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# The PKI in West Timor and Nusa Tenggara Timur 1965 and beyond

This article examines the aftermath in West Timor, and elsewhere in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), of the so-called coup attempt made in Jakarta, Indonesia, on the evening of 30 September-1 October 1965, which came to be known by the acronym G30S (Gerakan 30 September; 30 September Movement). The 'coup', which resulted in the deaths of six army generals, amongst others, was blamed on the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party). The PKI was subsequently banned and many of its members and sympathizers died as the result of extra-judicial killings, often carried out or organized by the army. These killings were most widespread in Java and Bali, the main centres of PKI activity, but occurred in the outer-island provinces as well, including NTT.

What follows is a brief assessment of the PKI's strength and support in NTT in 1965; the initial response to G30S in NTT; the first actions taken against the PKI; and descriptions of events later cited as examples of G30S plans for NTT. This is followed by some analysis of the killings that occurred in NTT after G30S, including consideration of numbers killed; who carried out the killings; those who were targeted; and the fate of those captured, but not executed. Consideration is also given to the ongoing effects of accusations of PKI membership in NTT and how the party has been viewed in the province in more recent times. First, however, it is important to say something about the sources used to write this article.

#### A note on the sources

Many of the published Indonesian sources about G30S were produced by the army or the New Order government led by General Soeharto, which came to

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power following the events of 1965. Extra-judicial killings, arbitrary imprisonment, and persecution of individuals who have committed no crime apart from supporting an ideology different to that of their opponents are not normally matters recorded faithfully by those who have benefitted from those acts and are largely seen as responsible for them. New Order propaganda sought to portray members of the PKI as criminals and traitors whose vile acts so incensed the people that they were driven to attempt to exterminate them. The government and the army, on the other hand, are portraved as the saviours of the nation who stepped in and stopped the slaughter by assuring the people that they would prevent the PKI from ever again obtaining a position of power or influence. In the process, the role of the New Order and the army in promoting and carrying out the killings is glossed over. However, as the victims of the violence have had little opportunity to set the story straight the histories produced by the New Order are some of the few sources available. Some of the information used in this article has been gained from government and military sources and must be treated with caution and where appropriate this is noted in the text.

A few Western press reports that are used appear to be second-hand accounts gathered by journalists based in Jakarta. In some cases the reports are corroborated by other sources, but in other cases not and thus must also be approached with some doubt. Most of the first-hand accounts used to inform the article are taken from interviews done by the author and others with people living in NTT. It is only in recent times that many people have been prepared to talk about the events following G30S and that gives these sources a special value. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that these testimonies were made decades after the events they describe and memory can be faulty. On the other hand, the author has no reason to believe that any of the testimonies used were fabricated. The main note of caution is in relation to events that the interviewees 'heard about' rather than experienced directly. In some cases this information appears to be little more than recycled New Order anti-PKI propaganda. Even this has some value, however, in supplying a picture of the extent of that propaganda and people's willingness to believe it.

All sources must be viewed critically and the special circumstances pertaining in the present study mean that the veracity of some sources available must be considered doubtful. However, by comparing the varying sources that do exist a more complete picture can be obtained than was previously available of what did happen in West Timor and NTT following G30S.

# The extent of PKI support in NTT in 1965

The PKI began as a socialist organization in Java in 1914, taking on the name Partai Komunis Indonesia in 1924. In that same year Dutch officials in West

Timor reported communist activity in their area. From its earliest days, until its demise following G30S, the PKI succeeded in appealing to a wide variety of people in NTT and was able to convince them that it could respond to their particular needs, whether they were Christians, Muslims, animists, university lecturers, or illiterate farmers.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to know the exact level of support the PKI enjoyed in NTT at the time of the 1965 Jakarta 'coup'. Nevertheless, it is known that the party and its affiliated organizations had expanded their membership in the region markedly in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The PKI-affiliated Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI, Indonesian Farmers' Front), for example, is reported to have experienced a fourteen per cent growth in membership between 1957 and 1959, largely in the regions of Aceh, Bali, West Timor, and the NTT islands of Flores and Sumba (Hindley 1966:166). In the worsening economic situation of the early 1960s the PKI was able to gain support in rural West Timor through offers of aid and its campaign for land reform. The governor of NTT following G30S, Brigadier General El Tari, reports that in 1960 the BTI established branches in Kupang, the capital of West Timor, the town SoE, the district Timor Tengah Utara (TTU, North Central Timor), and also on Alor Island. By 1963 the BTI reportedly had 25,073 members in the district Timor Tengah Selatan (South Central Timor), 189 in TTU, 16,166 in Belu district, and 4,000 in Kupang. Tari (1972:253-4, 263) gives no indication of where he got this information, but as he names the committee members of each branch, it seems likely they did exist. The issue of membership is more difficult to establish, however, and it may be, as is discussed later on, that the figures given are based on the number of people who received assistance from the BTI and who otherwise had no real connection with it. Unless Tari simply invented the figures, they are still a useful guide to BTI activities, if not BTI membership.

Some Protestant ministers based in West Timor's poor rural districts could relate to PKI demands for social justice and in urban areas a number of NTT's best educated Christians – university lecturers and schoolteachers – were sympathetic to the PKI, mainly as a result of President Soekarno's promotion of the concept Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme (NASAKOM, Nationalism Religion Communism). While senior officials of the major Protestant church in NTT, Gereja Masehi Injili Timor (GMIT, Timor Evangelical Christian Church), were opposed to this flirtation with the PKI, many Christians saw Soekarno as the Church's protector and recognized that he had been instrumental in preventing Indonesia from becoming an Islamic state; thus, if Soekarno supported NASAKOM, they believed it must be in the national

For more on early PKI history in NTT, see Farram 2002.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> There was support for G30S in Central Java also, but this soon collapsed with the news that the Jakarta 'coup' had failed (Ricklefs 1990:270).

interest (Webb 1986:97-9).

The PKI convinced many in NTT that it was a Christian-friendly organization, but that did not prevent it seeking adherents from non-Christian groups, most notably the animists who constructed the majority of the population in 1965. In West Timor's Belu district and on Solor Island cargo cult-type movements associated with the PKI attracted many followers (Webb 1986:101-2, 106-7; Schaper 1984). On Sumba the PKI enjoyed an increase in its support in the late 1950s and early 1960s among poor landless farmers by promising to remove them from debt slavery and providing them land from the estates of the traditional elites (Kuipers 1998:86). In West Timor's Amanuban district the Nabuasa clan sought PKI support to reclaim its traditional authority from the ruling Nope clan; whereas elsewhere, such as in Amarasi, the PKI had taken a decidedly anti-feudal stance. The Nabuasa clan also sought PKI support against local Christians who opposed the traditional animist practices of its members (McWilliam 1999:135).

By the end of 1957 the PKI-affiliated Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Gerwani, Indonesian Women's Movement) was said to have 2,260 members in the province of Nusa Tenggara (Hindley 1966:206), but in 1958 that province was divided into three as Bali, Nusa Tenggara Barat (West Nusa Tenggara; comprising Lombok, Sumbawa, and other islands), and Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara; comprising West Timor, Flores, Sumba and other islands), so it is difficult to know where the members were based. El Tari (1972:264) reports that Gerwani was active in NTT in the early 1960s, and along with other PKIaffiliated organizations, such as Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth), Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Central Labour Organization), and Serikat Pegawai Daerah (SEPDA, District Government Officials' Association), tried to create a negative feeling towards Governor W.J. Lalamentik. Tari gives no indication of the membership of these groups and while other evidence supports his claim that they did exist in NTT it is likely that membership for some was quite small. As well as members of these official organizations there were an unknown number of unofficial PKI associates and sympathizers, such as the people who joined the PKI-supported cargocult movements in Belu and Solor, as mentioned earlier.

The PKI reportedly gained some high-level local government officials as sympathizers in NTT also, including the head of the Department of Information,<sup>3</sup> R. Amir Tjiptoprawiro, who was head of the government radio station Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), and army commander Lieutenant Colonel Soetarmadji (*Gerakan* 1996:116). If we consider parliamentary repre-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Interview with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 26 June 2000. Yohannes said that the head of the Department of Information and Lieutenant Colonel Soetarmadji were members of the PKI, but his statement was most likely based on rumours heard either before or after G30S.

sentation, the PKI would appear to have had considerable support in NTT as by 1961 the NTT head of the PKI, Thobias (As) Paulus Rissi, had been elected to the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly), as one of three NTT representatives.<sup>4</sup> In 1959 none of the 23 members of NTT's local parliament were connected to the PKI, but by 1965 there were 13 PKI representatives in the local parliament, and one each from SOBSI and the BTI. However, all were relieved of their parliamentary duties shortly after 30 September 1965 (Tari 1972:106, 109).

# The immediate response in NTT to G30S

When the Udayana Territorial Military Commander in Bali, Brigadier General Sjafiuddin, first heard of G30S over the radio he instructed his people to continue working as usual and to 'intensify the unity and integrity between the Armed Forces and the strength of the NASAKOM-based progressive, revolutionary people'. About a week later, on 9 October 1965, the Commander seemed to have had a clearer notion of the meaning of the Jakarta events when he instructed that all members of the military and civil services in his territory were strictly prohibited from being involved in the movement known as 'G.30.S.' Sjafiuddin, a committed follower of President Soekarno, had initially been slow to take action against the PKI and ultimately was replaced in June 1966 (Robinson 1998:232, 287-9).

Local PKI elements in NTT are said to have taken some action following G30S. It is claimed in the Department of Information's book that on 1 October 1965 As Rissi, the NTT PKI Secretary, passed on his concept of the NTT Revolutionary Council to Lieutenant Colonel Soetarmadji (*Gerakan* 1996:115-6). According to the Udayana history, Soetarmadji raised the idea of forming Revolutionary Councils, from village to provincial level, with the local armed forces leadership, but the idea was rejected. The government radio station, RRI, under R. Amir Tjiptoprawiro, is also named for broadcasting continuously from 1 October to 3 October the Order of the Day made on 1 October by Omar Dani, commander of the Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (AURI, Indonesian Air Force), in which he referred favourably to G30S as a movement aimed at protecting the Indonesian Revolution and President Soekarno from subversive elements associated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States of America. RRI is also said to have broadcast a separate AURI statement to do with the formation of the Revolutionary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Letter from Australian Consulate, Dili, Portuguese Timor, 2-2-1961, in: National Australian Archives (NAA), 1838/280, 3038/2/2/2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 'Pengumuman Pangdam XVI/Udayana', in Dinuth 1997:368.

<sup>6 &#</sup>x27;Instruksi Pangdam XVI Udayana', in Dinuth 1997:377.

#### Council.7

The coverage offered by RRI must have been confusing for listeners, but a privileged few in NTT had access to shortwave radio and kept abreast of events in Jakarta by listening to Radio Australia, which many considered to be a more reliable source of information. However, the majority of NTT people, including PKI members, had little access to radio and knew next to nothing of what had been happening. For example, Father Simon Schaper lived in West Timor's south Belu district for many years and was well acquainted with the local PKI leaders and functionaries. Schaper kept track of events in Jakarta by listening to Radio Australia, but was surprised that a few days after the 'coup' the local communists carried on with their business as normal and continued to give him their casual greetings. The men were finally arrested and Schaper (1984:61) concluded that they must have been totally unaware of what had happened in Jakarta.

## The first actions taken against the PKI in NTT

As already noted, New Order sources portray the PKI as an organization despised by the common people who were bent on eliminating it and it was only through the calm actions of the army that order was restored. Thus we read in the Udayana history that the realization that the PKI was behind the Jakarta 'coup' unleashed a strong desire amongst 'the people' to destroy the PKI and all its associated organizations. In response, the Territorial Military Commander issued an order on 3 November 1965 halting all activities of the PKI and its associates in his territory. This was not enough for 'the people', however, and in Denpasar, Bali, on 7 December they attacked shops, destroyed property, and killed people connected to the PKI. The violence soon spread despite an order issued that same day prohibiting people taking the law into their own hands. The violence had subsided by 1 January 1966, by which time the 'eradication' of the PKI was being carried out in 'orderly' fashion by the army. By then about 30,000 people had already been killed in Bali (ABRI 1999:94-5). This account is most misleading as it suggests the killings were spontaneous affairs carried out by 'the people' and not the army. Most evidence, however,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ABRI 1999:93. Omar Dani's 1 October Order of the Day has been reproduced in several sources, but the other document referred to in the ABRI book, AURI statement number 5/D27/65, 1 October 1965, has not been found by the author. However, a statement issued by Omar Dani on 2 October 1965, number 5/207/65, has been reproduced in various sources concerning G30S. It states that AURI is not involved in G30S; that AURI agrees with all efforts to 'clean out' the instruments of the revolution in accordance with the directions of the Great Leader of the Revolution (Soekarno); and that AURI knows nothing about the Revolutionary Council or the composition of its personnel (Dinuth 1997:70; *Gerakan* 1996: Lampiran 10).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000; Schaper 1984:61.

points to the killings having been carried out or directed by the military, with anti-PKI groups encouraged to rid themselves of their enemies with the army supplying transport, communications, and weapons (Robinson 1998:295-9).

In NTT, in the meantime, El Tari reports that 'the people' began taking 'spontaneous action' on 28 October 1965. This included pelting the houses of As Rissi and other PKI members with stones. All signs and placards in Kupang with the initials PKI were torn down; and a number of PKI members were captured by local youths, although what they did with them is not recorded. Further to this, on 20 November 1965 and again on 17 January 1966, mass meetings were held in Kupang attended by up to 10,000 people, with representatives of all the non-communist parties present, who demanded the dissolution of the PKI and all its associated organizations. The PKI, however, is alleged to have 'voluntarily' disbanded itself on 11 January 1966 (Tari 1972:284-5, 287). As with the Department of Information's version of events in Bali, Tari's account cannot be accepted at face value. It is very possible that the events he describes did take place, but it is most likely that they were instigated and carried out by the army or anti-PKI groups encouraged by the military. This is quite unlike the spontaneous acts of an undifferentiated mass known as 'the people'.

Concurrent with the events just related, the army and police began arresting PKI members throughout NTT. Some of the most high-profile ones, such as Rissi, Soetarmadji, and the head of the Department of Information, were arrested and taken away to Java or Bali. Most of these people were never heard of again, although it is said that Rissi returned to Kupang in the 1990s. According to one informant, Rissi received lenient treatment because of family connections high up in the military. Some lesser PKI activists are said to have escaped death or imprisonment by fleeing NTT into neighbouring Portuguese Timor.

# Events later cited as proof of G30S plans for West Timor

There is a widespread belief in West Timor that the PKI planned many killings associated with G30S, but on close examination many of the stories on which this belief is based appear highly flawed. In SoE, communists are supposed to have dug graves near a local landmark, the Beatrix Tree (planted in 1938 to commemorate the birth of Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands), in which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Interviews with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 26 June 2000; Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang 30 June 2000; name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000; and former senior GMIT synod member, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$  Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000. This is by no means a solitary opinion and has been heard by the author many times in West Timor.

to bury the *bupati* (regent) and other government officials.<sup>12</sup> In Kupang communists are also supposed to have dug graves to bury heads of government departments and others.<sup>13</sup> In the aftermath of G30S various 'blacklists' were allegedly discovered in Kupang with the names of church leaders and others opposed to the PKI who were to have been liquidated. Their bodies were to have been disposed of in the Oesapa district in an open drain leading to the sea.<sup>14</sup> While it is possible that 'blacklists' were discovered post-G30S they could just as easily have been fabricated by the army. The case of pre-prepared graves, on the other hand, is most unlikely as they would surely have been discovered. The persistence of these rumours and their apparent acceptance as truth is an indication of the persuasiveness of New Order propaganda in the climate of fear that existed in the aftermath of G30S in NTT. It is also probably no coincidence that these rumours appear to be most readily accepted as truth by non-communist former government officials and other prominent members of the community who felt threatened by the PKI.

Maria Patty-Noach, who in 1965 was a young lecturer at the Kupang state university, recalled that there was an 'air-raid practice' in Kupang just before the 'coup' where a number of Christian leaders and non-communist government officials were taken out of town. They returned home safely, but the following day they heard via Radio Australia of the 'coup' in Jakarta. Patty-Noach surmises that these people were to have been killed, but that for some reason the order never came through and they were released. John Hughes (1967:142-3) recorded a similar story of non-communist officials and their spouses being gathered outside Kupang for a 'special briefing', but were returned unharmed when local army units refused to align themselves with the communist plotters. The similarities in these two accounts suggest that an event of the kind described did occur, but without further information the claim that the plan had been to kill those who attended appears to be mere speculation after the event.

The Indonesian Department of Information in its book concerning G30S reports that the PKI Central Committee in Jakarta sent one of its members, Sardjono, to Kupang in mid-September 1965 with instructions for the NTT PKI to prepare a Dewan Revolusi (Revolutionary Council) to replace the existing heads of government. This is reported to have been done at a meeting on 27 September, where it was also decided how to eliminate the existing officials and troublesome *alim ulama* (religious scholars) (*Gerakan* 1996:91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Interview with Pae Nope, SoE, 26 June 2000. Nope is the youngest son of the then *bupati*, Koesa Nope, who was also the last officially-recognized raja of the kingdom of Amanuban.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Interview with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 26 June 2000.

 $<sup>^{14}</sup>$  Brookes 1977:85-6; interview with former senior GMIT synod member, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000.

The use of the Islamic term *alim ulama* is curious as the main religious opposition to the PKI in NTT came from members of the Protestant and Catholic churches, not from the minority Islamic community. Without documentary proof it is impossible to know whether a Dewan Revolusi was prepared or even planned for NTT, but the reference to *alim ulama* in the Department of Information's book suggests that its authors had little understanding of the situation in NTT in 1965.

In an official history of the Udayana military command (based in Bali, but which also controls NTT) it is stated that the PKI had planned to kill the Minister of Defence, General Achmad Yani, during his visit to Kupang in September 1965, but that this 'evil plan' was foiled by the vigilant security provided by the army (ABRI 1999:92). El Tari, a senior army officer based in NTT at the time and later the governor of the province, included in his official memoir a photograph of General Yani with Lieutenant Colonel Soetarmadji, taken at Kupang on 28 September 1965; the caption to the photograph states that Yani was to have been killed by the PKI and that Soetarmadji was part of the plot. 16 A rumour later circulated in Kupang that an attempt had been made to kill Yani with a poisoned apple, but that the general had rejected the fruit, stating that he had been taught that apples were only for sick people. 17 Yani was among those who died during the 'coup' in Jakarta two days later, but if he had been killed in Kupang it would surely have had an enormous influence on the course of events and highly disrupted any plans being made by the PKI in the capital. The alleged plot to kill Yani in Kupang thus appears to be no more than post-G30S propaganda, while the rumour of the poisoned apple is one of the least believable of such tales.

The killings – how many died, by what means, and where they were buried

The number of people who died in NTT as a result of killings following G30S is unknown. All sources agree that the figure is at least in the hundreds, while some put it at 2,000 or higher. R.A.F. Paul Webb (1986:98-9) was informed that civilian 'killer squads' similar to those that had operated in Java and Bali were also active in West Timor. While co-ordinated by the army, it appears that members of Ansor, the youth wing of Nahdlatul Ulama (the largest Is-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Tari 1972: photograph between pp. 32 and 33.

 $<sup>^{17}</sup>$  Interview with former senior GMIT synod member, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Interviews with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 6 June 2000; Minggus Ratukore, Kupang, 7 July 2000; and name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000; Cooley 1976:347; Hiorth 1985:18. See also Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:253-4; the section dealing with the PKI was written by John Prior with Eduard Jebarus.

lamic organization in Indonesia), and Islamic, Protestant and Catholic student groups were actively involved in organizing and carrying out killings in NTT. 19 El Tari (1972:280) reports that the PKI in NTT was 'wiped out', 'down to the village level', by the government and the army with the help of the people. Most sources concur that if the army was directly responsible the victims were usually shot; if the killings were carried out under army instruction the people were most often decapitated with machetes, an item almost habitually carried by most rural men of the region.<sup>20</sup>

In most cases arrests seem to have been followed almost immediately with extra-judicial killings. The wife of the head of the Nunhila PKI branch in Kupang recalls her husband being arrested and taken to the old gaol near the Kupang waterfront. The 30 or 40 members of his branch were also arrested, and none were ever seen again.<sup>21</sup> In some cases trials were held, but one non-communist NTT parliamentarian from the time believes that no more than a dozen PKI members were convicted and given prison sentences; the rest were simply executed.<sup>22</sup> Three judges were sent to the small south Belu town of Betun where 30 PKI suspects were held captive for months in makeshift cells pending trial; some went mad in the interim. One young PKI member ordered to report to the judges committed suicide by plunging a machete into his stomach. The suspects were periodically released to collect provisions from their homes, but if one of the prisoners absconded one of his fellow prisoners was executed. Father Schaper witnessed a group of prisoners holding the head of a man decapitated as the result of one of the other prisoners attempting to escape. The escapee was soon caught and executed also. Schaper was surprised to learn that four of the detainees – two men and two women – were acquitted by the judges but by then scores of other PKI suspects in the district had met their deaths and were buried in mass graves in Webua, in the forest between Lalian and Atambua, and elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

Judges were also appointed in Sumba, with one appearing in west Sumba in mid-1966. As a result of his deliberations six PKI leaders were executed on a beach in Memboro in north Sumba and a further 13 on a beach in the south at Rua. Why the executions took place on beaches or how they were carried out is not known (Kuipers 1998:86-7). In central Sumba a judge ordered suspects to be

<sup>19</sup> Leaders of these student and youth groups today hold senior positions in NTT business, the media, and politics. Personal communication from Gerry van Klinken, 22 July 2009, based on notes from his field trip to NTT, June 2009. I thank Gerry for allowing me to use this information. Interviews with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 6 June 2000; and Minggus Ratukore, Kupang, 7 July

<sup>2000.</sup> See also Webb 1986:103, 107; Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Interview with Minggus Ratukore, Kupang, 7 July 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Schaper 1984:55-7, 63. Schaper relates that the execution of prisoners in response to the escape of one of their fellow prisoners was also practised by the Japanese when he was interned by them during the Second World War.

rounded up, loaded on a truck, and driven through neighbouring villages with an invitation for local people to physically assault them. A Dutch Protestant pastor and a Dutch Catholic priest were incensed by the lack of justice in these cases, as the men had undergone no trials and no evidence had been offered against them; they had been merely presumed guilty. The two Dutch preachers condemned this practice from their respective pulpits and it was soon discontinued. Whether any lives were saved as a result is unknown, but at least 100 communists or suspected communists are thought to have perished on Sumba under orders of the local military (Webb 1986:107-8).

The wife of the Nunhila PKI branch head is certain her husband and his colleagues were executed, but she has no idea where or when this occurred, or what happened to their bodies afterwards. There are, however, believed to be numerous mass graves in West Timor containing the remains of victims of the post-G30S killings. In Kupang and SoE, for example, PKI members are said to have been shot and buried in the graves they had previously dug to bury their own intended victims.<sup>24</sup> It is almost certain the burial places exist, but as already noted it is highly unlikely that any PKI members dug graves before G30S in NTT; the accounts sound more like rumours that were fabricated afterwards to justify the executions. Two of the burial places in Kupang are said to be Tanah Merah and Batuplat, and there are said to be a number of graves outside the town as well.<sup>25</sup> Allen K. Wilson (1992:42-3, 49), an Australian travelling in West Timor in the early 1970s, was given a lift to Kupang from Kefamenanu by a senior government official who pointed out to him a spot near Kupang that he said was the mass grave of hundreds of people killed following G30S.

One of the most detailed accounts of a mass grave in NTT was collected by Gerry van Klinken in June 2009. He was shown a place near Buraen in West Timor where 33 people are said to be buried in two locations. It is said that 300 people had been captured and were held at Baun, but that Raja Victor Koroh of Amarasi managed to get most freed; otherwise it seems the raja worked closely with the military in the killings. The rest of the detainees were brought to the place near Buraen, which is a swamp in the middle of a forest. Either the military from Kupang carried out the killings or they ordered locals from the area to do it. The killings took place sometime between February and April 1966. It is said that for a long time people passing the site experienced strange things. If people were carrying meat to the market, for example, and went past this place they would find they could not walk any further, but if they cut off a bit of meat and threw it in the forest they could continue. For many years later people left *sirih pinang* (the material used

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Interviews with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 26 June 2000; and Pae Nope, SoE, 26 June 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Interviews with Pae Nope, SoE, 26 June 2000; Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000; and Benyamin Sahetapy Engel, Kupang, 2 November 2000.

when chewing betel) tied up in the trees as an offering to the spirits of those killed. Until today truck drivers passing the site blow their horns otherwise their trucks will 'die'. Truck drivers passing a mass grave about 40 kilometres west of Ende in Flores follow the same practice.<sup>26</sup>

Western journalists based in Jakarta who appear to have collected their material from others who had travelled to eastern Indonesia reported that the army and police organized nightly executions in Kupang and invited local citizens to witness them and take part. A Western visitor was also invited to attend, and was told that participation was obligatory so that all who witnessed the killings were involved in some way. It was further reported that men had been killed along with wives and children in order to decrease the chances for revenge (King 1966; Sulzberger 1966). This latter report may have referred to a single incident, but the killing of family members was also reported by a witness from the island of Rote, and an account of a massacre in Maumere on Flores refers to men, women and children hacked to death and dumped in mass graves.<sup>27</sup> Patty-Noach says that members of non-communist political parties, such as the Partai Kristen Indonesia (Parkindo, Indonesian Christian Party), were ordered to attend the executions, which was against their will.<sup>28</sup> Heads of government departments were also ordered to witness the killings. Andreas Yohannes, who at the time was head of the Social Department, did not wish to take part, so he sent a representative in his official jeep. When the jeep was driven back its interior was covered in blood. Yohannes asked what had happened and was told that one of the prisoners had tried to escape, was shot, and then transported to the burial site in the jeep. Yohannes heard that some of those who were shot were not yet dead when they were buried.<sup>29</sup>

On Rote Island a young man who had lived in the Netherlands for many years returned to visit his family in September 1965. His timing could not have been worse. In November 1965 the army was given a 'blacklist' of communists by the police and proceeded to round them up. This included many of the local teachers, several of whom were members of the young man's family. The man knew of about 50 communists and their families who were killed and heard the executions, carried out with machine guns, take place at the port Pelabuhan Baru. He later saw the bodies, which were left to be carried away by the sea. He also heard that the army had been given a quota from Jakarta, but the list supplied by the police was too short, so they simply rounded up some Chinese merchants, killed them, and added their names to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Personal communication from Gerry van Klinken, 22 July 2009.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Name withheld, interviewed by Rob Goodfellow, Kupang, June 1997 (thanks to Rob for this information); Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Interview with Andreas Yohannes, SoE, 26 June 2000.

the list.30

In Ende town on Flores it seems that many suspected communists were arrested, as it was reported that they were brought out of prison daily, 20 at a time, and beheaded. Sometimes a head was left displayed in the town's central square (Sulzberger 1966; King 1966). Webb (1986:104-5) was told of such an event that occurred in Ende in November 1966; he was also told of a suspected communist being burnt at the stake. The wife of the Nunhila PKI branch head had also heard the story of an alleged communist in Flores being tied to a tree and set on fire. 31 According to information gathered by Gerry van Klinken this event took place at Tanjung near Ende. The man executed was John Dimu, a well-known, aggressively pro-PKI figure. The death by burning was advertised by the military the day before and many people gathered to witness the event. Dimu was dragged to the site behind a truck, so he was in very bad condition before the execution. A pile of rubber tyres was soaked in petrol and Dimu was forced to stand in the middle of the pile before the tyres were set on fire. Several witnesses claim that Dimu stood with his arms stretched sideways, 'like Christ', as he burnt to death. This killing was said to have been organized by the police and Ansor.<sup>32</sup>

Webb (1986:104-5) also reports the story of the 'fanatical Muslim' Javanese army commander in Ende who ordered young Catholics to participate in the slaughter of known or suspected communists. The Timorese Archbishop Gabriel Manek of Ende forbade Catholic participation in the strongest terms and the army commander did not renew his order. The 'fanatical Muslim' charge was also heard in West Timor and the killings there, which continued throughout 1966 and well into 1967, are said to have only come to a halt after repeated complaints by Parkindo that those being killed were not communists, but Christians.<sup>33</sup>

Manek and a few other members of the Catholic clergy took a strong stand against the killings in Flores and this appears to have diminished the slaughter, but in many areas the clergy 'stood aside as silent bystanders' (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:255). In Maumere, Catholic youth leaders were intimidated by the military into taking part in an orchestrated campaign of killings between February and May 1966. In some cases whole villages, such as Keut, were almost totally wiped out, with men, women, and children hacked to death and buried in mass graves in a mission coconut plantation near Wairklau. Between 800 and 2,000 people are said to have perished at this time, nearly all baptized Catholics. Local Protestants and Muslims were forced to participate in digging graves and other tasks, so that all were implicated and

Name withheld, interviewed by Rob Goodfellow, Kupang, June 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Personal communication from Gerry van Klinken, 22 July 2009.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

no one left free to report. For decades afterwards, very few people were willing to even discuss the incidents (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:253-5).

On Solor, communism was linked to a local 'cargo cult', with PKI members claiming that after the PKI took over there would be food for all as the party would dig out a local mountain, revealing a waterfall and sacks of rice. A large ship would also appear bringing further supplies of rice. Following G30S, 15 of the Solor communists were taken by the army to Larantuka on mainland Flores and beaten. They were then returned for punishment to their community, where they were beheaded. The villagers went further than this, however, and sought out another 15 'troublemakers' who were also killed. These extra killings were not tolerated and some of the culprits were imprisoned (Webb 1986:106-7).

# The fate of those captured, but not killed

Not all those accused of connections with the PKI were killed. On Sumba, for example, some people with only peripheral connections to the PKI, such as having attended meetings, were dealt with by public beatings, sometimes while hung upside down. Others on Sumba were imprisoned, publicly vilified, stripped, and beaten. One victim described how he and other accused PKI supporters were transported to what appeared to be a festival where they were beaten and exposed to the elements for two days and three nights (Kuipers 1998:87).

Wilson (1992:45-6) was told in the early 1970s that the Kefamenanu gaol in West Timor held 200 communists condemned to hard labour making bricks. Each evening they were given a lecture on the error of their ways. Such reports of imprisonments in no way negate the claim made by a former NTT parliamentarian that only about a dozen PKI suspects were convicted and imprisoned in NTT, as it is well established that thousands of suspects throughout Indonesia were imprisoned for years without trial. It is probable that many such people lingered in NTT gaols for years also, but how many, and for how long, is unknown.

As already noted, in south Belu a number of PKI activists were captured, interrogated, and executed. Others were killed without any preliminaries. There were also a great number of people in Belu associated with the PKI through their involvement with the 'cargo cult' led by *makdok* (traditional healer) Balthasar Klau. Klau claimed that through a great ceremony he would unite the spirit world with that of the living and there would then be no need to work and people would remain young forever. At the conclusion of the ceremony Klau would pilot a boat from the sea bringing to shore an abundance of goods. Klau paid for preparations for the ceremony from membership

fees he collected for co-operative organizations that he had established. New members were handed a PKI membership card. The ceremony was never held, however, as when news broke of the failed 'coup' in Jakarta Klau disappeared (Schaper 1984:28, 31).

Klau had fled with Fanus Pinai, the local BTI leader, to the district capital Atambua, where he was eventually arrested. Some time later the army issued a summons for all remaining south Belu PKI members to appear in Atambua. The wet season was well advanced and a great caravan of people trudged over 60 kilometres in the rain to reach the town. On arrival they were led to the crossroads in the middle of the town where the severed head of Balthasar Klau was displayed on top of a large petrol drum. The long procession was ushered around the drum and without further ado allowed to start the long journey home. <sup>34</sup> It was certainly a dismal scene, but the south Belu PKI members were fortunate compared to many others in NTT.

## Who was targeted?

High-profile leaders and activists in the larger towns were the first ones targeted in the action against the PKI in NTT, but lesser figures were soon sought out throughout the region and the latter must account for the majority of the victims. In the rural areas the PKI enjoyed popular appeal because of its land reform campaign and offers of food and goods to the poor. Several members of the GMIT were attracted to the PKI because of this and some were killed as a result, with at least one preacher, one parish teacher, and two church elders killed due to their PKI connections (Cooley 1976:347). Patty-Noach claims some simple villagers in West Timor who knew nothing of politics joined the PKI simply to take advantage of offers of food and goods, but later paid for them with their lives. 35 In Rote's Delha district scores of people were rounded up by the army and taken to the island's main town, Baa. Many of these people were illiterate villagers whose only association with communism was knowing the words to a few NASAKOM songs. After intervention by the Raja of Delha most of them were set free, but the local PKI head and some others had already been executed.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Schaper 1984:56-7. Simon Schaper SVD was a minister of the Divine Word who spent many years in south Belu. The Schaper manuscript cited is held in the library of the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (D H 11910). A brief account of Klau's story is also provided in a book about the history of the Catholic Church in Indonesia (Schaper 1974:1323-6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Interviews with names withheld by request, Nemberala, 28 November 2002.

Many of those targeted in NTT were low-level government officials and schoolteachers.<sup>37</sup> Tradesmen seem to have been targeted also as Wilson (1992:53) was told in Kupang that when basic services such as plumbing broke down it was difficult to have them repaired because most of the tradesmen had been communists and were killed following the 'coup'. A former NTT parliamentary member who complains of the lack of lawful process at the time believes that many of those who were killed were not actual members of the PKI or its associated organizations, but had been ordered by their superiors to wear SOBSI badges or the like at some time, photographs of which were produced as 'evidence' of their 'guilt'. 38 Others killed may have only joined PKI-affiliated organizations due to familial pressure.<sup>39</sup> It is possible that the figures for BTI membership, stated earlier, may have been compiled from lists of names of people who had received assistance from the BTI, most often in the form of free shovels. Many of these people may have later been killed, although they had no real connection to the group. 40 The government official who pointed out the mass grave to Wilson (1992:49) near Kupang, volunteered that many of those killed had nothing to do with the PKI.

It is a widely-held belief that the killings in NTT were used as a screen to remove, for various reasons, people who had nothing at all to do with the PKI.<sup>41</sup> As noted earlier, Chinese merchants are reported to have been killed on Rote merely to make up a quota, but it seems likely that there was a particular reason for those Chinese to have been targeted. Webb (1986:112) was told that some of the Chinese killed in West Timor were simply moneylenders who were liquidated with a view to clearing outstanding debts. The Chinese were clearly targeted, however, as the Pecinaan (Chinese quarter) that had existed in Kupang since the nineteenth century was completely destroyed. Temples and schools were closed, Chinese organizations were disbanded, and many of those not killed fled the city never to return (Julianus and Harzufri 2001). Tari (1972:289) claims that the Chinese schools had been owned by the government of the People's Republic of China and were taken over by the Education Department. A Chinese Indonesian man interviewed in Kupang supported the latter claim, stating that the Chinese school in that town had been turned into a teacher's college. He said, however, that the school had previously been run by a local Chinese association and had been returned to

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 37}$   $\,$  Interviews with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000; and name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Interview with Minggus Ratukore, Kupang, 7 July 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Interview with former senior GMIT synod member, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Personal communication from Gerry van Klinken, 22 July 2009.

 $<sup>^{41}</sup>$  Interview with former senior GMIT synod member, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000; Cooley 1976:347; Wilson 1992:49.

the Chinese community in 2002 for use as a cultural centre. A new temple was being built on the outskirts of the town at that time as well, but as most members of Kupang's Chinese community had since become Christians it would also play more of a cultural role rather than a religious one. <sup>42</sup> In many other parts of Indonesia the main Chinese targets following G30S were members of the PKI-affiliated Badan Permusyawaratan Kenegaraan Indonesia (Baperki, Indonesian Citizenship Consultatative Body), a socio-political organization that sought equality for all Indonesian citizens regardless of ethnic origin and demanded the cultural rights of the Chinese minority (Suryadinata 2001:504). Tari (1972:264), however, does not include Baperki in his list of PKI-affiliated groups operating in NTT and it is not mentioned in other sources, thus it is unknown whether it was active in NTT or not.

The case of Nitenel Ngoek in Kupang demonstrates the use of accusations of PKI membership for other purposes. Ngoek was in the middle of a landownership dispute when the 'coup' occurred in Jakarta. On 3 February 1966 he was detained by a mob including a policeman (brother of the plaintiff in the land dispute), which falsely accused him of PKI membership. Ngoek was forced aboard a truck that already contained 20 or more other people and was taken at high speed to the village Tarus, about two hours' drive from Kupang. There the detainees' names were read out from a list, one by one; they then re-boarded the truck and were driven off to be executed. Ngoek's name, however, was not on the list. His guards told him that he was free, but that he had better run away as far as possible and not look back. Ngoek knew that if he returned home he would be killed, so when he arrived after much wandering in an isolated village he was glad to accept the villagers' offer to stay. Ngoek remained in the village for over 30 years and only returned to Kupang after being discovered by some of his by-then adult children. Ngoek's tale may be fabricated, but the details he relates, such as the names of all protagonists, and his request that his case be re-examined, lends it veracity. In late 2001 he was still trying to clear his name of any connection with the PKI (Keda 2001).

# Non-PKI members who also suffered

Family members of those accused of PKI membership suffered much in NTT. The Ngoek family, for example, endured the scorn and avoidance of their neighbours for decades after the accusation made against Nitenel Ngoek in 1966 (Keda 2001:41). Relatives of PKI members were often forced out of their jobs or found it difficult to get a job. One of the best-known cases in West Timor concerns the Markus family. Mikael Markus was a teacher and head

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Interview with Irwan Safari, Kupang, 16 December 2002.

of the BTI in SoE. His son Octo was also a teacher and communist and both were killed following the 'coup'. One of Markus's daughters was a member of Gerwani and later spent many years in prison as a result. Another of Markus's sons, however, was a respected staff member at Kupang's state university, a Parkindo activist, and a known anti-communist. Nevertheless, when this J.F. Marcus was elected *rektor* (vice-chancellor) Jakarta would not ratify the appointment because of the family PKI connection. 43

The wife of the Nunhila PKI branch head had tried to dissuade her husband from joining the party, but he rejected her advice. Yet after her husband was arrested she was also taken into custody and accused of being the real 'communist brain' in the family as she had been educated to senior high school level, whereas her husband had only attended primary school. He had been heavily pregnant when her husband was arrested and the child was born on 7 October 1965. The very next day she was taken to the police station. After four days of questioning she was loaded onto a truck with other women prisoners. She suspected they were to be killed and when the police wanted to take her baby from her she refused, saying 'If you are going to kill me you should kill the baby also'. Perhaps this saved her life because she was later returned to the police station.

No food was provided by the police and with an acute famine in West Timor at the time rice was expensive. Her parents could only afford to buy her rotten rice, which was made into cakes. She and her baby were constantly exposed to the elements and the child died soon after their release from custody. Later, she was kept under constant surveillance. She was sacked from her civil service job and told that she would never be allowed to work for the government again. It was very difficult with four young children to care for, but the situation improved when she got a job with a foreign company. She was even given the opportunity to travel abroad, but she was refused travel documents. In many ways she continued to suffer in silence; as her children grew up they disliked her to talk of the past, and if she raised the topic with others in Kupang they quickly changed the subject.<sup>46</sup>

The young man, mentioned earlier, who returned to Rote to visit his family after many years living in the Netherlands found himself in a very difficult situation following G30S. Several members of his family had joined the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Personal communication from Gerry van Klinken, 22 July 2009; and interviews with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000; Benyamin Sahetapy Engel, Kupang, 2 November 2000; and former senior member GMIT Synod, name withheld by request, Kupang, 3 November 2000.

While of limited education he was a talented musician and artist, was a member of the PKIaffiliated Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture), and had attended an art course in East Germany.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Interviews with name withheld, Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.

PKI and were killed not long after his return. He narrowly avoided capture himself. He fled to mainland Timor, but did not try to leave Indonesia as he feared capture at the border because of the family connection with the PKI. Finally, his Dutch passport expired and he was too scared to apply for a new one in case he was identified. He spent some time in Dili in East Timor, but later settled in Kupang. In the late 1990s he remained living as a fugitive and his apprehension of being connected with the PKI was compounded by a fear that his time in Dili would attract attention from Indonesian intelligence officers searching for members of the East Timorese resistance.<sup>47</sup>

Conclusion: continued action against PKI suspects and the recent situation in NTT

Although the killings in NTT seem to have ceased in the late 1960s, the repercussions of G30S continued to be felt for much longer. Wilson (1992:40-1, 52-3) reports that in Kefamenanu in the early 1970s bells chimed each hour as patrols moved through the town – a hangover of the 'previous troubles', and in Kupang he was warned to avoid being caught out late at night as the armed six-man patrols were very alert, always questioning strangers.

The Udayana military command remained vigilant against the PKI and in mid-1967 declared it had uncovered the existence within its territory of a group known as PKI Malam (Night-time PKI) or PKI Gaya Baru (New Style PKI). As a result 184 soldiers and 122 civil officials were arrested that year. Several scores of PKI suspects were arrested in the following years, but the numbers reduced to a trickle in the course of time. Nevertheless, in April, May, and June 1977, the Udayana Territorial Military Commander issued orders to all under his command to increase their vigilance against any resurgence of PKI activity. The PKI Gaya Baru was said to be operational mainly in Bali and had been influenced by a movement begun in Blitar in East Java. There is, however, no indication that any of the arrests relating to PKI Gaya Baru were made in NTT.<sup>48</sup>

Despite having minimal ties to the PKI many people who were captured, but later released, such as those mentioned from Sumba and south Belu, continued to be viewed suspiciously and were required to report regularly to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Name withheld, interviewed by Rob Goodfellow, Kupang, June 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> ABRI 1999:95-6. Reports of the PKI Gaya Baru make it appear to be a shadowy organization created by New Order propaganda in order to justify the regime's repressive activities, but it was not entirely fictitious. For example, a decade-long rebellion in West Kalimantan led by the former head of the West Kalimantan PKI, Said Achmad Sofyan, was often attributed to PKI Gaya Baru. Sofyan was captured and killed in 1974 and military operations against the rebels were formally ended in 1976. Nevertheless, there were scattered reports of 'communists' being arrested in West Kalimantan throughout the 1980s (Davidson and Kammen 2002).

the police for decades following G30S (Kuipers 1998:87; Schaper 1984:57). As many unsophisticated villagers who joined the PKI or its associated organizations in NTT were killed, those who survived often felt that they had been tricked into joining by false promises or did not understand that they were joining an organization at the time. As a result, village people became wary of all organizations and would avoid any sort of membership. This reluctance only began to ease in the early 2000s. The exception to this pattern was church membership. In 1965 a large proportion of the NTT population still adhered to their traditional animist beliefs. Following G30S, however, it became clear that the army considered all those who did not belong to one of the major recognized religions to be atheists and therefore communists. As a result tens of thousands of people rushed to renew their church membership or joined the church for the first time (Farram 2002:45).

Some people in NTT were accused of involvement with the PKI nearly 18 years after the party had been banned. On Christmas Eve 1983 six primary school teachers in West Timor were informed that they were being removed from their positions as they had been involved in a banned political party (PKI). The issue became public in 2000 when the six teachers from Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS, South Central Timor) approached the district head, Bupati Willem Nope, seeking a reversal of the decision. Nope, however, claimed to have no power to reverse the decision and stated that in the 1970s and 1980s many civil servants, including teachers, were subject to administrative sanctions and sackings due to their involvement in the PKI. The six teachers took their complaint to the local head of the Department of Education and then to the office of the provincial governor, both without success. In June 2000 the six teachers stated that they had sent their request for a review of their cases direct to the president, but the result of their appeal is not known (Ans 2000).

When the six TTS schoolteachers requested a review of their cases in 2000 the situation was vastly different to that only a few years before. Soeharto, whose New Order regime had relied on the continued demonization of the PKI as part of its legitimacy, had stood down as president in May 1998. In October 1999 Abdurrahman Wahid became president and offered hope to those who had suffered under the previous regime by suggesting that restrictions against the PKI and its former members were no longer necessary. Ultimately, however, those who had a vested interest in the continued suppression of the PKI, or who genuinely feared a resurgence of the party, ensured that laws banning the PKI were not repealed.

In NTT some politicians have shown that they believe there is still political mileage to be made out of accusations against their opponents of PKI involvement. While campaigning for elections in North Central Timor in 2004 a candi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Interview with Maria Patty-Noach, Kupang, 30 June 2000.

date and a Golkar official were reported as having suggested that a number of their opponents were in parties that accepted communist ideology. The parties targeted were Partai Sarikat Indonesia (PSI, United Indonesia Party), Partai Persatuan Daerah (PPD, United Regional Party), and Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party). Supporters of these parties were disturbed by the accusations which they felt might affect their candidates' chances in the elections. The accusations led the official election monitoring body to issue a statement that former PKI members or their descendants could be involved in the parties concerned, as the law allowed, but that communism as a party ideology was prohibited, thus electors need have no fear of supporting communism when casting their votes (Nes 2004). What effect the accusations had on people's voting preferences remains unknown.

In what may or not have been a related incident, it was reported in Kupang in March 2004 that posters with the initials 'PKI', the words 'Partai Komunis Indonesia', and the famous symbol of a hammer and sickle, were pasted on walls along three of the town's main roads (including, perhaps significantly, Jalan Achmad Yani). The posters' presence was reported to the police, who 'immediately went to the scene to tear them down before any more people could lay their eyes on the PKI symbol'. The matter was reported in the local press, along with a photograph of one of the offending posters (Aly/Rys 2004; *PKI pamphlets* 2004).

The cases discussed show that fear of the PKI in NTT has continued into recent times. The final word on the PKI and the fear it has continued to engender in the province is given here to Andreas Yohannes, a non-communist former government official, who told the writer that he was very thankful to Soeharto, as he believed that without him he would have been killed by the PKI. Yohannes also made what appeared a contradictory statement by claiming that President Wahid's proposal of reversing the ban on the PKI was not a bad idea. He then clarified his statement: if the PKI was legal, he said, we would then know who its supporters were and where to find them; unlike the present situation, where they are all hidden.<sup>50</sup>

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