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# Trends. From the Wretched of the Earth to the Power of the Weak: An Example from Indonesia

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As previously mentioned in IBPP (1(14)), our era of globalization may be increasing the potential power of the wretched and the weak throughout the world. How is this occurring? It seems as if the noxious aspects of living as wretched and weak are being perceived as ever more threatening to the well-off and strong via the interdependence of peoples being nurtured by globalization. The noxious aspects loom as something that must be attenuated, not out of love and compassion for the less fortunate but out of concern for one's own material welfare. Population dislocations of the dispossessed that can tax social and economic infrastructures of their safe havens, the rapid transmission of disease, and the pollution and consequences of ecological disaster that know no boundaries become not nightmares of far-off places but incipient realities upon awakening in one's own bed.

The current dance to nowhere among the Indonesian Government, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and various nations led by the United States (US) affords a further example. Although President Suharto has taken some small steps strongly suggested by the IMF and the US as contingent on receiving over \$43 billion in aid--e.g., opening talks with creditor nations about its \$70 billion debt--he has resisted or deceived about more significant matters--e.g., breaking up monopolies of relatives and friends. And even in spite of or because of growing political violence in Indonesia, the IMF and US is approving the transfer of funds albeit in smaller increments than initially discussed.

Why? Indonesia is not powerless in this situation. Its power is in the potential magnitude of failure. As the fourth largest country in the world, and with the world's largest Islamic population, its power resides in the threats of (1) economic contagion throughout Asia and beyond and (2) domestic destabilization affecting regional stability. During the colonial and even neo-colonial eras many nations and multilateral organizations could demand the most austere or unfair of conditions before aid was given. Now the strong and the weak are more closely recognizing the intimacy of their embrace, their reciprocal needs, and their vital and mutual dependence for their very lives--much as two entities locked in a sadomasochistic complex. (See Bach, S. (1997). Resolving the sadomasochistic dichotomy, *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 14, 65-77; Fanon, F. (1986). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press. (Original work published, 1963); Psychopolitical effects of globalization on power: When weakness becomes strength. (February 28, 1997). *IBPP*, 1(14); Lebe, D. (1997). Masochism and the inner mother. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 84, 523-540; Warren, C. S. (1997). The disavowal of desire: A relational view of sadomasochism. *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 14, 107-123.) (Keywords: Globalization, IMF, Indonesia, International Monetary Fund, Political Violence, Suharto.)