

CONCEALED POLITICS, REVEALED WOMEN:
GENDERED ICONS OF LABOR IN INDONESIA ^{MAS}

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Trade union politics have been suppressed, often violently, in Indonesia's New Order era (1966-present). The murder of a young Javanese woman, Marsinah, in 1993 drew international attention to extralegal abuses as her death became an icon of protest and publicity of workers' rights in Indonesian media and arts. Discourse surrounding Marsinah's murder structured its representation of women's interests as workers through cultural conceptions of labor, gender, and the public nature of scandal, at the

same time concealing the political and historical processes by which Javanese women have figured as "workers" in contemporary Indonesia. This paper examines the publicity of trade union politics and the "feminization of labor" as processes which, paradoxically, reveal workers as women, even as they conceal local politics within a logic of scandal. This paper is based on Indonesian media sources and fieldwork on industrial labor relations from 1986-1993.