mentally as well as financially.....!

III CAPTURE

Before being aware , we had been doing underground work for more than one year, during the last months reproducing and spreading the Bulletin in support of President Sukarno called P.K.P.S (Supporters of President Sukarno's Command).

We had a reproduction machine in the rented house of Sri, my friend from the National Council of the Indonesian Trade Unions (SOBSI). Together with Harti from the Farmers' Union the three of us used to come together regularly to discuss the situation and futhhh activities. I received the monthly bulletin from Lamy, who got it from another three-persons'group above us. It was dedicated against President Suharto ,who declared himself President inconstitunally. We knew that President Sukarno was held as captive until hepassed away in 1969. But at that time it was September 1966 when I got shocked by the information that my two friends were arrested . It meant that they were looking for me too. Capture after capture took place. For me and my friend Lamy it was aproblem not to be caught. We disbursed ourselves with diffrent names and appearanced I had to cut my long black hair changing it into brown curls or eventually very short like a tomboy. Fortunately citizencards could be 'obtained' as far as one could pay a high price.

But finally on the 17th of February '66 Lamy and I were caught one by one and also another friend Biz from diffement spots. It must be a traiter who knew us precisely in spite of our disguises. We were brought to Gunung Sahari Street in a former Chinese School. I understood later why the place was ordinarily referred to as 'the Ghost House'. I was thrown in a narrow cell full of bloodspots on the wall. I heard cries of pain outside in the big interrogation space.

My friend Lamy was first interrogated, then my turn came. A team of interrogators in striped uniforms were standing around me. The Chief called Acep grinned at me : "Ai..ai you tiny girl! How dare you to spread pamphlets supporting the former President against the New Order, Heh ! Are you one of the generals murderers ?! Bereasaonable and tell me where your other friends are !"

He called some soldiers, who dragged me into a jeep next to the driver. They took me around asking me where my other frineds were staying. I closed my eyes firmly my mouth firmly. They shook my arms shouting me to anwere. But I just closed my eyes too, behaving as if I was on the point of fainting. One soldier layed his ear on my breast to listen my heartbeats I held my breath as if I was unconscious.

'Ai, Ai..if you die here. I 'll got trouble.."

So he returned to the Headquaerters at Gunung Sahari. and reported that I did'n want to utter a word. He put me on a chair in front of the commander.

I kept silent, looking at him without flickering. I felt my eyes tense without being able to close them.

"How dare you tu bugge out your eyes at me like thant ?!" Acep shouted angrily. He called two solders next to him. They took off my clothes and there I stood completely naked in front of those grinning 'ghosts'.

"Come on, open your mouth...or !" and they beat me with long rotan sticks all over my body. About eight of those 'ghosts' in striped uniforms green and yellow.

I closed my eyes feeling the blows down on my naked stomach, breast, face and arms. Blood spilled from my mouth. When I oped my eyes for a while I saw beaten men lying around the corners, many of them unconscious.

They dragged my around the small yard "You see..you will be thrown in that hole and buried if you don't want to tell us anything" I just shut my eyes again. Why should I tell them the secrets of our undergr oundwork and betray my friends, if finally I would be killed anyway!! flashed in mu mind

They could beat me to detah, if they wanted, but I should not become a traiteor anyhow. They took me on a chair to look at the beatings of other detainees. A young man I knew was pushed into a bambpo-basket, which they kicked around the yard. When he tried to free himself he got more kicking accompanied by laughter at the "show". One of the soldiers opened the basket and bit one of the ears of the detainee. It fell off in a shower of blood.

Again I shut my eyes ."Were they humanbeings or real 'ghosts' with such sadistic inhuman behavior ?!'
to X Finally they considered that harshness could not open my mouth . The commander patted me. "Be a good girl..here..take on your clothes and have some talk !"

He brought me into a cell.

"please be rational..if you tel me about your work..your leader and where he stays, you wil be freed !"

I still kept silent. When he came near or almost touching my cheeks,I felt disgusted. My stomach seemed to moved up and I vomitted all the liquid from my stomach...just on his face with the feeling of the greatest disgust. He shouted a vulgar abusement and dragged me along the big room,while other soldiers beat me again with rotten sticks intil i really felt unconscious I didn't know for how long I heard a new voice shouting.

"Enough ...don't kill her...I think she has to be brought to court with the others" It seemed that the newcomer was of a higher rank.

with the [illegible] she was also bruised throughout her body

I was then transfered to anot er place, it seemed a former chinese school too. In the big hall I met some other women detainees, all of us suffering from severe beatings. Drops of blood were seen on the thin mats where we were pushed together . More than thirty women and girls ,among other chinese women.

She were trembling and crying. A chinese girl was unconscious. She was interrogated "When she refused to speak she got electric shocks" her friend explained./ Across the yard we saw another former classroom where the men detainees were kept also squeezed, may 40 of them in one room.

I looked around. There were some older women,whom I knew, mostly members of the Indonesian Women's Movement, The People's Youth or the Indonesian People's Cultural League and young Chinese students assumed as allied to the C.P.I.

Once a day they gave us some food. In this centre of detainees the nights were more awful, because just at night some detainees either from the men-side or someof us would be called up for interrogations at the 'Ghosts'House' the place of sadistic torments

Upon return in the morning they were wounded and some of them died during interrogation.

I rubbed my own face, which was swollen from the beatings and my lips were inflamed. In any case I was still alife...!

At that time there was no other feelings than trying not to be nervous during interrogations. Although my heart seemed to burn with fire, my head had to remain cool and not to loose my mind. I did'n 't want to dye now, even I had to pass prsion life.

Finally someof us were transfered to another camp and our turm came. Lamy and I were called up and transfered to a building in the centre of the town. It was narrow, men and women detainees were pushed together, nearly hundred of five. The women squeezed in one room while the men sleeping on the terrace in a row close to each other. But still life was going on. The young students were playing cards while making fun. A group made efforts to study languages or accupuncture from experts.

In June 1967 we were moved again to another camp. This time also overcrowded, so that we had to sleep in turn. It was just an ordinary house for one family, but we were nearly hundred. We met here our two other friends, Sri from the Trade Union and Harti from the Farmers' Union. So the four of us were complete. I listened to the story of their capture in September '66. Sri was severely beaten. She was actually well built with yellowish skin and big breasts. So when she had to stand naked in front of the soldiers at the "Ghost House", she was greatly humiliated. For some time she lost her mind staring mindlessly in front of her, Harti told. Some friends who studied accupuncture tried to cure her by massage and reflexology.

Although in such horrible situation we tried to use the days as best as possible, Some groups were learning from others various skills and knowledge.

Of course when the guard was not in sight.
I spoke with a wellkown poet (Sitor Situmorang), who tried to remain calm and humorous in the worst moments in our life.
Chatting was better than being depressed. I met here a wellknown lawyer, journalsists, enterpreneurs and ordinary ex-activists of leftist massorganizations, once so powerful with millions members throughout the archipel.

Again we were investigated in turn. Although no forms of tortures like in the "Ghosts'House" were used, but still if the military interrogator was not satisfied with our answers...
He just slapped in my face like a naughty schoolgirl decades ago
Ah it hurt me more mentally, feeling deeply humiliated. Sweat drops fell from my face, when I returned to my place at the corner.
I just fell asleep. My friends tried to cheer me up. In fact we had to comfort each either in order not to feel depressed.
I smiled when a friend told the group how to practice meditaion or "yoga", the Indian way to keep calm in any turbulence.
Other friends tried to make pipes from chickenbones, etc, I saw a friend going from one corner in the morning to another corner and returning to his sleeping corner in the evening as if coming 'home' from office, The space was just several meters long.
The episode of living in a narrow space like fishes in a tin, finally came to an end, when one by one or in groups , we were transfered into the prisons.

Our turn came ..a group of men detainees among them a lecturere of the University, a journalist and some activists entered then bus and they called us: the four women.
The bus sped to the big prison at Salemba. I still remembered our friends, thin, pale and in ragged clothes, while the military

guards shouting powerful, when they saw them flickering towards us, the women, in like saying goodbye. All what we had , especially notes, papers, any books were cllected and burned. We regretted the notebooks with meditaion lessons of Yoga: a method to obtain peace of mind in the chaos of worldly tumult.

Finally all the women detainees were ordered to get into the bus again and we sped up to the Women Prison of Bukitduri. OE..how big and sturdy was that building. Later I was informed that it was built during the Dutch colonial time for rebellious (ingenious' people or 'inlander'. Some were sentenced to death and m many others were banned lifelong to Boven Digul in West Itian. Onee I read wbout those heroes, the fighters for independence many decades ago.

It turned out that the big building was devided into two sections, the left one for the women criminals and the right section for the political detainees. In the centre was a big hall used for gatherings or celebrations and in front was the office of the guards. Unfortunately the four of us were not brought to the right wing together with the political detainees, butisolted in one room among the criminal detainees .The guard said it would be just for a certain time as my friend Lamy was needed as witness at the Court of a Communist Leader,who participated in the Sukarnoi ist Group issueing the Bulletin Supporting President Sukarno. We didn't have the opportunity to coantact our friends at the poltic cal Section.In the beginning we were rather afraid amidst the wo - men criminals like murderers, thieves,kidnappers,cheaters etc. But soon we understood that they were mostly kind to us. Probably the y felt sorry for us,as we were completely isolated day and night Even our door and windows were al the time shut/.

Once, during a rainy day we heard someting falling from the high window near the ceiling. It turned out to be a package of fried cassave, smelling deliciously. It seemed, that behind the wall was the kitshen of the criminal prisoners. Oh...how kind they were... The second time was, when somebody opened our window to clean it, but at the same time tossed down some fried fishes inside. We thanked them quietly in oreder the guard would not see it. We were really among sympathetic people. More than one month we were there. Even socalled 'criminals' had a human heart, feeling sorry for us, who were isolated day and night without enough food.

When on the 27th of July '66, Lamy came from the Court Session of the Communist Leader Sdm, she told that the latter was sentenced to death just on that day, which was accidentally his birthday. Another friend from Surabaya was also brought as witness. She was captured in Palembang and brought to Jakarta and stayed in the room next to ours.

Finally our days in the Criminal Section of Bukitduri were finished and we were returned to our last Detainees' Camp. We told our friends there about the friendly women criminals, who many times smuggled some delicious snacks for us.
Our friend the humorous poet remarked "Ah...certainly there are a lot of themes to write about...It's a pity I am not a woman !" Of course everybody laughed.

After several days the four of us were suddenly called up returning to Bukitduri Woemn Prison, This time we entered officially the Section of Political Detainees at the right wing.

It was a lot of hugging and kissing, as most of them we knew already ; such as the leaders of the Indonesian Women's Movement and activists of all the mass organisations ,with whom we have worked together many years before 1965.

We were put at Block C ,again in isolation as this Block was suppsed to be prepared for those marked as 'dangerous'. We as Epiloque activists belonged to this group because when the organisations were banned we still continued our activities. Others in this Block were the young teenagers arrested at Lubang Buaya, they were members of People's Youth. But during our underground work we read that they were members of the Indonesian Women's Movment participating in mrdering the Generals. Ah..later we would know everything about the truth. In any case ,we were now far from the "Ghosts'Houese", the interrogation centre with inhuman tortures..

For the first time since our arrest and in various camps I could breath relieved and tried to sleep. What would tomorrow bring for us, we had just to wait and see ..!

=======

LIVING IN ISOLATION

We were put in Block C in One big cell. Block C was dedicated for the 'dangerous' detainees. The socalled epilogue-activists like us, who continued active after the banning of all leftist organisations. And also those young girls arrested at Lubang Buaya . They stayed in the cells next to ours, but we could not speak with them as the door was always locked. The other inmates, who were not isolated sometimes approached at the windows to have a chat , naturally when the guard was no guard in sight.

After some months we were separated , one of us down, in one small cell of about 2 x 4 meters with a cemented 'bed' , without mattress. I sat down on a thin mat, while the air was damp as the door was always closed day and night . The only window was a small one high near the ceiling, unable to be reached by the other detainees.

During the long hours of loneliness (time) started to become stressed and began daydreaming. I lived in an imaginary world.

My activities in the past before the arrest flashed back like a film being rewind.

My happy student years in the early fifty-est at the Gadjahmada University in Jogyakarta until 1955.

At that time I joint the Indonesian Communist-movement , Jogya branch. Even I participated at the first Congress in Surabaia in 1954. Until 1955 its members had become hundred thousands in all the provinces.

In 1955 I participated in a Youth Delegation to the International Youth Festival in Warsaw, Poland. It was the first time

Upon returning to Indonesia I started working as translater in the Headquarters of the Indonesian Woemn's Movement.

In 1963 I got the duty to join the Women Workers' Delegation to the Congress of International Women Workers in Bukarest, Rumania. Its chairman was Sri who was the chief of the Women's Section od the Indonesian Workers'Federation (SOBSI).

Oh.....like rewinding a film I still remember those faces of women from various countries, white or yellow skinned, brown or black wi with hair like gold, blond or black, and eyes of brown, blue or yellowish colours.

All of them united in one aim :: to defend women's rights.

Every fight has its consequences. My older friends, who experienced the Dutch colonial time and fought against colonialism, were banned to Boven Digul in the 30-ies (West Irian) stated, that every fighter had to face the 3 B (Buang, Bui, Bunuh) to be banned, to be inprisoned or to be killed.....

And now I was here... isolated in the prison, Bui in my case I had to be thankful, thant I I was till alive.

Where there is life, there is hope , isn't it ?!.....

I looked around in my small cell.

Oh, a friend had given me a pillow containing no soft cottonwool but a collection of pieces of textile pieces , as her mother was a dressmaker. I opend the pillow , collecting the various colorful pieces . I started to make dolls, the faces with embroidered eyes, nose and red lips. The hours passed away.

On daytime we could borrow scissors, knives and threads but those things had to be collected in the evening for danger of suicide with those sharp thingsm , they said.

I saw foreign countries and met young people from all over the world. I started to write letters to a friend in Jakarta. The sery of letters was entitled : I saw a new world . It turned out, that my friend published them in the People's Daily . a left wing daily. It was the beginning of my carrier as journalist.

When the Youth Festival was over I got the duty to join the Women's International Democratic Federation (W.I.D.F) as the Indonesian Women's Movement was one of its members. Its office was in Berlin, Germany. It was very interesting I worked together with representatives of many countries, such as Beatrix from the United States, Madeleine Rossi from Italy, the chairwoman was Madame Cotton from France.
I lived together in apartments along the Orankestrasse with Balqis from Iraq, she was at the same age like me , about twnty five years. Next door was Shahnaz from Iran and in another room was Maud from Sweden , Didi from India and another friend from Spain. Our office was at Unter den Linden, in front of the Humboldt University, We were like a global family interested in the defence of Women's Rights in the shole world.
We attended international Conferences like those held in Helsinki (Finland), Lausanne, Swiss, even in China.
Several national organisations invited us at their Congresses like Didi and me to attend the Congress of Femme Francais in Paris, Vienna, Austria and Oslo , Sweden.
It was really an interesting period of my life being in daily conta contact with women from various nationalities.
I spoke about the fight for independence in my country and the position of women which was still lower than that of the men in most Asian African countris.

For three years I stayed there, traveling many times to other countries.

Nikat schilp

Enthousiastically I produced dolls with various national dresses of diffrent countries as well as from various provences in Indonesia. In the evening when I looked at them especially the dolls' eyes, I felt like having company, not just completely alone. Also my yearning for the outside world with sceneries of palmtrees waving at the beach was somehow reduced by doing patchwork making pictures of coconut trees along the beach with waves of the blue sea. I was fortunate to have studied painting during my student years.

When selling my handicracts my friends started to like them and excanged them with tea, sugar and snacks ,whih they received from their families. Even they encouraged me to produce more to sell them via their visiting relatives.
Only two of the four of us received family visits ,although rare.I did n't have contact with my family as they lived far away in Solo, Central Java.

Once a day the four of us were brought in front of the guards' office to have one hour 'sunbath', although strictly guarded. Even going to the toilet or taking our baths , we were guarded.

(1) In 1968 new detainees entered the prison. They came from Blitar after a failed revolt against the regime. They were also isolated. It so happened that there was daily only two guards doing their duty in turn, They entrusted their esponsibility of controling the blocks to the socalled 'block-chiefs' choseb from among the detainees supposed to be loyal to the guards. After certain periods they were changed.

Once we got a block-chief who could play a double role, intelligent enough to seem obliging the miliary guards but at the same time violating thier rules to relieve our suffering , especial ly for the isolated detainees. She dared to open pur lockedd doors as soonn as the guad left the blocks to return to his office whi was about several hundred meters from the blocks

We then could freely associate with our other friendss. Apart from the teenagers of thePeople's Youth there were some reall kids of two to 4 years old brought along by their respective mothers, usually their fathers were also arrested so nobody could take care oft them.

Our blockchief Yus taught the children like Yoyo ot Tetty a special children's song and upon instruction they sang it when the guard left the office approaching our blocks.

Yus would quickly push the isolation detaine es into our own cells and 'clock' the door was locked again .

The other friends returned to their daily routine jobs as tailors, or clustered in the yards while doing their work like crocheting, knitting, orembroidering waiting for the inspection of the guard .

==========

During my life alone in the cell, I tried to write poetry just to push away every thought which might lead to stress. Some of those were the following :

1. Peace in my heart !
2. A whisper of hope !

A whisper of Hope

In the deepest darkness of the night
Knocked down by a gulf of sorrow
Painfully squeezed beyond comparison
During years of glowing fire...

In the silence behind walls
Piercing through the iron bars
Those whispered a string of words
Full of hope in future peace

How dark the night might be
And dreadful the storm could be
Once the storm would come to an end
Fresh and bright the sun would shine

In the deepest darkness of the night
I hear a whisper of hope
Coming from HIM, whose love embraces us all
Who do not daubt in His power ...!!!

Peace ib ny heart !

Walls and bars
Are witnesses
Of all turmoil
And grief in my heart

Days became moths
Years were quickly flying
Like a very long night
Sinking in freezing nothingness

Silent and quiet
Locked up in my cell
Far away from the noises
In complete loneliness.

All turmoil in my heart
Quietened in the tremble of peace
In Full belief in HIM
The Crator of the Universe.

Walls and bars
Became witnesses
Of the Deepest joy
Thrilling uh my heart
in full belief ..!!

====

IV THE CHILDREN AND HUNGER BEHIND BAR

Years have passed since we were thrown into Bukitduri Women Prison in the Southern Part of Jacarta in 1967. We were considered as Epiloque detainees, those who after 1965, the banning of all leftist organisations, were still active. Therefore we were assumed as 'dangerous' and had to be isolated in Block C. We stayed together with a dozen young girls all of them teenagers, assumed as directly involved in the 30th September Movement. They were arrested in 1965 at Lubang Buaya, the place ofwhere th 6 Generals were murdered by a military unit. After a while they were eager to tell us their stories. In the media and posters in those days they were considered as Gerwani members but in fact none of them were a member of the Women's Movement considering their age at the time of their arrest. They were members of People's Youth who got military training at Lubang Buaya.

In that period during the conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia called Dwikora it was usual to join military training by massorganisations Not only the communist allied mass organisations, but also by the nationalist and religious groups. Under President Sukarno the three ideologies the three trends and their organisa (NASAKOM) were united in the fight against imperialism

About the 30 Sept, Movement itself it has been explained before The main thing was to use GERWANI as the object of accusation of horrible deeds of sadism agiantst the 6 generals. And these girls were the victims of the assumption that as members of the Women(s Movment they had committed sadistic and pornographic activities at Lubang Buaya.

They were widely reported in the massmedia that they had taken off the eyes of the generals, cutting their penises after doing sex . Such horrible stories were published. One report stated that these 'Gerwani members' had taken off their clothes and nakedly they danced the socalled "Fragrant Flower Dance'.I asked the children how was the truth. The fact was that these children were arrested at Lubang Buaya heavuly beaten ,some of them even raped like W.She became mentaly disturbed since then . And it was in Bukitduri Prison, where they took teir clothes off in the meeting hall,where they had to jump and shout while being put in a video strip. This was believed as the socalled 'Fragrat Flower Dance' taken in Lubang Buaya . There was also a young innocent housewife who's husband owned the well in which the generals were thrown. She has been heavily beaten , she used to sit for hours stupified alone.

And now here we were together in Block C .We were altogether about one hundred inmates. Block A was occupied by women leaders and important personages like the wives of communist leaders. Block B was occupied by more or less ordinary Gerwani or Fra other massorganisations members arrested in the areas of the various Jacarta miliary Districts. Some of them were also heavily beaten ,even raped by the military interrogators.

The more we got the stories of their experiences durin g the arrests, the more we heard horrible stries like the time we were arrested in February '67. Many died during the interrogations and beatings too.

In any case we were still alive , but how...

In the beginning we got as daily food twice a day some rice ,vegetables and a piece of fish. Never a breakfast during all the years. Later on it became rice-porridge some vegetables and no fish, even
the worst was some grains of maiz ,some vegetables, even without salt. Hunger was our daily suffering. Especially for those young girls,usually called 'children'.
Most of them did not get family visits too. We tried to survive eating anything eatable from the garden all kinds of leaves usually nit to be eaten, as far as they were not poisonous.Even stems and green buds of flowers.
But the solidarity among us inmates was high. Anybody,who got a family visit and received some food, devided it to some others ,especially those who were sick.
For me ,as I lost my teeth during the beatings at the time of my arrest, I had to make my food very soft by grinding it with a stone on the aluminium plate.
For us four in the isolation room, every gift from the other friends meant a lot, as we were suffering from all kinds of deseases as the aftermath of our tortures at our arrests.
As two of our inmates were former medical doctors, they suggested that the weakest friends should get daily one glass of the fluid after boiling the vegetables. Usually it was thrown away. It must still contain the vitamines of the vegetables, although it tasted bitter .
Some friends who got the duty to work in the garden took the inisiative to collect edible snails, altgough we had never eaten such meat. 'Still it is meat ...just try them !"

We did not have oil, so the snails would be half roasted on hot stones in the garden Some of the inmates got visitors from theor relatives . They told that in the men prison in Salemba and Tongerang they even ate meat meat instead of chicken or bufuflo meat. Some of the husbands were also detainees in the men prisons.

In Tangerang prison , some km outside of Jacarta many died from hunger .

During that hunger period at night we used to hear the girls crying and shouting feeling oppressed, as nobody knew when would be the end.

They were arrested and accused of committing such horrible crimes, which actually were complete lies.

When the four of us were brought to court in 1975, before my defence I stated why those children were not brought to court and in case of being ungulty, they had to be soon released.

But not the least response.

Only when there was an international urge to free the thousand of detainees fin lly they were released in 1979. For those children it meant fourteen years of their youd. waisted behind the iron bars, without any evidence of crimes.

When the hunger persisted some times we exchanged some clothes , some blouses with a handful of food from the criminal section , the left building in Bukitduri. We had to do it very carefully in order not to be observed by the guards.

It happened , that our bathroom was next to that of the criminals The wall deviding the two parts of the long bathroom had an open space above, through which we exchanged our clothes with packets of rice in bananal eaves.

We used to hid the packet in our ttokely while walking raidly to the blocks.

Still,day by day the hunger became worst.

One of the girls, the youngest--she was only thirteen when she was arrested as 'political detainee'. She was rather fat and short,nicknamed Fatty and used to make jokes in spite of the tragic condition in the prison.

This time she shouted that we were treated just as goats with just maiz and leaves as daily food. The other girls agreed and started togther mimicking the bleating of goats.." mBeek..mbeek..!

The next tome when the military guard entered to blocks for inspection we heard from all rooms the bleating of goats in all intonations.

The guard understood directly what it meant...only goats got such kind of food daily..! He became furious and red in his face, shouting to stop mimicking the bleating of goats.But it went on..for a while

Then the guard lost his patience and pushed every body in the cells and locked them. For two days all inmates were punished without food in the isolation rooms.

Yet the older inmates did not become angry against the naughtiness of the children. Instead, they laughed and later on still laughed remembering the angry guard while hearing the 'bleating ' of goat-children.

Ah...the children..and hunger behind the bars !!!

VI - Cultural activities.

In spite our suffering from hunger and mental stress we tried not to loose our spirit.

While looking at the teenagers we as adults had to be more resolute and able to endure hardship.

During those times we were again interrogated , this time not by military officers, but some civil prosecutors to take our verbal official report in anticipating the court session.

But when would it be, it was just a question ...!

It was already nearly five years since entering the prison, when I felt really very weak from lack of vitamines and daily food.

During one of the interrogation by a prosecutor, I didn't tell the truth about our underground w ork as usual.

He presented a written statement of one of our women leaders who told everything about our underground work, telling everything concerning the groups, even the names. Ah such a traitor !!!

I was ultimately shocked, so that suddenly I could not move my right arm. My nerves seemed to be cracked down by such a trairtory. This disappointment was a climax, for two years I could not hear and could not move my right arm even until ten years later as going to see a doctor was a rarity for us.

Still we did not want to become hopeless.

We tried to make our prisonlife as best as we could in spite of the poor food and medical services we could not obtain.

The young teenagers liked to learn singing and dancing. They held various competitions of gymnastics and other sports in the yard. Every morning we had to do morning gymnastics.

Table tennins was allowed to be done, even for us during our daily time of 'sunbath'.

In that way the years passed.
Once Carmel Boediharjo, who worked ath the Department of Foreign Affairs entered the prison after Minister Subandrio was arrested and detained at Nirbaya. Carmel was once a representative of the British Students'Union working at the Headquarters of the International Students'Union in Prague.
She met the Indonesian representatiove of students,Budiharjo and finally became his wife returning home to Indonesia with him.

Some of us formed a group to study English conversation with her. In turn I taught the teenagres elementary English. We were lucky, that Yus was still entrusted as block-chief, so that the opening and closing of isolation doors became her dailt routine. We, the isolation detainees were still forbidden to communicate with the others.

We also performed plays in a rather wide space between the blocks. Of course some friends hd to take the duty to monitor the guards. As soon as one of them left the office to approachr the blocks, we had to stop quickly our activities and did the the daily routine of embroidering, sewing etc, while the isolation detainees like us,had to rush to our cells and locked.

My friend Lamy and I used to write the plays, mostly about the geurilla troups fighting for independence against the Dutch colonial troups. We had a lot of rememberances about the tome between 1945 -- 1949, when we were teenagers. I was at that time a courier of the geurilla troups, making contacts beween the villages and the city of Solo, Central Java.

I got the duty as playdirector, chooisng the suitable players.

As Dutch soldier I asked Carmel to play the role as she was the only European, tall, whteskinned, with a straight nose, the exact type of the Dutch figure.

She did it very excellent, but sometimes she just mumbled " Wow... I have to play always the loosing one ! '
Of course all of us laughed.
We used to stage such plays approachinh IndependenceDay , the 17th of August to give the youngsteres some imagess of the struggle of the older ones.

Once it happened, that our friends who had to monitor the guards seemed to be too much engaged in watching the play and the code-song was heard rather too late.

We rushed to our isolation cells quickly and 'click' the door was locked. But it was not quick enough for Carmel to change her 'soldier's' clothing. So the other friends just dragged her into one of the nearby rooms and covered her with a big blanket. The guard was inspecting the rooms.
"She got suddnely ill, probably influenzia' told Amah.
At that time there was an epidemy of Hongkong -Flu spreading over the country, So the guard quickly left the blocks, afraid to be contaminated. The guards never paid attention, if enybody got sick....

We were lucky that the guard did not have any suspicion/ What if he knew, that Carmel was insoldiers' dress with a pistol in her pocket.... Of course just for playing !

Since that time on we continued our English studies. We also held competions in singing, dancing and poetry readibg.

Sometimes, it happened that we got the order from the commander so stage a play formally for the occasion of Independence Day, Christmas or Lebaran Day (the end of the fasting month) It was then staged in the big hall in the middle of the two wings, the left for the criminals and the right wing for us, poltical detainees.

Many guests from outside the prison were invited. They were quite impressed by our play, singing and dancing. Yes, we had to make our prison-life as sustainable as possible. We didn't know, when would be the end. But we should not loose our spirit and hope in the future!!!!

VII Visits of the International Red Cross.

Some years later for the first time we got a visit of the International Red Cross delegatton, one from Switserlabd and another one from Germany. They didn't bring a translater with them. As the guards didn't speak English, they asked us who among us could do it.

As I was known as an ex-translator, I was chosen together with my friend Tini, who was a former lecturer at the Indonesian University before.

While walking around, I told the Red Cross deleation about our sufferings, the lack of food and medical care. If anybody became ill, she was not directly brought to a doctor. The last time Rumini died from weakness ,symptoms of high blood-pressure without doctor's control.

In the office I obligedly translated the questions and answers. "How many times a day do the detainees get their meals and how much ?"

The guard answered " Well, certainly three times a day, rice soup and dishes, enough for them I think. Look they are healthy !"

I translated his answer fully and loudly, but added in a whisper. " He lies, we don't get enough, many times only once and not even rice, but maiz or cassave !"

It seemed that Tini said the same to the other delegates. We hade to look seriously so that the guard would not be suspicious about our translation even contrary.

The delegates noted everything down. We showed the the rooms , the sleeping cemented 'beds' without any mattress and blankets. Many friends just slept on the damp bare floors, and when it rained,it could be imagined how we felt.

It contained a nice blanket , nice clothes and chocolates I didn't taste such delicious chocolates for many year. The packet was accompanied by a letter from a Dutch woman introducing herself as a friend who knew my condition and woyuld continue to contact and assist us .
For the other three, each of them got also a packet with a moving letter of friendship.

The third time we met another I,R,C delegation was in 1980 during our stay at the new Tangerang Women Prison, where we were moved from Bukitduri. It was some kilometers away away from teh capital of Jacarta.

It was just on time, as I suffred from allergy for several months and was not brought to the hospital for medical care.

How happy we were like meeting old frineds.

How beautiful and nice was international so;idarity !!...

When the second International Red Cross delagation came after two years in 1974, the four of us were already transfered to the left wing among the criminals. But the ddlegates insisted to meet the four of us after they finished their visit to the political section. They had our names and urged to meet us.

The officer in command was obliged to take them to us after passing several closed doors until the left wing.
We were surprised and happy. This time they brought their own translater along. When the guard left us for a while they told us that for each of us they had found a special group of Amnesty International supporters, mostly in Europe. For me in Netherland, for Harty in Swiss and for the other two friends in Britain and Germany.

Oh... we were not forgotten, we still had friends, who fought for huma rights.
This time the delegation presented us all detainees each a mattress to sleep on. Already so many ~~days~~ years we did't feel the soft mattress.
When we for the first time tried to enjoy sleeping on the mattress, we sometimes woke up startled when our fingers felt the softness of the mattress containing cottonwool.
My friend Harti got the idea just to put our usual strawmat on the mattress . In that way when in the middle of the night we woke up and our fingers touched the strawmat , we felt relieved and continued sleeping like usual.
Oh..how funny it was !

After a little while after the visit we got a packet from the International Red Cross. The ~~rid~~ officer did not dare, not to send them to us, because the Govecrnment had an agrrement with the I,R,C.

VIII. Together with women-criminals.

Starting from 1974 ,when the International Red Cross Centre delegation met us for the second time, we were already transfered to the left Section of Bukitduri prison amindst the women-criminals in blue uniforms.

Although for several years the four of us still lived in one cell, but our follow prisoners used to approahh us the windows and told us their stories freely.
When after our courtsessions the door was finally unlocked during daytime, we could communicate with our neighbors more intimately.
As they were mostly young girls or women, they called us 'mummy', whereas the women-guards they adrressed as 'ibu' (mother or madam). So 'mummy' was more intimate.

I began to know the criminal world, the life of pickpockets,swindlers, thiefs, kidnappers, drugtraders or smugglers, and murderers. They were usually considered as 'social garbage'. But were they really garbage?
Weren't they humanbeings too,who were unfortunate and had reasons in doing their crimes ? I became the more interested day by day while listening to their stories,
I remembered my years before 1965 ,when I worked as translater for foreign journalists, including a Pravda journalist from the Soviet Union. At the same time I wrote artivles and short stories for various newspapers and magazines.
At those times we interviewed high officials, even ministers in Presidential Palace.

But now I was here and had the opportunity to t write the life stories of the lowest class citizens tossed down in the prison.
Of course I could not justify commiiting crimes, but I began to undertsand the reasons why and the motives behind various types of crimes.

For instance there was Tarsem, a sweet darkskinned young woman from Indramayu, a region at the Northern beach of West Java, wellknown for its sevre poverty.

She didn't know her father, who died from hunger and tuberculosis when she just a small kid. Her mother worked in the market carrying loads of vegetables and cocomuts piled up on her back When she came home she used to collapse from exhaustion. As a little girls Tarsem wanted to work as childworker in a sigaret factory to help her mother feeding her younger brother and sister, although she earned only very little. Tarsem told me haltingly " We used to eat cassave or maiz, as rice was very expensive for us. One day a neighboring girl Minem, who used to work in Jacarta, came home. She persuaded me to go to Jacarta in order to be able to send enough money for my mother . I joined her with great expectations. But what happened ?

Minem brought me to a brothel caclled 'Sweet nights', She has worked there for yeras as prostitute and so became I too. I had no choice. For three years I worked there. I was just a 'paything' with diffrent husbands every night. Of course I had dreams of being loved by a man. I yearned to finish with this life somehow.

Once My roommate stole some jewelry and a lot of money from a customer and fled .So I had to be imprisoned in her place Ah...in any case I can sleep quietly now ", she smiled

Another one was Keling ,a pickpocket "People were shouting..thief..thief!" I was caught stealing redhanded a few cans of sardines in the market. I was beaten across may face, head and body. I bit my lips and hold back the pain, I didnT share a tear. That was why I came here, mummy ! I was born beneath a bridge across the Ciliwung river in down town Jacarta, I did't know my parents .I was brought up

bt Ma' Isah a nimble fingered middle aged woman who was a p pickpocket herself. She had some maternal feelings towards me. When I was small, she used to carry me on her hips . She was formally a vegetable trader, But she frequently stole anything from the shops. And when she was caught and sent to jail I accompanied her as I was too small to stay on my own.
Ma' Isah taught me the skill of pickpocketing. That's how I have lived for years just like the other pickpockets and thieves, sleeping curled up next to my friends near the piles of vegetables in the market or in the doorways of some shops nearby, also under the bridges when the water was not high.
My friend Udin and I were the best in stealing. We were not allowed to beg. Ma'Isah didn't like it. To her stealing or pickpocketing is a dangerous 'profession' with consequences to be caught, whereas begging is just for the lazy and desperate people. When I met a schoolgirl in uniform carrying books under her arms, I sometimes had the feeling of envy... ah away with such thoughts ! There was a wall between their world and ours...! But a pickpocket has certainly dreams, you know!

When I became a little older. Ma'Isah took another orphanaged youth boy as her adopted son. I was happy to get a brother who was some years older than me, who could defend me when I got troubles.
His name was Bopeng or Pockmarked. As years passed Bopeng became a sturdy young man ,who could easily haul down huge weights of rice down from the trucks into the warehouses. That was his 'official' profession. At other times he used to steal car-spotlights which was his speciality ,just as each of his friends had their own specialitu in stealing.

Like my friend Dedeh for example used to chat animately with the young men and snatched their wallets cleverly.

When she shouted 'Pickpocket..pickpocket !" together with the others,nobody suspected her.

In my community to be a prostitute was considered of a lower status than a thief . We entered and left a prison ,but continued our 'profession'.

As years passed Bop eng showed not only brotherly affection, but the beginning of love, which got full response deep in my heart. Ma' Isah was happy that Bopeng and I loved each other. Who says, that love is not only for those who have house and much money ?!...

Ma'Isah had the dream to marry us 'officially' in her home-village one day.So she urged Bopeng and me to collect enough mony, although by stealing and pickpocketing.

But you see..now I am here, although I think just for some months and Bopeng is in the men prison. He will be released sooner than I and of course he will visit me then !" Keling's eyes sparkled gaily.

Another type was a middle aged woman nicknamed 'Dracula' as she had murdered four persons during several months.

She didn't show any feeling of regret. Once she told me, that she could not control her deeds, when she quarrelled or had a grudge against somebody. But in everyday life she was kind and helpful towards the other prisoners.

I thought she must be suffering of a certain psychological device . She should be handled by a psychiatrist then..

Not only poor people entered the women-prison. There was a beautiful wealthy young Chinese woman named Yang, who was sentenced for ten years imprisoonment ,beaause she had mudered hus husband/

"Ah..it was a tragedy. I regret it,but too late. We were married several years and got a son. But I found out thathe took a mistress in Singapore. Some friends from Singapore told me it to me.

I went to Singapore to find out wether the rumor about my husband was true. He sometimes didn't come home for a long time. I didn't meet him there, but the neighbors ensured my that it was the house of my husband and his 'wife'.

It so happened, that in Jakarta, I took part in a shooting lesson as a sport as it was common among the elite . So I know how to handle a pistol and shoot.

When I returned to Jecarta ,I made the gruesome plan to kill my husband. At night when my husband was vast asleep I took my pistol and shot him on his heart. He died immediately, I reported to the police and was detained and brought to trial. It was all like a nightmare. But I really regret it as my little son ceontinvously accuses me "Mummy, why did you kill daddy ,mum ?!!!"

But as she was a millionaire in those times she was able to bribe the authorities , Her official sentence was ten years long,but during that period she was allowed to go home now and then of course by paying millions. And finally on the base of various articles of the Law she got many years reduction and was released after 3 years.

Not like other murderers, who had to be inprisoned for the whole period of the sentence, even some of them were sent to the prisonen on Nusakambangan island at the Southern Sea South of Central Java.

Murder cases were usually committed ~~dd~~ to betraiyals of the husband , yhe object was usually the husband or the 'third woman'. Ijah even cut her husband's penis to death so that the other woman could not get it, she said.

In 1974 two students of the University of Indonesia, Faculty of Criminology cameto stay with us to make a thesis about women criminals. I introduced them to my fellow prisoners and said that they were our daughters. who paid attention to the fate of women criminals. Later they became lecturerers on Criminology at the University.

In the meantime I continued writing short stories of those woman criminals, who were pushed aside by the 'civilised' society. Somehow we could not feel the suffering in the prison ourselves as we were in the midst of human suffering of my fellow prisoners, who mostly didn't have the opportunity to live a normal life before, due to the deep poverty, lack of education etc.

At least all four of us didn't experience such life before, even we had the opportunity to be sent abroad as activists of the women's movement or trade union. Everywhere we were welcomed and honoured by our foreign friends.

I continued my writing about robbers, swindlers , drugseller I trusted a woman-guard who was particularly kind to us to send the stories home. Later on, when I would be released some time, I would take them back again.

It turned out that her husband was also a polical prisoner sent to Buru Island and died there.

She did not tell her superiors ; Otherwise as the wife of a polical detainee ,she could be expelled from her job at that time.

IX Brought to Court.

Finally the time came, when we had to prepare ourselves to be brought to court in 1975.
From the nearly hundred political prisoners in Bukitduri, only the four of us were sent to court, They told us, that they got suffifient evidence of our 'crime', tnamely the publication and spreading of pamphlets supprting Presdent Sukarno We did it in 1966, when President Sukarno was officially still in power, but general Suharto tried to shake it in order to obtain the power in his hands. Only in September 1966 President Sukarno was officially turned down at a General Assembly of the Parliament . He was then kept in arrest until he passed away in 1969.

Our court was 6 years later after the death of President Sukar o and President Suharto got the full power.
President Sukarno was accused as being loyal to communism as his slogan was unity among the three ideologies: nationalism, religion, and communism (NASAKOM).

The new order of President Suharto boasted itself as being consequent anti-communism, engineering the 30st September Affair, intructing the mass-murder of more than one million communists, sympathisers, and members of the allied massorganisations .
Everything connected with Sukarnoism (Old Order) was considered as a crime.

Approaching our appearance at the Court our friends lent us nice batik blouses and syawls to look presentable before the Court. A big prison carriage took us out. It was open at the back so that we could see the people on the streets. When we passed thmarket, it was asurprise, that many streetventers waved atus us enthousiastically From the prison carriage they knwe, that we were detainees Oh probably, they were also like our prison-mates! pickpockets or thiefs etc and considered us

as their friends. We smiled and waved back.

In front of the Court Building at down town Jacarta a whole crowd gathrered . They must be informed by the media, that four women political detainees would be brought to court on that day. The four of us sat neatly in a roww in front of the judges, consisting of one male and two female judges in their black toga uniforms. On the left the team of prosecutors and on the right the team of defenders from Jan Apul $ Associates. One defender smiled and nodded his head welcoming us. It was the first time in years that somebody welcomed us so kindly and ready to defend us. Ah..my heart started to beat harder.

As I looked at the three judges I suddenly remembered that the one on the left was my former classmate Yati at the Senior High School in Solo and also my fellowstident at the Gajah Mada University in Jogya, My self-confidence returned. Why ..I didn't do anything wrong . I spoke freely in my defence.

In a flash I remembererred the 'children', now already teenagers arrested in 1965 as Gerwani members although they could not be members of a women organization yet, but members of People's Youth. They were accused as having mutilated the generals at Lubang Buaya, taken of their eyes, cutting their penisses , which was complete lies. But for years written as headlines in newspapers and posters pn the walls to provoke the society in order to hate everything connected with communism and its allied organisations. I saw the bare lies along the streets during my underground period in 1966 - 1967.

"Honourable Judges, I know the Law has to be applied all the time. Once I have studied Law at theGajah Mada University My fellow detainees, still kids from the People's Youth, who were arrested in 1965 and still inprisoned after 10 years, should be also brought to court and set free, not only the four of us "

I pointed to the judge ,who was my former fellow student:

" I am speaking the truth, please ask her ! Supporting President Sukarno, who was still in function at the time we published the pamphlets in March, April and May 1966 was certainly not a viola tion of the Law. But this court is held after eight years of our arrest and sixyears after President Sukarno pass passed away, According strict regulation , a detainee should be brought to court after six months of his or her arrest. After 8 years of our arrest we are brought to court. Is not that violation of the Law ?!!" I spoke emotionally. The Chief of the Judges, Asmara, got red in his face. He banged the hammer amd stopped the court session. Some one took the loudspeaker in front of me, sothat the audience ,especially the crowd outside the building could not hear us anymore. The session was then postponed until undeterminated time. One session upon another continued for months. Finally the sentence was deternined. The hammer fell, sentencing us inprisonment during in secuence .

for Lamy 20 years, for me 18 years and for Sri and Harti each 15 years withouth reduction of the period since they day of our arrest. And that was eight years , by the way !!

Our defender Yan Apul from the Association of Indonesian Advocated (PERADIN) suggested us not to accept it and go to Higher Court. Also our prosecutor did not accept it as they demanded life sentence. It semmed that the process in Higher Court needed some years,as there were lots of cases awaiting, they told us We just waited ..and in complete isolation as usual...

In 1976 our friends from the poltical section on the right wing were suddenly moved away.

They were sent to a banning[4] place at Plantungan in Central Java, a former leprosery rehabilitation centre.

Finally the Higher Court issued the sentence in 1978, which was the same, but with reduction of the period wince the arrest. We wanted to accept it, but this time the team of prosecutors disagreed and went to the Supreme Court, During the time of waiting, bargaining between the courts, we were still locked up as usual. amidst the criminals.

When the guards were not around, they approached us at the windowm, chatting, pitying us, giving us sometimes anacks and cheering us up with their jokes. Ah... they were our closest friends during those dark days!

Due to international pressure in 1979 all political detainees in Indonesia were set free , but not those who were already sentenced. We could read newspapers smuggled carefully by our friends the women criminals. The nearly 10.000 poltical male detainees on Buru Island were released after 14 years of detention without evidence of their guilt or violation of the law.

But our status was just in between. We were no detainees anymore, because we have already been brought to Court and had still to wait to become formal prisoners.

The final sentence from the Supreme Coury came in the beginning of 1980. We were officially released from isolation and were free to communicate with our fellow prisoners wearing the same blue uniforms. We also got the same duties, like cleaning the blocks in turn, sewing and embroidering table clothosm and knitting in the work centre led by a woman guard.

On celebartions of National Days we sang in a choir togther. I taught thme some dances to be performed on the stage.

During all those years we rarely got family viists. Once I was visited by my younger brother , who was just released from prison after 8 years in Solo. He told me that our parents had passed away several years ago. He was formerly an activist

He was formerly an activist of the People's Youth in Jacarta and worked at the National Front.
An old church activist regularly visited us throughout the years. We wre really grateful to Mrs Tine Franz for her attention and assistence and from her we got informations about our other friends in different prisons.

X. Moving to Tangerang Women Prison

(At the end of 1980)

One day we were informed that the next day we had to move to Tangerang Women Prison, Tangerang is a small town , northwest of Jacarta. As the inmates of the Rightwing of Bukitduri Prison were trasfered to Central Java in 1976 Bukitduri Prison bcame too big for us. Actually the building was built during the Dutch Colonial Time more than two hundred years ago. And freedoom fighters were jailed there, even many were executed. We saw the iron guillotine , where they were hanged at that time. Now the building became rather brittle and the ceilings were likely to break down.

We had to collect all our belongings , namely some clothes, towels etc in one bag. Early in the morning probably at 3 O'clock we had to get into the buses and off we went. It was really a long journey to the north, passing ricefields, villages and sceneries, we hadn't seen in many years. We stopped in front of a sparkling new building, the Tangerang Women Rehabilitation Centre.

In the same town there were prisons for men, for delinquent youth and also one special for children.

The Women Rehabilitation Centre consisted of several round buildings one in the front for the office. Two on the left and right for work-centres and a few others for sleeping places..

For us, poltical prisoners, they reserved one round building. We got more inmates, one from Lampung, South Sumatra, who was sentenced for life. Two others from Cianjur, West Java , a mother and daighter, whose 'crime' was giving a communist leader from Bandung to stay overnight for a few days. They got respectively 16 years and 12 years sentence.

Another one was Tati from Purworejo , Central Java, who got 15 years.

So the eight of us were brought together in one round building.

The media reported that the new Women Prison was the best in the whole South East Asia. In our opinion it eas the most secured, because each was shaped round and the middle space was the post for the women-guars overlooking all rooms around. The doors were not made of wood, but iron bars, so that even at night the guards could control what the inmates were doing.

During daytime we got the duty in the Work Centre, just like in Bukitduri, sewing ,knitting, embroidering togther with the women criminals. As I didn't have enough patience to do handicraft I told the guards that I could draw desingns for table clothes,or handcherchiefs for embroidery.

At the same time I could put aside some pages of paper to continue my writing of short stories. I had to do the writing at night in the toiletroom in order not to be seen by the guards.

Sometimes we had to do gardening as around the buildings there was anough land to plant vegetables and flowers.

In the beginning we had to prepare the inauguration of the prison which would be done by the President's wife, Tien Suharto.

We got a teacher to teach us playing the gamelan orchestra and singing traditional Javanese songs. Each of us got a nice light-blue blouse with flower designs, but only just for that occasion. Whereas everyday we had to be satisfied wearing our dark blue prison uniforms.

As there were frequently visitors from several institions and social organisations, church activists or journalists to write reports about the new prison, the food we received was somehow better than in Bukitduri, where we suffred from hunger.

I got the opportunity to smuggle my writings out of the prison via a young female yournalist, Doris. She pretended to be student

of the Technical Institute interested in the design of the new prison and wanted to study it in detail. She got the permission to enter the buildings unaccompanied by the guards.
She saved my writings and returned them to me after my release.

We met here some international figures in the criminal world.

Jane was an Italian girl, a member of a syndicate in morphine trade. When smuggling drugs to Bali she was caught. Jane didn't speak Indonesian well, so she used to come to me chatting freely about her eeperiences to pour all the burden in her heart,
Here is her story :

"Yes, I am an adventuress. I have besmirched my country's good name . I started as a model in a big fashion company in Paris. I came from a simple family near Rome. On the age of 16 I had a great ambition to become rich and joined a group of girls trying fortune in Paris. In the glamorous world of luxuruous fashion I forgot my life in the village. My first love was a feudal prince from Germany. We called him just Baron.

Some time later this Baron took me to elite restaurants in Champ Elisee near the Eifel tower. I felt like Cinderella.

My friends warned me "Be careful with your prince in order not to be betrayed later !" But I just didn't pay attention. My prince took me onee to a small island, Banana island south of France at the nmediterranian sea..
It was called also the 'nudists' island as people were sunbathing completely nude at the beautiful beach. Oh..it was like heaven on earth !.
To this islands European millionnaires, big business men used to run away from the tensions of the big cities to live a 'free' life for some time. It seemed that Baron was not strange here.

Nobody asked wether I was his wife, We had to enjoy life, Baron always said as nobody knew, when would be the end..

After a while he told me that he had to return home for a while to take more money. With tears in my eyes I told him that the fruit of our love had sprung,,,that I was pregnant..

He just comforted me saying that he would be back soon.

Days and months passed, but Baron didn't appear.

I was really betrayed. Fortunately aunt Rosa ,may former housemaid cared for me as she didn't have any child of her own.

When I gave birth to a baby-girl, she took it in her arms like a grandmother and named her Violetta or Letta.

We earned our living by selling souvenirs made of sea-rocks ans shells.

After some time Peter, a friend of Baron came to send me some money. He told me that Baron had to marry the only daughter and heirress of a rich Prince, a relative of his mother. As Baron's parents were impoverished and had to pay loads of debts, Baron agreed to save the family,

And I,,, without anybody on the small island had to care for his daughter. Frustrated I threw away all the money to Peter's face..

No..no better finished with all this !!

I became a drugseller like many others on the beah and got a lot of money. An international syndicate uf drugsmugglers used me to widespread the network to many countries,in particular in Asia. I became a real adventurer. They thought, thta I was a beutiful rich girl, traveling to different countries accompanied by handsome partners like Henry, Joe and some others.

I kept the morphine tablets among the linings of my brassiere.

But in Bali the accident happened, when a big dog was smelling around. He must be trained to find drugs,He jumped army breast, while barking loudly. Probably I was suspected already,as I came to Bali many times.

I was arrested with a lot of morphine tablets as evidence. Now here I am..mum ! I don't know what the future will be for me !"

As for the other inmates in Tangerang were mostly small fishes. Pickpockets, swindlers and husband murderers Two girls from Singapore were gold smugglers.
After a certain time we faced some negative treatments in the form of the prohibition to go to the hospital when we were ill. There was a case of an inmate running away while going to the hospital. Although she was accompanied by a guard, she mangaed to slip away from the backdoor of the doctor's room.

During that time accidentally I suffered from a kind of skin allergy, itching gravely when I was emotionally tense. One day the chief told me that I got permission to see a skin doctor. I was rather surprised, but the only skin specialist was at the leprosery. There I saw the victims of leprosery pushed aside from the sciety. Oh..certainly there were people who suffred more than us...!

It turned out that the next day a delegation of the International Red Cross came to visit us. It was the third time that we were visited by the IRC delegation.

We welcomed them and secretlytold that I was permitted to go to the skin doctor the day before as the chief knew that an IRC delegation would visit us.

In 1981 it was the time for our two friends Sri and Har to finish their 15 years long sentence after getting some remissions. With tears in their eyes they departed from us the remaining six poltical prisoners.
Then the three others, Mummy Ubed, her daughter and Tati wre in turn relased.
So the three of us, Lamy, I and ndari with her life sentence remained.

According the regulation of the Criminal Law after two third of the sentence we could appeal for parole (relased under control or in Dutch Voorloping in vreiheid stelling ! V.I) but usually with some amount of money to be paid.

Lamy and I didn't have any money, even our families in Central Java could not afford to visit us, the more to pay four our parole.

So the only solution was to wait until the time of P.R.T (Pre Release Treatment) meaning a certain period of time before the date of the exact release. But under strict control of the local military district command until the formal date of release.

I jearned to breath the free air outside the prison walls.

++++++++++++++++

XI. Released in 1983.

To be released needed somebody to be responsible for .
I was lucky that the wife of a distant cousin Widodo, sometimes visited me in Tangerang. Her husband was namely -also detained for 14 years and banned on Buru Island . It was she, who declared herself responsible for my request for P,R,T (Pre Release Treatment) It meant that during the time of PRT in my case two years more, in case I ran way and didn't report to the local military comand, she would be arrested in my place.

I thanked her heartily, when finally she picked me up on August 17th, 1983 afyer 16 years of imprisonment.
Ah..how relieved I felt !! Once a week I had to report to the local district military command, But it didn't matter, I was then free to go anywhere I wished .
My niece rented a small house several km from Jogyarta in a suburban village called Gendul.
Whenever I went to town in a small public vehicle, everytime I felt happy inhaling the fresh air of freedom.
" Free...completely free !" was the song in my heart, remembering the time within a locked cell during years and years.
My nephew, Widodo, after 14 years in burning on Buru Island with forced labour and probably heavily tortured at his arrest was at that time mentally rather disturbed and could not earn his living.
So my niece had to work hard during many years as secretary of a woman landowner to earn the living for the family.
The eldest son and his sister were already married, the younger two sons had to go to college.
Sp I had to think how to earn my living and not to be a burden to others .

As I was a translator about ~~two decades ago~~ many years before 1965, presently I had to obtain new certificates in foreign languages, otherwise it would be very difficult to get a job in this overcrowded metropolitan city of Jacarta, people told me.
From all the foreign languages I knew, namely Dutch, German and English, Dutch I knew the best as I was forced to master it since childhood during Dutch Colonial time. I studied in the Dutch Elementary School (H.I.S) for seven years and two years at the Junior High School. Then the country was occupied by the Japanese invaders and for three one half years we had to study Japanese. Only in 1945 after the Proclamation of Independence we studied the Indonesian language, called the Malayan language before. My mother tongue was Javanese.
I registered at the Erasmus Huis, a Dutch Language Instutute managed by the Dutch Embassy.

Fortunately I had saved several thousands rupiahs collected from translation fees during the last period of my prison time. Although it was a rather long daily trip from Gandul Village to the Institute in downtown Jacarta, I enjoyed it very much passing beutiful seeberies, ricefields and palm orchards before entering the city with huge buildings and skyscrapers.
After several months of hard study I passed the final test cum laude. My teacher a Dutch lady, Johanna, offered me to work at her house assisting her husband, who was a Dutch lecturerer at the University of Indonesia. Naturally I was ready to accept it. Only I didn't know how her reaction would be if I acknowledged that I was an ex-political prisoner, who had still to appear regularly to the local military command. For two years I had to report weekly. They said, that an ex-political prisoner could not take a job connected with the community, such as teacher, journalist, civil servant even private enterprises or individuals usually didn't accept them as employees.

I started to work as translator at her house, even I had to study operating a computer befor ehand. Before 1965 we didn't have computers yet. Finally I stated openly that I was an ex-political prisoner, who still had to report weekly at the military command, She hugged me with tears in her eyeyes and stated that it was alright as she was connected with the International Amnesty in London, although not openly

So I continued working for her for about four years long, when the family had to leave as there were indiction about her activit activities. During that time she suggested that I should master the English language too.

So I registered as astudent athe English language Institute manag ged by the Indonesia-America Friendship League (L,I,A) you know, in that time anything connected with America was considered the best, SO I could be sure that having a certificate as English teacher from LIA would be a licence to get a job. Although there was a restriction for ex-tapols to work as teacher, journalist, civil servant, etc we better watch out not to be found out ;

After two years I got the official statement of release namely from 1967 up to 1965 , on the whole 18 years .

Now I didn't need to report weekly, but like the other ex-detainees I had to report monthly during many years. (it ended in 1997)

When my Dutch employer had to return to Netherland , he gave me a reference to work at his friend's house, an Australian lecturer in history at the University of Indonesia.

Here I became acquainted with some Australian Professors like Prof Herbert Feith from Monash University and other women lecturers, who were very kind towards me and interested in the situation of ex-political detainees in Indonesia in general.

For several years I worked $ there , while finishing my teacher's training at IIA. So when the time came that he had to return to Australia I had already my certificate . In the meantime I got contacts with some NGO's , especially feminist foundations, who usually got invitations to attend congresses or seminars abroad. So they needed the staff to master the English language..

I came in contact with upcoming reform style women activists, who remembered me with my activities several decades ago , when I worked for the women organisation and attended congresses in Europe and Asia.

Since my release I used to visit our friends who were still imprisoned since 1963 and later on the young activists were detained after the incident of the attack on the office of the Indonesian Democratic Party. Some leaders of the People's Democratic Party were executed ,who were just around 20 years old.

The political situation in the country, after great demonstrations of students finally led to the downfall of the New Order, the Suharto Regime. But the way to release all political prisoners either from army controlled abroad as well as demands from domestic groups, didn't get response yet. Some were released, but still many didn't get abolition as they were considered as allied to 'latent communist danger'.

That is the present political situation in 1995 I hope there will be soon a change and all political prisoners will be set free. Let us wait and see !!!