

CONDEMNING THE HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS AGAINST WEST
PAPUA BY THE INDONESIAN
GOVERNMENT

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a problem of growing concern in Southeast Asia. I want to inform my colleagues of the human rights violations committed by the Indonesian government against the people of West Papua. For the last forty years, West Papuans have lived under the rule of a government that has virtually declared martial law on people who only want to participate in the determination of their own destiny. Like in East Timor before their independence from Indonesia, the military and local law enforcement officials continue to violate the human and civil rights of West Papuans.

West Papua has been under the rule of foreign governments for almost three hundred years, beginning with colonization by the British in 1793 to the Dutch in the mid twentieth century. In the early 1960s, West Papuans almost realized their dream of self determination with a Dutch-sponsored election for a local government called the West New Guinea Council. Unfortunately, the results of the Dutch plan were rejected by the United Nations. The Indonesian military subsequently invaded West Papua. After nearly a decade of uncertainty, the U.N. in 1969, supervised a vote for the so called "Act of Free Choice" which gave representatives a vote between independence or continued rule under the Indonesian government. This vote did not truly reflect the opinions of the West Papuans because only 195 out of the 1,026 elected representatives actually voted. As reported in New Internationalist Magazine, most of those votes were cast under pressure by military leaders.

Over the years, the people of West Papua formed an independence movement coordinated by the Papuan Council under the leadership of Mr. Theys Hijo Eluay. I am sad to report that Mr. Eluay, a revered figure among his people, was assassinated last November. According to a report published by the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, Mr. Eluay's death was caused by asphyxiation. While this report only moderately implies that the military and police were responsible, it recognizes that the assassination may be part of a military strategy to quell the independence movement. Other tactics used include arbitrary executions, random detention, torture, kidnap and rape have been frequently used by the military. The Indonesian government has declared that any protest or congregation of dissident groups would be seen as treason and stopped immediately.

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Thom Beanal, Acting Chairman of the Presidium of the Papuan Council and Mr. Willy Mandowen, Facilitator for the Dialogue for the Presidium of the Papuan Council. These men and their colleagues, who are proponents of independence and human rights, advocate their cause through peaceful means, yet they continue to face threats of physical harm by the military who oppose the independence movement.

I ask my colleagues to imagine living each day under the threat of violence. Imagine living with the knowledge that at least one member of every family in your town has experienced a loss of a loved one at the hands of the Indonesian militia. Imagine living with the fear that your child may be kidnaped by armed gunmen, only to be found burned and buried in a shallow grave. West Papuans don't have to imagine. They live with this every day.

We acted in the case of East Timor and the results have been spectacular. Since it became a sovereign nation on May 20, 2002, the people have regained the rights and liberties which all people are entitled to. Had Congress not intervened when East Timorians were under heavy rule by the Indonesian government, surely they would not be celebrating the new freedoms that they enjoy today.

Mr. Speaker, our actions in East Timor helped give birth to the world's newest democracy that thrives today. We must continue to note the events in West Papua and take action when it is necessary. For too long, we have remained silent on the issues of human and civil rights around the world. It is time for us to take a stand. I urge my colleagues to join me in condemning the actions of the Indonesian government. A peaceful resolution to West Papuan independence is possible, but it must be with the cooperation of the Indonesian government and military.

HONORING ELI SIEGEL

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great Baltimorean poet, educator, and founder of Aesthetic Realism, Eli Siegel.

Mr. Siegel was born in 1902 and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland where his contributions to literature and humanity began. Mr. Siegel founded the philosophy Aesthetic Realism in 1941, based on principles such as: man's deepest desire, his largest desire, is to like the world on an honest or accurate basis, and that the world, art, and self explain each other: each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites.

Mr. Siegel explained that the deepest desire of every person is, "to like the world on an honest basis." He gave thousands of lectures on the arts and sciences.

Mr. Siegel's work continues at the not-for-profit Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City, where classes, lectures, workshops, dramatic presentations, and poetry readings are offered. In addition, a teaching method, based on aesthetic realism, has been tested in New York City public schools. The teaching method has been tremendously successful. Understanding and using the teaching method may be used as an effective tool to stop racism and promote tolerance; because it enables people of all races to see others with respect and kindness.

In 1925, Eli Siegel won the esteemed "Nation" Poetry Prize for "Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana," which brought him to national attention. "Hot Afternoons," Mr. Siegel said, was affected by his thoughts of Druid Hill Park. And so, it is fitting that on August 16, 2002, the city of Baltimore will dedicate the Eli Siegel Memorial at Druid Hill Park on a site

near the Madison Avenue entrance, not far from his early home on Newington Avenue. The bronze memorial plaque, designed by students of Aesthetic Realism, includes a sculptured portrait and poetry.

Mayor Martin O'Malley has designated August 16, 2002 as 'Eli Siegel Day' in Baltimore. At this time, I would like to insert the Mayor's proclamation and a few of Eli Siegel's poems found in the June 5, 2002 of the Aesthetic Realism Foundation magazine for the record.

Eli Siegel died in 1978, but his poetry and the education of Aesthetic Realism will be studied in every English, literature, and art classroom across the nation for years to come.

I would like to end this tribute by reciting a poem Eli Siegel wrote honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

SOMETHING ELSE SHOULD DIE: A POEM WITH
RHYMES
(By Eli Siegel)

In April 1865

Abraham Lincoln died.

In April 1968

Martin Luther King died.

Their purpose was to have us say, some day;
Injustice died.

Eli Siegel wrote poems for more than six decades. These poems expressed his thoughts on people, feelings, everyday life, love, nature, history. I am proud to offer this tribute.

Thank you.

[From Aesthetic Realism Foundation, June 5, 2002]

THE RIGHT OF AESTHETIC REALISM TO BE
KNOWN

BALTIMORE REPRESENTS THE WORLD—
CONTEMPT CAUSES INSANITY

Dear Unknown Friends: In this issue we reprint the text of a public document that is beautifully important in the history of culture and justice. It is a proclamation by the Mayor of Baltimore, the city in which Eli Siegel spent his early years. Mr. Siegel was born on August 16, 1902, and the proclamation is a formal honoring of him on his centenary: an expression of pride in and gratitude for his work, by this major American city. It describes truly some of Mr. Siegel's greatness and the principles of the philosophy he founded, Aesthetic Realism.

The mayoral proclamation was first read publicly on April 28 in the Wheeler Auditorium of Baltimore's distinguished Enoch Pratt Free Library. It began an event hosted by the Library in partnership with the Aesthetic Realism Foundation, "The Poetry of Eli Siegel: A Centennial Celebration."

I and others have written much about the horrible anger Mr. Siegel met from persons who resented the vastness of his knowledge, the fullness of his honesty, the newness of his thought. The Baltimore Proclamation stands for what is natural and just: if something or someone is great—and Eli Siegel is—we should rejoice.

When a public document is mighty it is because, while impersonal, it embodies the deep feelings of people, their beating hearts, and the careful judgment of their minds. This Proclamation does. It resounds and is warm. With its legal structure, it stands, for example, for my own love of Mr. Siegel, my intellectual opinion of him: it represents people now and for all time.

In honor of Baltimore as representing the world, and to show something of Eli Siegel early in his life, we include here two writings by him from the *Baltimore American*. After his winning the *Nation* Poetry Prize in February 1925, Mr. Siegel was a columnist for the *American*, a major newspaper of the time.