

How Papernas' Congress was held in spite of threats

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Dear friends

The National Liberation Party of Unity would like to thank you for your support for our democratic right to hold our founding congress. We have received many message from various organizations from all around the world to our email, fax , mobile phone and not to mention the messages that were sent directly to the police, Indonesian Embassies and other related departments. Despite the repression and intimidation our congress was able to proceed and make important decision. Thanks

Warmest solidarity

Katarina Pujiastuti

Amidst threats of right-wing militia disruption to the founding congress of KP Papernas (the Preparatory Committee of the National Liberation Party of Unity), about 400 participants persevered in conducting the congress while strengthening the security of the venue.

On January 19, 2007 at about 3pm, a group which called themselves the Anti-Communist Group of Indonesia (FAKI) staged a protest near the venue. Some local journalists said that the FAKI had swords and other sharp weapons in their cars.

The police offered to organize a negotiation between KP Papernas representatives, FAKI and the village head. The negotiations commenced with the police standing watch. But as we already expected, the talks did not produce any results.

The FAKI kept condemned Papernas' Three Banners of The National Unity as the revitalization of the

banned Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). We have informed them of the content of the Three Banners (repudiation of foreign debt, nationalization of the mining industry, and the national industrialization for prosperity of the people) but they insisted that this was only a cover.

They said: "If you resist we are going to eliminate you!" and made throat-slitting gestures with their hands. They give a deadline to end the congress by 9 pm that night, and said they would return. But we considered that there was no reason to stop the congress.

The local village head just stated that he did not want FAKI to attack and hoped there was not going to be any riot in the village. That night was the opening celebration of Islamic New Year, so there was to be a village parade and gathering. He did not want any violence to ruin the celebrations.

The congress continued in the very tense situation. All of the participants prepared to face an attack with whatever was available in the venue — bamboo stick, rocks etc. We also were pleased to discover that a group of 200 West Nusa Tenggara, West Papuan and South Maluku students from Yogyakarta, came up to support us to face the FAKI threat.

That night, around 50 FAKI members on motorbikes stayed in the area, but as many more people came out to celebrate the New Year's eve, they did not dare attack the congress venue.

The congress continued on January 20 and adopted Popular Democracy as party's principle, the form of our organization and structure, agreed to keep using Papernas (The National Liberation Party of Unity) as the name of the party and to promote the Three Banners of National Unity as a program.

The congress also elected Agus Jabo Priyono as Chairperson and Haris Sitorus as a general secretary.

While Chairperson Agus Jabo and Dita Sari were delivering speeches, the head of the police district came try to stop the congress. However, the congress continued until 12 noon when it adjourned early as a sign of appreciation to the local community's wish to have a peaceful and safe New Year's celebration.

Police repressed anti-repression protest!

Responding to the threats of violent dispersal of the KP Papernas founding congress, most of KP Papernas branches staged protests to condemn this repression. In Medan, North Sumatera, the police arrested protestors, revealing once again the repressive character of the State and its apparatus.

50 people of KP Papernas branch had marched to the regional police station to delivered a speech in support of the Papernas congress. In front of the police station, when Sindang Pardosi, the coordinator of the action was about to begin the speech, the police tried to grab the microphone. The protestors tried to keep the microphone and the police charged into the line, provoking a violent struggle. The police not only dispersed the action but also detained six protestors for 24 hours. Following are the arrested protestors

1. John Merdeka (Leader of KP Papernas- North Sumatera Branch)
2. Sintong Pardosi (Leader of National Peasant Union/STN - North Sumatera Branch)
3. Anwar Nasihin (Member of Student National League for Democracy/LMND)
4. Deny Sirait (Leader of KP Papernas - Siantar Marihat District)
5. Hendra Pratama (member of Urban Poor Union/SRMK)
6. Surung Hutagaol (Secretary of KP Papernas - Sima

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