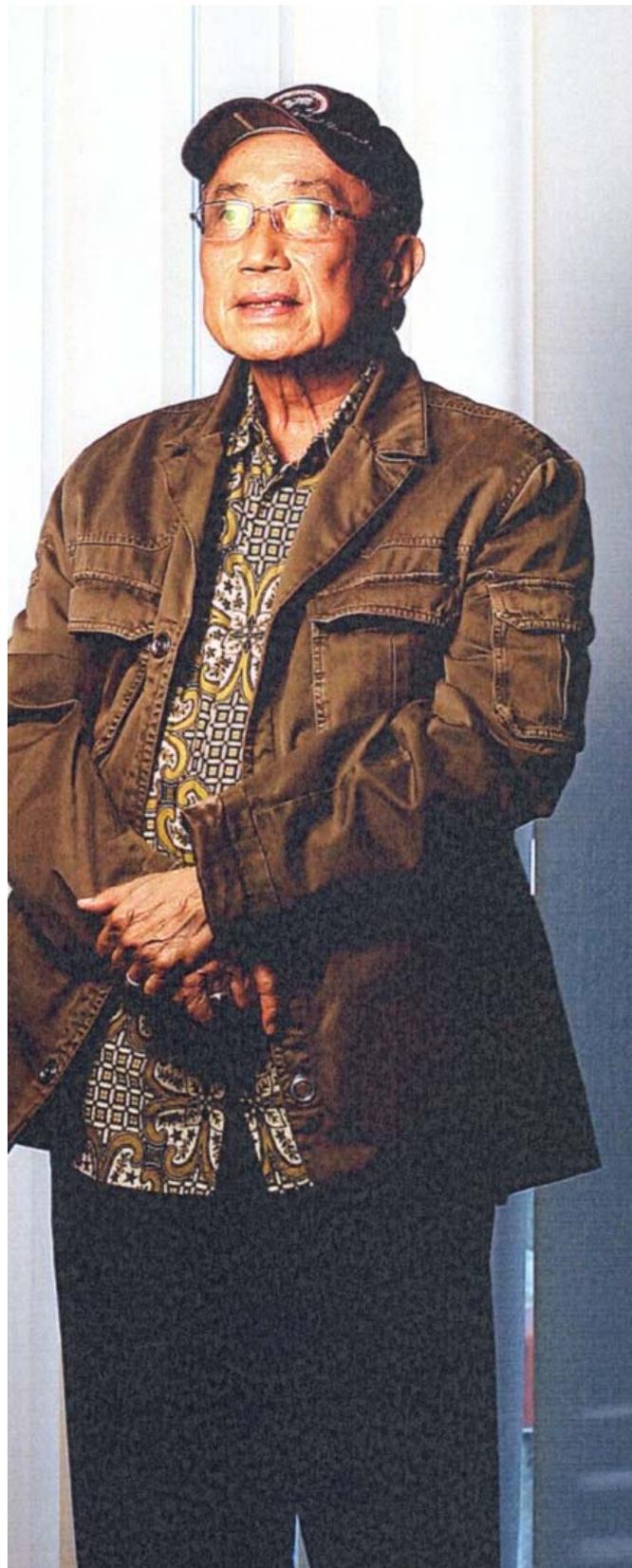


## The Activist from Tanah Abang

**T**he political tumult of 1965 changed the direction of Jusuf Wanandi's life 180 degrees. From a professor of law, he became a political activist, and even had to forego the opportunity of attending Harvard University in the United States. Jusuf was a ringside spectator to the end of President Sukarno's reign, and was personally involved in the political upheavals and student demonstrations that led to Sukarno's fall from power. Together with like-minded individuals, he encouraged General Suharto to become leader of the New Order. He was a close friend of Major-General Ali Moertopo, a Special Operations officer who was greatly trusted by Suharto. The wheels of history never stop turning, and during the Malari incident, or the tragedy of January 15, 1974 it was the turn of Jusuf - and his colleagues at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), headquartered in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta - to be the targets of student criticism and protests. Even his relations with Suharto were not always smooth, and from 1987 he began to diverge from the man he had previously supported so firmly. Next month, Jusuf, born in Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, will turn 73. Two weeks ago, he related his life story, so intimately entwined with contemporary Indonesian history, to *TEMPO's* **Nugroho Dewanto, Ign. Yophiandi** and **Ninin Damayanti**.



*“Was I really afraid of them?”*

*“It’s not like that, Sir. I was once in their position, and they’re very strong. We could be overrun.”*

**T**HIS conversation occurred as I tried to stop Major-General Ali Moertopo, who was intent on emerging from the offices of the CSIS, brandishing a pistol. Ali wanted to confront Hariman Siregar, Chairman of the University of Indonesia Students Council, who was heading up a demonstration and accusing Ali of being a Japanese stooge.

The 1974 demonstration and the ensuing riot became known as the Malari incident (Indonesian abbreviation for “The January 15 Tragedy”). In his biography, written by Heru Cahyono, the Public Order and Security Operation commander, General Sumitro suggests that the riot may actually have been engineered by Ali Moertopo.

Whatever the case, it was the biggest student demonstration since 1966 and the overthrow of the Old Order and the establishment of the New Order under Suharto. I was part of that process and so I know precisely how formidable student protests could be.



*Armed soldier on guard during the Malari incident*



*People at the Ciliwung River during the Malari Incident in Jakarta, January 15, 1974*

The background to the Malari incident was public anger resulting from soaring rice and other basic commodity prices, the cause of which was the global recession that had set in 1973 due to the Arab oil embargo and the ensuing surge in world oil prices. The anger came to a head through the student movement as the students had been asked by Sumitro six months before to criticize the government so as to serve as feedback for government policy.

A flood of Japanese products, accompanied by a superior attitude arising from their investments in Indonesia, particularly in the automotive industry, further enraged the students. So, it was no surprise that one of their targets was Astra, an Indonesia-Japan joint venture—the students pushed a number of Japanese-made cars and motorcycles into the Ciliwung River.

The situation put a lot of pressure on President Suharto, especially given that Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was in the country at the time. Due to the riots, he wasn’t brave enough to emerge from Hotel Indonesia, where he was staying.



*People at the Ciliwung River during the Malari Incident in Jakarta, January 15, 1974*

In 1973, Sumitro was appointed the Public Order and Security Operation commander. Previously, President Suharto was overly trustful of him, since he was the nephew of Doel Arnowo, a figure from East Java known to be a Sukarno loyalist. However, Sumitro had performed well when he was Deputy of Operations at Armed Forces HQ.

He had succeeded in sorting out the “rebellion” by a number of generals in the regions who were unhappy with Suharto, including Kemal Idris in Sulawesi, H.R. Dharsono in West Java, Sarwo Edhie—Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s father-in-law—in North Sumatra, and Amir Machmud. Sumitro managed to pull this off by transferring the generals away from their power bases.

As Public Order and Security commander, Sumitro acted like a prime minister. He could summon ministers, the Attorney General and

technocrats to meetings in his office. He used to make visits to various universities and meet with student leaders, including Hariman. He encouraged them to express criticism so as to provide feedback on government policy. I thought this was very strange. Students don’t normally need to be told to be critical. But this was exactly what he was doing.

At the same time, Ali Moertopo, Soedjono Hoemardani, myself and some others had just visited Australia and a number of Pacific nations, including Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand. We didn’t know that Sumitro was working to get permission from Suharto to put Ali in his place because Ali was felt to be too pro-Malaysia in its dispute with the Philippines over Sabah.

So, Ali’s telephone was tapped by Strategic Intelligence. His bodyguard and adjutant were withdrawn by Skogar at Sumitro’s instigation. Upon arriving back in Indonesia in December, Ali and Soedjono were surprised to find themselves being treated as *persona non grata*. “What does he want?” Ali asked me angrily. “If it was just him, it would be nothing to worry about.” Ali was convinced that Sumitro was using the students to get at him.

***Our movement was an underground one devoted to resisting the communists, who were so strong back then***

Suharto sensed the outbreak of a Cold War in the ranks. Acting quickly, he summoned nine generals to the Palace on December 31, 1973. Besides Sumitro and Ali, also present were Soedjono, Kharis Suhud, the head of Strategic Intelligence, later the Strategic Intelligence Agency, Intelligence Coordinating Agency head Seotopo Joewono, Public Order and Security

Deputy Commander Sudomo, State Secretary Sudharmono, Presidential Ministry Secretary Tjokropranolo, and Army Chief of Staff Surono.

Suharto admonished the generals: “If there are those of you who want to take over as president, go ahead. You don’t have to be competing with each other to launch coups like in Latin America,” both Ali and Soedjono quoted him as saying. The meeting left Sumitro very nervous, and he swore that he had no ambitions to replace Suharto. After the meeting, Kharis, Ali and Sumitro were asked to hold a joint press conference and say they were the best of friends, while at the same time attempting to douse down the student protests. It was too late. Two weeks later the Malari incident occurred. The pressure that had been building up for six months couldn’t be dissipated just like that.

The CSIS was originally a documentation bureau on Jalan Gunung Sahari, Central Jakarta. Established in 1962, its job was to collect clippings on social events and analyze them for the Catholic Party and the Church Council.

In 1963, we came to the conclusion that the Indonesian Communist Party was going to take power. We believed they were set to win the general election in five years’ time as Sukarno appeared entranced by the party’s mass movement. And we, the Catholics, would be the first up against the wall as we were the most opposed to the Communists, alongside Masyumi and the United Indonesian Islamic Party (Partai Sarikat Islam Indonesia).

We, members of the Republic of Indonesia Catholic Students Association (PMKRI)

***For Suharto back then, questions of strategy meant military strategy without any need for civilian input***



***With General Sumitro***

and Catholic intellectuals, ran the bureau. Social analysis was needed to provide material for argumentation and making decisions by the Catholic Party and the Church.

At the time, I was the deputy chairman of the PMKRI, while Harry Tjan was secretary-general of the Catholic Party. We were two of the prominent thinkers in the movement. We also had people with military training. Our movement was an underground one devoted to resisting the communists, who were so strong back then.

At the time of the 1965 events, the bureau helped us in the Pancasila Front, which was a kind of anti-communist think tank. After Suharto became president, we were asked to keep helping as a think tank within the presidential structure. At the time I remember thinking that this guy was naturally clever. If we weren’t careful, we would end up under his thumb.

While we believed that there was a need for a research institute to help the government create a more developed Indonesia in the political, economic and defense realms, we took the view that it would be better if it was not part of the presidential structure but independent and self-financing.

For Suharto back then, questions of strategy meant military strategy without any need for civilian input. We thought differently. But we also understood that the military needed to be

## Conversations with Jusuf Wanandi



*With family and relatives*

involved. So we opted for military men who were able to think, like Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani. It was they who became the protectors of the CSIS.

Ali and Soedjono were Special Operations officers who subsequently became personal assistants to Suharto. The special operation in question was ordered by Army Minister and Commander General Ahmad Yani to bring a resolution to the confrontation with Malaysia. In reality, their duties were primarily political in nature.

Through the CSIS, we provided political, economic and defense input to Suharto, all in the form of academic and strategic studies. We also invited various experts from Western Europe to assist us. Daud Jusuf and Hadi Soesastro joined us later after they had completed their studies.

***Through the CSIS, we provided political, economic and defense input to Suharto, all in the form of academic and strategic studies***

It was Ali who presented us with our first offices on Jalan Kesehatan, Central Jakarta. It was also Ali who provided the funding to set up the institute. In order to allow us to become self-financing, we set up the Proclamation Foundation—subsequently the CSIS Foundation—and Sofjan Wanandi was appointed treasurer to take charge of fundraising.

We did not only present our studies to our own government, but also to other countries. For example, we presented a report at the Japan-Indonesia Conference at the start of December 1973, six weeks prior to Malari, in which we criticized Japan's policy of shoving its way into Indonesia, including in the investment arena.

I was of the opinion that Japan, after the end of World War II, saw Indonesia and Southeast Asia as nothing more than a market for their products. They were still not very shrewd politically so that they focused all their attention on governments and local business people.

We are used to studying Indonesia's bilateral relations with other nations, including the normalization of relations with China in 1992. At the time, China was looking up in both economic and defense terms.

Other studies were about multilateral organizations of which Indonesia is a member. At the start of the New Order, we studied the development of ASEAN. As it happened, eight months before the signing of the ASEAN declaration on August 8, 1967, I was assigned by Ali Moertopo to study organizational collaboration among the Southeast Asian nations.

At the present time, the CSIS is very much involved in providing reports on China to the government and the private sector, particularly since the enactment of the ASEAN-China freetrade agreement at the start of this year.

I am the fourth generation offspring of immigrants from Fujian, China, who came here back in 1850. There are seven of us children, and I am the oldest. I was born in Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, a place known for its coal mines.

While I may be of Chinese descent, I never went to a Chinese school. When I was small, I went to a Dutch school in Padang, even though the city also had a good Chinese school. My grandfather and father, Lim Gim To, still communicated with each other in the Fujian dialect.

Our father was a strict disciplinarian and the rattan rod was a regular feature in our lives. By contrast, my mother, Katrina Tjoa Gim Jong Nio, was full of love and affection. She never spoke harshly to us, was always cheerful and had a positive influence on other people. It was she who taught us always to empathize with others.

In 1966, I was known as Liem Bian Kie. My younger brother, Sofjan Wanandi, then a student activist at the University of Indonesia, was known as Liem Bian Koen. After Suharto came to power, I changed my family name to Wanandi, and my younger siblings followed suit.

Sofjan and I have not had a political argument since the election of 2004. Sofjan, because he is close to Jusuf Kalla, supported the Yudhoyono-Kalla ticket, while I supported Megawati, not because she was better but rather because she was courageous enough to defend the policies of her subordinates. I did not see this same courage in Yudhoyono.

Because of our different political choices, Sofjan and I did not talk for three months. Whenever we met in our mother's house, we



*In his CSIS office, Jakarta*

## Conversations with Jusuf Wanandi

would always keep our distance. I would be in one corner and Sofjan would be in another. Seeing what was going on, Mother decided it was time to act. A great traveler, she invited us all to go on a 10-day family trip to China.

During the trip, naturally we did everything together: travel, eat, shop, and so bit by bit we began to forget about our differences. How could it be any different?

Upon our return from China, Sofjan was offered the Trade Ministry portfolio by Kalla. I wouldn't allow it. As a businessman and trader, he would be laboring under a conflict of interest if he accepted the offer. With the bureaucracy the way

it was, it would also have been impossible to make trade policy work. So Mari Pangestu, also a CSIS economist, was proposed instead. It took a year after Yudhoyono came to power for Sofjan to realize he had made the wrong choice.

I invited Jusuf Kalla to the launch of a short biography of our mother at the Jakarta Theater lounge some time after the 2009 election. Sofjan and I were united again, and were fully behind Jusuf Kalla. Speaking from the podium, I told Mother not to worry as Sofjan and I were both on the same wavelength this time around, and while Kalla's presidential bid had failed, he was still the best candidate. Kalla smiled when he heard this.



*Jusuf Wanandi meeting former Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi. ISIS CE Mahani Zainal Abidin is on the extreme left*