

TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPTION

SLAMET OETOMO

DHD 8 No. 077/IX/A/ 1945/1977

Tearing the Three Colours Flag

Since the morning of Thursday, September 19, 2605, Sumera (19 September 1945), the people have witnessed the waving of the Dutch flag, red-white-blue tricolour, above Yamato Hotel or Orange Hotel located at Surabaya Tunjungan Street. The flag had been deliberately waved by the Dutchmen who had re-occupied the hotel with a group of International Red Cross (Intercross) which had arrived a few days earlier. Some of them were arrived by plane and being dropped off over Surabaya city.

So it was not surprising that Indo-Dutch youths, who suspect their golden age will soon return, bravely disturb people passing in front of them, while tearing the Red and White badge mounted on left side of the chest of the person they disturbed. Meanwhile, the Indo-Dutch youths had contacted the Japanese Army Authority to request that the Yamato Hotel as their headquarters, to be guarded by the Kenpeitai [Japanese Military Police] soldiers.

The raising of the "three colours" flag and the Indo-Dutch arrogance, provoked the anger of Surabaya's youngsters or "*Arek-Arek Suroboyo*" who had fully understood that Indonesia had become an independent state. The action of the Dutch people above was a great insult to the Indonesian nation.

Within a short time, in front of and around the Hotel where the Dutch colonist's flag was waving, there were groups of youngster clustered irregularly looking up at the flag. Seeing the crowds of people and youths growing increasingly, the Indo-Dutch people became discouraged and rushed into the room inside the hotel. The Indonesian youth grumbled and looked at each other as a result of an overflow of anger, but no one among them took the initiative to act. In the uncertain atmosphere, a youth named S. Kasman came out from the crowd and immediately invited the newly arrived youths, Sumarsono and Ruslan to go around asking for people's reinforcements. By riding a bicycle, the three of them went to Praban Street, Blauran Street and Embong Malang Street while shouting to invite people to come to Tunjungan Street. On their return at Tunjungan, from the north to the south of the road has been crowded by thousands of people. They shouted threats and condemnation to the Dutch and made the frenzy situation.

Meanwhile, Mr Sudirman, Resident of Surabaya, came at Yamato Hotel by car. He immediately asked the Dutch representatives to bring the "three colour" flag down quickly, since the people were very anxious about it. He said that Indonesia had proclaimed its independence on August 17, therefore the Indonesian authorities had the right to ban other flags besides the "red and white" flag. Nevertheless, the Dutch representative refused to dismiss the "three colours" flag that was waving. Their reason was the Dutch Government has been entitled to return to the East Indies, because the Allies were the winner of the World War. In another word, The Dutch is a member of the Allies, and Japan was not.

Tension occurs. The Dutch suddenly went to Japan's guard post near the hotel and returned to Mr Dirman with a revolver in hand, which he obtained from the guard post. In the contend circumstances, the Dutch tried to subdue Mr Dirman by pointing a revolver at him. It was a moment when Sidik, a young man who was beside the Resident since the beginning, launched off his kick and hit the Dutchman's hand who have pointing a revolver at Mr Dirman. The revolver bounced and burst, Those Dutchman angry and attacked Sidik immediately. However, Sidik was not an amateur, he was trained by Barisan Jibakutai (Barisan Berani Mati) [Dare-to-Die Squad]. He fought back and in the exciting struggle, the Dutch died due to strangled. Suddenly another Dutch came with a drawn sword to kill him. In a state of fast-paced, Sidik took a bicycle, that was leaning against the hotel's wall, and with this "weapons" he could fend off from the sword that was swung at him. Unfortunately, the broken end of the sword hit the top of his head and caused bleeding. Nevertheless, the resistance continued and another Dutch have killed again. If Sidik was not exhausted, he would not run away into the middle of the crowd across the street because another Dutch chased him with a flower pot on his hand.

Furthermore, after the fight finished, all the people invaded the hotel. Meanwhile, Sidik was carried to the hospital and those Dutchmen were beaten by the masses.

After that, some young men were trying to go up to the top of the hotel towards the flagpole. Whereas other youngster halted for a while because from inside some hotel's room, the Dutch threw stones continuously from a former protective shelter. Indonesian men also threw stones, from a former protective shelter that was built in front of the hotel, also using broken bottles and sharpened bamboo. Therefore, some people called this incident as "tawuran" (brawl).

A young man named Umar Usman, who was serving as the Head of the Regional BKR Kapasari, went to Oranje Hotel after hearing the news that the "three colours" flag waving from above the hotel's building. He arrived in front of the pavilion (right next to the hotel), that was

used as perfume storefronts, by carrying “Bambu runcing” [sharpened bamboo; traditional spear]. But the Japanese guard who stood there not allowing Usman to enter and ascend to the top, Usman together with others men, who were very angry, broke the glass windows display in there and destroy anything inside the display. He fought off the Japanese guard and continued walk to upstairs toward the hotel’s attic where the "three colour" flag was waving. Even though the Japanese guard followed him but the guard did nothing. As well as with a Dutch army who was stood in the corner of the attic who were armed with the Sten Gun. Even the Dutch men looked scared and frightened with a pale skin. Usman arrived in the attic, he realized that to go to the top of the hotel’s building he needs to use overhang [afdak] part of the building because there were no stairs anymore. So as he pointed to the flag, he tried to get the whole people up by shouting "the Dutch guard was helpless... come on... let's all move up!". Next, people tried to go to the top of the building by sticking the ladder on the wall while Usman holds the tip of the ladder from above. At that time, he wanted to set another ladder that goes straight to the flagpole suddenly a strapping young man managed to jump up from the edge of the floor. That strapping young man was named Koesno, an employee of the Kentyo Office (Surabaya’s residency office). Before reaching the top floor of the hotel, Koesno also token part to broke the glass window display in the pavilion, as told in advance. But as some people there began to take anything in the stores display for their own personal interests, Koesno saw some young men carrying a bamboo ladder, hurried tagged along with them to help set the ladder on the hotel wall. Immediately he climbed the stairs to the floor in second level until finally succeed in climbing to the top floor where the flagpole stand upright.

Evidently, on that floor, there was someone who already stands up. His name was Since that young man seemed to be silent without doing anything, then Koesno hoisted the “three colours” flag down deftly and managed to tear the blue part after repeatedly bitten the flag cloth. Finally, the remaining colour was “red-white” flag, then Koesno hoisted back the flag up. After the red-and-white flag waving (the flag shape was in disarray), Koesno picked up a blue cloth that was thrown away to the floor, tied up the cloth in a mess then thrown away the cloth to the ground while shrieking "Merdeka, Merdeka, Merdeka! [freedom]". The people below welcomed him with great excitement.

After Koesno, who tore the flag, went down to the ground, he was hailed by a mob of people with pride. In another word, practically the event of tearing the Dutch flag has been finished. But there were so many people who did not want to leave the place, not only just chat about the events that have just passed, but also guarded just in case if there was still any Dutch who dared to leave the hotel. Only after Mr Soedirman, Resident of Surabaya came and

explained that he would solve this problem with the Dutch and Kempetai, the mass of the youth calmed down and moved from there to went come back to their origin place.

Problems:

- The second person besides Koesno, whether Hariono, Sutrisno or Abdul [Irus/Idris/Muis]?
- The flags are hoisted or the pole is torn down?