

Right-Wing Reactionaries Plunge Indonesia Into a Bloodbath

“To lift a rock, merely to crush one's own foot' is a Chinese saying to describe the action of fools, the reactionaries of every country are just such fools. Their persecution of the revolutionary people will only end in rousing the people to broader and fiercer revolution. Did not the persecutions of the Russian tsar and Chiang Kai-shek against the revolutionary people serve precisely to stimulate the great Russian and Chinese revolutions?”

— MAO TSE-TUNG

SINCE the beginning of last October, Indonesian Right-wing reactionary forces have stirred up a violent campaign in all parts of Indonesia against communism and against the people. By the most brutal fascist measures and through mass arrests and wholesale killings, they have plunged Indonesia into a bloodbath, turning that beautiful and fertile country of 3,000 islands into an inferno where white terror reigns. In only a few months, they have slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Indonesian patriots and innocent people — old people, women and children not excepted. Their savage crimes fly in the face of all humanity.

Below are extracts from some reports by Western news agencies, from some relevant articles in Western and Japanese papers, as well as from a Right-wing Indonesian paper. From these extracts readers get some idea — surely not the whole picture — of the fascist mass arrests and massacres committed by the Indonesian Right-wing reactionary forces.

House-to-House, Village-to-Village Arrests And Massacres

The Japanese paper *Asahi Shimbun* on October 8 carried a report from its correspondent in Djakarta which said that every night beginning from October 2, soldiers had conducted a house-to-house search. “In out-of-the-way alleys and the slums (nearly 2 million people live in Djakarta's slums) . . . the search seems to be most rigorous . . . there are reports that people have seen trucks loaded with corpses; others said that their neighbours had disappeared.”

L'Agence France-Presse reported from Djakarta on October 31: “Prisons in this sprawling archipelago . . .

are being filled to capacity with arrested communist coup supporters . . . the army is firmly continuing its mopping-up operations, combing out one *kampong* (village) after another. . . . The army has worked out plans for temporary detention camps of Communists at Onrust Island, off the northwest Javanese coast, near Djakarta, and at Nusakambangan Island, off the Central Javanese south coast near Tjilatjap.”

Another **AFP** dispatch from Djakarta on November 9 said: “The Indonesian army's great purge and manhunt for communist coup supporters was today reported to be continuing unabated.

“At Onrust Island alone, some 5,000 arrested Communists are being kept in detention. it was reliably learnt.

“(This island — which was formerly used by the Dutch as a detention camp — is off the northern coast of West Java, near Djakarta's Tanjung Priok Harbour.)

“Meanwhile the army's mopping-up operations are still in full swing in Central Java and East Java. . . . One village after another is being combed carefully. Communist village heads and other local communist leaders are being rounded up.”

Corpses Rotting Everywhere; Rivers Clogged With Bodies

AFP reported from Singapore on December 29, 1965: “Tens of thousands of people are being slaughtered in Indonesia in a savage wave of reprisals against the Communists. . . .

“One hundred thousand would be a conservative estimate of the total of those who have already died

in mass executions and massacres in Java, Sumatra, Bali and throughout Indonesia. . . .

"The bloodbath intensified four or five weeks ago and extends throughout most of the sprawling island state of Indonesia.

"There have been mass executions of prisoners abandoned to the fury of the populace [counter-revolutionaries]. Outbreaks of spontaneous killing have occurred. . . .

"Military authorities in Bali reportedly admit there have been 15,000 official executions, but observers say the burnt out dwellings, charnel houses, of Bali attest to a death toll at least twice that figure. . . .

"In Sumatra the killings now total more than 60,000 and in Central and Eastern Java . . . it may be even higher."

The report added: "On December 18 President Sukarno complained because bodies lay rotting along the roadside in ditches and rivers and in fields without the benefit of the rites of Islam."

The **Associated Press** said on January 13: "The reported killing of more than 100,000 Communists and sympathizers in Indonesia was a very conservative estimate. . . .

"The figure was more likely in the 150,000 range. . . .

"One thousand Communists and sympathizers were being killed weekly in North Sumatra alone.

"The killings were . . . ferocious in the Medan area. . . .

"Parts of the Medan River were clogged with bodies for a while. . . .

"It was the army which is conducting the greatest purge against . . . Communists and sympathizers."

A Bloody Three-Month Record

The London **Sunday Times** reported on January 2 that "more people had been killed in the Indonesian revolt in the past three months than had died in the Vietnam war in the past five years. . . .

"Deaths in the 'wholesale slaughter of Communists' had been put conservatively at 100,000 by Western diplomats. . . .

"European engineers, businessmen and other foreign travellers returning from up-country . . . speak of rivers filled with floating decapitated corpses."

A London **Times** article on January 8, entitled "Mass Killings of Indonesian Communists Continue," said: "Stories of the continued widespread and ruthless suppression of the Communist Party of Indonesia (P.K.I.) by nationalists — in particular by the Muslim

youth organizations — have continued this month to reach the outside world. . . .

"Estimates of the number of those killed now vary from anything between 10,000 and 300,000. . . .

"In addition to the executions, there have been thousands of arrests — 2,500 in East Java, where there has also been a purge of some 5,700 teachers, and 10,573 in West Java, of whom nearly 10,000 are said to be Communists and the rest government officials."

Villages Deserted After Massacres

The Indonesian paper **Sinar Harapan** on February 3 contained an article describing the situation in East Java. It said: "It is indeed with apprehension that one takes a trip to East Java. This is because one is affected by ghastly rumours. Everywhere the masses [counter-revolutionaries] . . . rounded up and killed Communists en masse. The press did not dare to report these events in detail for fear that they might affect public feelings. . . . Whether in Surabaya or in Pasaruan, Probalinggo, Madiun, Kediri and Malang, we heard of truly dreadful events that had taken place in the course of smashing the September 30 movement. These events we never read about in the newspapers. It is rather embarrassing for one to try to talk about them here now. . . .

"The campaign to smash the September 30 movement was often manipulated by elements giving vent to personal spite, and criminals and exploiters. . . . Dead silence reigned in the countryside, whether in the daytime or at night. It appeared that the villages were deserted. Villagers feared very much that they might be wrongly arrested. The Coleman lamp in the office of the village administration was no longer lighted. Street lights were out. Villagers trembled with fear the moment they heard a car entering the village."

A Carnage Which Finds Few Parallels in the Contemporary World

The French weekly **Le Nouvel Observateur** on March 2 published an article which said that in the past four months Indonesia had a real bloodbath, an unimaginable carnage which had few parallels in the contemporary world. "On January 15, Sukarno, in a speech, spoke of 87,000 killed; insiders, at that time, quoted the figure to be 200,000. Today, estimates considered moderate put it between 300,000 and 350,000. The victims are 'Communists' or people deemed such.

"In East Java, beheaded bodies drifted by the dozens down the rivers daily while the peasants brought the corpses of those executed to the railway embankment for travellers to identify. In Bali, the repression was marked — it is said — by an implacable ruthlessness. In North Sumatra, in the neighbourhood of some plantations, where the victims were numbered

by thousands, the smell from the unburied corpses obliged the authorities to take 'certain hygienic measures.'

"The anti-Communist generals and their advisers have thus utilized the 'September 30 event' to launch what some people call the 'physical elimination' of the Indonesian Communist Party."

The British daily **Guardian** of April 7, in a report by Nicholas Turner from Djakarta, under the heading "Indonesian Political Killings May Exceed 300,000," said: "Estimates of the total number of Indonesians killed in political massacres after the attempted coup on September 30 are being revised as fuller information comes in from outer regions. One Western ambassador considers 300,000 to be a conservative estimate, and other compilations run far higher.

"A traveller who knows the island of Bali well, and speaks the language . . . describes mass executions and the annihilation of village after village in some areas. A consular official in Surabaya accepts a figure of 200,000 for Bali, which has a population of 2 million.

"Estimates of the dead in Sumatra also range around 200,000 and a similar figure for Java is generally regarded as on the low side. When the death tolls for other islands such as Borneo (Kalimantan) and Sulawesi are added, the total may well be upwards of 600,000. Just how many of these are Communists is another question.

"It appears certain that the great majority of the dead were innocent victims of political hysteria. . . . Many others probably died, in settlement of personal feuds and vendettas during the confusion. . . .

"In some areas, Communist suspects were shot or poisoned, but usually the Moslem youth beheaded its victims with the parang. . . . The heads were often impaled on fences and gateposts. . . .

"Rivers in many parts of the country were clogged with corpses for weeks. A European resident of Surabaya describes finding bodies washed up by the river on to his back garden."

Killing Everyone in Sight; Whole Families Slaughtered

The London **Times** of April 13 published a report by its special correspondent who had recently been in Indonesia. Under the heading "Reign of Terror in Java," it said: "The highest figure for the mass killings given to me by an Indonesian general was 150,000; some diplomatists are prepared to believe 500,000. . . .

"A huge number of people were killed, almost without trace in this great and silent country. . . .

"By the time I arrived in Indonesia, eyewitness accounts of the killings were hard to come by first-hand. It was coincidence that a man I met from Central Java was suddenly persuaded 'for the sake of

understanding Indonesia' to recount his part in organized killings. . . .

"He said . . . by the end of October, army units arrived . . . and the hunt for Communists and their families began.

"He went on: 'It was quick death, at night. We surrounded their homes and killed everyone inside . . . with knives . . . though the troops occasionally shot anyone trying to escape. . . . In all we killed about 3,000. We threw their bodies into the river or into the jungle.'"

The report added: "The man smiled and added almost gently: 'We had to make sure we got everyone this time, so there would be no come-back . . . that is why we took the whole family.'

"The man did not boast, nor, I think, did he lie."

The Massacre Has Not Yet Ended

The **New York Times** of April 13 published an article by C.L. Sulzberger datelined Djakarta which said: "One of history's most vicious massacres has not yet ended in Indonesia. More people have been slaughtered here during the past six months than in the entire Vietnam war. It is impossible to give any precise figure on the number slain. One careful diplomatic estimate puts the total at 300,000. Others range higher.

"This tranquil capital . . . calls the significant political revolution [the military coup d'etat staged by the Right-wing generals' clique to seize state power] a 'Javanese courtesy coup.' It politely left President Sukarno with the appearance of power while stripping him of its reality.

"But there is nothing courteous about the mass bloodshed that has raged and still rages in the hinterland. Officials seek to minimize its scope and claim the ghastly episode is closed. Nevertheless, along an immense island arc from Sumatra to Timor, the killing attained a volume impressive even in violent Asia. . . .

"In February public beheadings were still being held outside Ende, capital of Flores Island. Each night soldiers were trucking groups of 20 or more P.K.I. suspects from the prison and out of town to decapitate them with heavy machetes. . . .

"Men have been slain together with their wives and children to reduce chances of later revenge by eliminating complainants. . . .

"Near coastal Surabaya early risers in March were pushing bodies away from the jetties before their houses. Jails near Jogjakarta are said still to be crammed with P.K.I. suspects who are not tried but taken out in nightly batches and killed.

"Unburied bodies recently littered village streets in Central Java. Recently a traveller was told of a bullock cart loaded with human heads."