THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE INDONESIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

ISKANDAR TEDJASUKMANA

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Department of Far Eastern Studies
Cornell University
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PREFACE

In few Asian countries is organized labor so important an economic and political factor as in contemporary Indonesia, and in few countries of the world has it been so politicized. Yet, thus far very little serious research and writing has been concerned with the Indonesian trade unions. Consequently the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project is pleased to publish this pioneering study by Iskandar Tedjasukmana. It would be difficult to find anyone better qualified to undertake it, for he served as Minister of Labor in three different Indonesian cabinets: the Sukiman Cabinet (April 27, 1951 - April 2, 1952); the Wilopo Cabinet (April 3, 1952 - July 31, 1953); and the Burhanudin Harahap Cabinet (August 12, 1955 - March 27, 1956). In addition, he was from 1951 to 1956 Chairman of the Political Bureau of the Labor Party. From 1946 to 1956, except while Cabinet Minister, he was a member of the Indonesian Parliament, serving from March, 1947, to August, 1949, as Vice-Chairman of its Working Committee.

Currently, Mr. Tedjasukmana is enrolled as a candidate for the PhD. degree in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University.

Ithaca, New York
October 31, 1958

George McT. Kahin
Director

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Significance

In Indonesia, the trade union movement has always been subject to ideological influences, especially communist and socialist influences. At the same time, nationalism and the Indonesian national revolution have aroused the imagination of all trade unionists.

The result is that unionism of a non-political nature is unknown to the Indonesian workers. The administration of the unions is not always businesslike and is often determined or affected by the circumstance that the unions are a sort of political association and fighting organization, although they are also very busy in presenting economic demands to the employers, in conducting collective bargaining negotiations, and in handling labor disputes. However, in their approach to labor-management relations and to the handling of labor disputes, many union leaders are often inspired and guided by political sentiments, rather than by cool economic calculations. The means employed and the phrases used during labor disputes remind us more of a political arena than of a business conference room.

Many unions are frequently engaged in pure political activities and cherish political aims. Their primary basic underlying concern also centers in the field of political economy. The economic reconstruction of the country along socialist lines is a constant subject for study, discussion and agitation among the trade unionists.

In the months following the Proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, it was the workers who seized Government offices, establishments, factories, plantation estates, and commercial houses from the Japanese military managements. And, in December 1957, it was the workers again, led by trade unions, who seized Dutch enterprises in order to force the Government to assume control over these vital economic objects.

This state of mind among trade unions dates back to the early beginnings of the movement in Indonesia fifty

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years ago. It is the result of the circumstance that the birth, development, and experiences of the trade union movement coincided and went hand-in-hand with the vicissitudes of the nationalist political movement for independence. In fact, the Indonesian trade union movement has been always a part, an important one, of the Indonesian nationalist movement at large.

The process of development was as follows:

The first pure Indonesian trade union--a union under the leadership of Indonesians—was organized in 1908, the same year that the first Indonesian political association was founded. (1) Before 1908 there were already organizations of salaried workers, but these were associations of Dutchmen employed in Indonesia, or of Dutchmen and Indonesians, but with only Dutchmen as leaders.

During the whole period of the nationalist struggle against the Dutch colonial regime, up to 1942, the trade union movement was continuously in close contact with the political movement. Many trade unionists were members of political parties, and many functionaries of political parties held positions in trade unions.

During the Japanese occupation the trade unions were suppressed. But many union leaders joined the underground movement together with political elements of communist, socialist, and nationalist convictions.

Immediately after the Proclamation of Independence, the trade unions resumed their activities, most of them with new names, new structure, and new programs, while at the same time, entirely new unions were formed.

When, soon after the establishment of the Republic, the Dutch came back to Indonesia under the protection of the Allied Forces, the workers, inspired by union leaders, fought the Dutch colonial troops, side by side with the regular Republican army and several other private military organizations. (2)

(1) The Budi Utomo (Noble Endeavor), founded in 1908, was a nationalist association which later on became an official political party.

(2) Units of especially trained workers were also charged with the carrying out of the so-called earth-scored policy, namely the demolition or destruction of buildings, factories, bridges, and other establishments.

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The hostilities with the Dutch ended--at least officially--at the end of 1949. On December 27, 1949, the Kingdom of the Netherlands conferred its recognition upon the Indonesian Republic, the then Republic of the United States of Indonesia.

The trade unions now faced a new situation and new problems. First of all they insisted that they had to share responsibility for the future of the Republic. Since they had had an active part in the early struggle for independence and in the defense of the Republic, the unions were of the opinion that they were also responsible for the future course of events in the Republic and for the realization of the goals and ideals attached to Independence.

The purpose of this study is to trace and identify the ideological influences which have made fighting organizations of the Indonesian trade unions which pursue long-range political aims in addition to immediate economic gains. Special attention will be paid to Marxist and Leninist influences. To identify them, we have to refer to the indoctrination of the trade unions in the mother-country of communism--the Soviet Union. The reference to the Chinese communist trade union movement will show the importance of the communist victory in mainland China for other Asian countries, including Indonesia.

In order to deepen our understanding of the Indonesian trade union movement, it is necessary to comprehend its political character, as manifested by the relationship of the trade unions to political parties and their propensity for political action. This understanding is required to explain the attitudes of Indonesian organized labor today. An understanding of the attitudes of the trade union movement will serve to unravel the confusing complexity of current labor relations in the country, and to explain the labor policy of the Indonesian Government.

The unravelling of this complexity serves not only understanding but is also the first step:

a. in paving the way for a more sound development of the Indonesian trade union movement and for the preservation of democracy in the movement and in the community at large;

b. towards the improvement of labor-management relationships and the lessening of industrial strife;

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c. in simplifying the groupings in the trade union movement; in restoring and adapting the labor movement's connections with political parties to more logical and sound proportions; and, by so doing, easing partisan rivalry among the various political factions which divide the country, and thus helping to promote national unity, harmony and stability;

d. towards the abolition of paternalism and the institution of a more liberal labor policy based on voluntarism.

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CHAPTER I

SHORT HISTORY

OF THE INDONESIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The history of the Indonesian trade union movement can be divided into two main periods, namely the period during the Dutch Colonial Regime, and the period after the Proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia, on August 17, 1945. The three and one-half years of Japanese military occupation, from February, 1942, to August, 1945, can be reckoned to the Colonial Period.

Dating only from 1905, the Indonesian trade union movement can be considered as very young. Yet, it is older than its counterparts in the other Southeast Asian countries. (1) In the Colonial Period, if one takes into account the magnitude of the population and the number of the gainfully employed persons, the movement was rather small. As a matter of fact, the pre-Independence trade union movement was on the whole not very strong. But, making its appearance as it did in that calm period of a colonial environment and under a complacent but rigid rule, and then soon becoming involved in a series of spectacular experiences, the young movement caused quite a sensation.

(1) a. "Malaya's first trade union movement appeared at the end of World War II ...." J. Norman Parmer, Trade Unions in Malaya, p. 142.

b. "Shortly after these disturbances (after 1932), the Government permitted the organization of the first labor union." International Cooperation Administration, Summary of the Labor Situation in Thailand, p. 5.

c. "It was not until 1938, when the Thakin Party began to organize labor as a part of its anti-British campaign, ..." International Cooperation Administration, Summary of the Labor Situation in Burma, p. 10.

d. "Organizations of Vietnamese workers have existed since 1930 ...." International Cooperation Administration, Summary of the Labor Situation in the Republic of Vietnam, p. 6.

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The Colonial Period (2)

This space of time, running from 1905 to February, 1942, and followed by three and one-half years of the Japanese interregnum, can be sub-divided into three shorter periods; namely: the time from 1905 to 1926-1927, then from 1927 to 1942, and finally, the Japanese period.

The Period from 1905 to 1926-1927

This was the period of early organization, characterized by circumspection, some hesitation and sedateness. However, after a few years, the new-born movement became conscious of its strength and capabilities; its cautiousness and sedateness made way for recklessness and radicalism. The change was mainly the result of socialist and communist propaganda; but it was also generated by the rigid attitude on the one hand of the Dutch employers who ran the whole economy of the country, and on the other hand, of the Colonial Government which was not prepared to deal with such a movement.

Although wage labor was introduced in Indonesia as early as 1870, (3) it was only in the beginning of the twen-

(2) For this part of the history of the Indonesian trade union movement the author has made use of the information given in the following works:
1. J.Th. Petrus Blumberger, De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indië, 1931, pp. 129-150 and pp. 360-374.
2. J.M. Pluvier, Overzicht van de Ontwikkeling der Nationalistische Beweging in Indonesië in de Jaren 1930 tot 1942, 1953, pp. 155-161.
3. A.K. Pringgodigdo, Sedjarah Pergerakan Rakjat Indonesia, 1950, pp. 27-29, 98-106 and 172-183.
4. D.N. Aidit, Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia, 1952, pp. 36-64.
5. The articles by Chronos in Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan of July 1948, No. 4, pp. 56-60; and by Sandra in the issues of July 1954, pp. 7-13, and of August 1954, pp. 3-10.
6. The preambles of the constitutions of the SOBSI, SARBUPRI, SBG, PERBUM, SBPP and SBKA.

(3) Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the exploitation of the natural resources of Indonesia was the monopoly of the Dutch Government. According to the so-called "Cultuurstelsel" (Cultivation System), the In-

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tieth century that the Indonesian laborers arrived at the position where they were able to give birth to an organized movement, aimed at the advancement of their living standards, and, in general, at the emancipation of the Indonesian working class at large.

This was apparently due to the widespread illiteracy and low level of education among the workers, the scarcity of craftsmen and other skilled workers, and the lack of potential trade union leaders. But, the late arrival of the movement was certainly also caused by the hostile attitude of the then prevailing colonial policy towards all kinds of concerted activities which might be initiated by the native population. As a matter of fact, it was only in the beginning of the present century that the law which put a ban on freedom of association and assembly was repealed. (4)

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donesian population was forced to cultivate coffee, tea, tobacco and other crops on their lands or on other lands designated by the Government, and then to surrender the entire harvest to the Government. In the second half of the century, due to unsatisfactory results in the production, to mounting criticism against the system, and to pressure from the business world in Holland, the Dutch Government went over to the gradual abolition of the Cultuurstelsel. In 1870, the so-called Agrarian Law was passed, followed by other laws which opened the doors of the Netherlands Indies for foreign private investors. The era of the "open door policy" began, and Dutch, British, Belgian, American and other foreign private capital poured into the country. "After the whole area ... was opened to Western capital in 1870, ... the number of Western enterprises increased by leaps and bounds ...." (A.D.A. de Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, Vol. II, p. 498). Plantations, sugar estates, sugar mills, petroleum refineries, mines, factories, railroads, etc., started to operate, employing hundreds of thousands of native laborers. Thus, for the first time, a large number of Indonesians was withdrawn from village life to become acquainted with the benefits and hardships of a new experience as wage earners, and "the labour question acquired urgency" (De Kat Angelino, Ibid.).

(4) Article 111 of the Regeeringsreglement (Law on the Regulation of the Government of the Netherlands Indies) of 1854 prohibited associations and meetings of a political character and those which were considered as dangerous for the public order. In 1915 the provision was made less rigid, but it was as late as 1919 that the law granted

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The first organization of salaried workers known in Indonesia was formed in 1894 by Dutch teachers of primary and secondary schools. This association of teachers--the Dutch name was Nederlandsch-Indisch Onderwijzers Genootschap, abbreviated as NIOG--maintained its exclusive Dutch character, and as such, has never played an important role in the workers' movement in Indonesia. With the removal of Dutch teachers from public schools after the establishment of the Republic, the NIOG became a small union of teachers in a number of Dutch private schools. It still exists now. In 1956 it was registered at the Ministry of Labor as having six branches and a total membership of 320 individuals. (5)

In 1905, employees of the State Railways founded the SS Bond, which meant: Union of State Railway Personnel. (6) The union counted both Dutch and Indonesian employees among its members, but the leaders were all Dutchmen. The union was strong and well organized; it had a rather conservative outlook, although now and then it ran into trouble with the even more conservative management of the State Railways. (7) The SS Bond never developed into a militant workers' organization, and ended its unsensational career in 1912, unable to maintain the competition with another newer union of railway workers.

The situation was that many railway employees looked with indifference or even resentment upon the SS Bond, because of its confinement to the State Railways and the fact that most of the members consisted of higher personnel and the leadership was entirely Dutch. In 1908, representatives of workers employed both in the State Railways and in the various privately owned railroad and tram companies, assembled in Semarang (Central Java) and proclaimed the

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freedom to Indonesian inhabitants to establish associations without requiring a special permission in advance. Vide Indische Staatsregeling (Regulation of the Government of the Netherlands Indies) Article 165 juncto Staatsblad (Statutes Book) 1919 No. 27.

(5) Djawatan Hubungan Perburuhan, Kementerian Perburuhan, Serikat Buruh Jang Terdaftar, p. 67.

(6) SS was the abbreviation of Staatsspoorwegen (State Railways).

(7) The original excellent relations between the SS Bond and the management of the State Railways changed after 1908. In 1909 the management severed all relations with the union.

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birth of a new union, the Vereeniging van Spoor-en Tramweg Personeel in Nederlandsch-Indië (VSTP). The new union was built on a broader basis; not only because it comprised both State-owned and privately operated railways, but also because it was determined to organize all railroad workers without distinction of race, type of work, position in the State service or in the companies. Apparently, it was the intention of the designers of the organization to put the emphasis and the centre of strength more on the "operative", manual and technical workers rather than on the "non-ops", white collars and higher employees. Thus, the way was paved for a militant mass organization.

The VSTP became a militant and aggressive union, indeed; especially after 1913, when socialists got the upper hand in the leadership. The militant character of the Union did not appear from its Statutes (Constitution). This Constitution, (8) consisting of only seven articles, stated in Article 2 the purpose of the VSTP as: the promotion of the material and spiritual interests of its members. Nothing appeared in this Constitution about principles, about political aspirations and that sort of thing, matters so characteristic of present-day Indonesian unions. But, of course, it was not possible for the founders of the VSTP to draft a "political" or socialistic constitution, because the statutes had to be presented to the Governor-General for approval. (9) Even these "innocent" Statutes of the VSTP had first to be studied thoroughly by the appropriate authorities before approval could be granted by the Governor-General.

At the time of its formation, the President and the Secretary of the VSTP were two Dutch socialists, namely

(8) The Statutes of the VSTP appeared in the Javasche Courant (Official Gazette of the Government of the Netherlands Indies) of February 19, 1909, No. 14.

(9) Although it was not strictly required by law, at that time newly established associations usually applied for approval by the Governor-General. The effect of such approval was that the association acquired the status of a legal person with the advantages attached to that position. The disadvantage was that the statutes of the association, before being approved, became subject to the scrutiny of the suspicious colonial civil servants. This approval by the Governor-General for the purpose of the mentioned legal effect had nothing to do with the "permission" required for the establishment of associations (see pages 3-4, footnote 4).

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C.J. Hulshoff and H.W. Dekker, (10) while some other positions in the executive committee were held by Indonesians. After 1913, left-wing socialists (communists) dominated the leadership of the Union. The Dutch communist Sneevliet (11) became President of the VSTP with Semaun, a young Indonesian revolutionary, as his disciple and right-hand man. (12) Later on, Semaun became President and Sneevliet Secretary of the Union.

Thus, the VSTP, founded on November 14, 1908, was the first trade union with Indonesians in the leadership and with Indonesian workers as the overwhelming majority of the membership.

Indonesian employees of other Government services and of Government-owned enterprises soon followed the example of the railroad workers in seeking improvement of their working conditions through unity and organization.

(10) These two names appeared in the mentioned Javasche Courant of February 19, 1909, No. 14 (p. 5, footnote 8).

(11) H.J.F.M. Sneevliet came to Java in 1913 as the secretary of an association of merchants in Semarang. Prior to his immigration to Indonesia he was a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party in Holland and later of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party (SDAP). After his expulsion from Indonesia in December 1918, Sneevliet went to Russia and China where he was engaged in several revolutionary activities under a pseudonym. Later he went back to Holland, became active in the Dutch Communist Party and represented this Party in Parliament. He was also chairman of the (Dutch) National Labor Secretariat. Because of his leftist deviations the Dutch Communist Party later severed connections with Sneevliet. When the Nazis invaded the Low Countries in 1940, Sneevliet was soon arrested and executed by the Germans. Sneevliet's name will be forever connected with Indonesian history as the man who introduced revolutionary socialism and communism, as the man who "started to bring socialist consciousness to Indonesian leaders" (D.N. Aidit, Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia, p. 38). Mr. Aidit is the present Secretary-General of the Indonesian Communist Party. More information about Sneevliet can be found in D.M.G. Koch, Verantwoording (an auto-biography), pp. 76, 87, 89-90.

(12) Semaun became later Indonesia's Number One Communist.

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On November 1, 1910, employees of the Customs Service announced the foundation of the Bond van Ambtenaren bij de In- en Uitvoerrechten en Accijnzen in Nederlandsch-Indië, also referred to as the Douanebond. In the beginning, the name was Dutch and the President a Dutchman. But later on the Union adopted an Indonesian name, viz. Perhimpunan Bumiputera Pabean. According to its Statutes, (13) the Douanebond had as its objectives: the improvement of the interests of the corps of the Customs Service employees and of the interests of the Service itself; the establishment of a strong bond among the members; the dissemination of knowledge about the Customs among the members.

In 1912, Indonesian teachers of the public schools formed the Perserikatan Guru Hindia Belanda (PGHB), (14) soon followed by the Association of Teachers of the Village Schools, namely the Perhimpunan Guru Bantu or PGB.

In 1915, the Opiumregiebond was formed by the employees of the Opium factory in Djakarta (the then Batavia) and of the opium distribution offices throughout the country. (15)

The well-known Perserikatan Pegawai Pegadaian Bumiputera (PPPB), namely the Union of Indonesian employees of the pawn shops, was founded in 1916. From the beginning, this union was entirely in Indonesian hands. The President was the militant R. Sosrokardono. (16)

Also in 1916 was founded the Vereeniging Inlandsch Personeel Burgerlijke Openbare Werken (VIP-BOW), the Association of Indonesian Employees of the Civil Public Works. (17)

(13) Statutes published in the Javasche Courant of April 28, 1911, No. 34.

(14) Javasche Courant, December 31, 1912.

(15) Javasche Courant, January 21, 1916. The production and distribution of opium were the business and monopoly of the Colonial Government.

(16) Javasche Courant, November 17, 1916. The pawn shops, a monopoly of the Netherlands Indian Government, were institutions for giving small loans to the population. Pawn shops were found in every city and town throughout the country.

(17) Javasche Courant, February 23, 1917.

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Other Government employees established similar organizations. This kind of development gave evidence of the lead and guidance given by Government employees in the origin, foundation and growth of the Indonesian trade union movement. The phenomenon was not strange since in Netherlands India almost all Indonesian intellectuals were employed by the Government.

But soon, the employees of the private enterprises, both white collars and manual workers as well, followed in the footsteps of the Government servants.

In 1919, Indonesian employees of sugar refineries (factories) in the Jogjakarta area (Central Java) organized themselves in the Personeel Fabrieks Bond (PFB) or Union of Factory Personnel. Under the energetic leadership of R.M. Suryopranoto, the PFB soon expanded to other sugar factories in Java. There were at that time about one hundred sugar factories in Java.

Other unions, soon formed in the private sector of the economy, were the Sarekat Buruh Onderneming (SBO), that was the first union of the employees of plantations, founded in 1924; (18) the Serikat Sekerdja Pelabuhan dan Pelajaran (union of dockworkers and seamen), founded in 1924 (19) which soon became the Serikat Buruh Pelabuhan dan Laut; and further, the unions of mineworkers, metalworkers, printers, electrical workers, employees in the petroleum-industry, chauffeurs, tailors and clothingworkers, etc. By 1920 there were already about one hundred trade unions with a total membership of nearly 100,000 workers.

The largest, most important and most militant union was and remained the VSTP which, under the leadership of Semaun, was continuously engaged both in socialist agitation and in defending the rights and promoting the conditions of the railroad workers.

The influence of socialist ideas on the VSTP was evident very early since the founders and leaders of the Union were always socialists and communists (Dekker, Snee-

(18) Peraturan Dasar SARBUPRI, 1956, p. 15. According to Mr. Ahem Erningpradja, the well-known leader of plantation workers, the SBO was founded in 1922 (Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, June 1950, p. 29).

(19) See the article by Sandra in Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, July 1955, p. 27.

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vliet, Semaun and others). In 1914, the socialists who were leaders of the VSTP, together with such other leftists as A. Baars, P. Bergsma, R. Darsono, Brandsteder and also a number of moderate socialists, such as P.F. Dahler, founded the first socialist party in Indonesia, namely the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV). From the beginning, the left-wing socialists or communists in the ISDV had the upper hand in the Party. Thus, with this Party as the "General Staff" or the "Vanguard", and the VSTP as the mass organization or the "grand army", revolutionary socialism and communism were already propagated in Indonesia before or at the beginning of the First World War. In 1917, the moderate socialists withdrew from the ISDV and founded the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Party (ISDP). The ISDV became now the monopoly of the left-wingers. Semaun cum suis soon agreed to call themselves officially "communists". Thus, on May 23, 1920, the name of the ISDV was transformed into Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI), section of the Communist International (Comintern), with Semaun as President. Other leaders of the PKI were Tan Malaka, Alimin, R. Darsono, Musso, Ali Archam, Dengah and Soegono.

Both in the political field and in the trade union movement the power of the revolutionary socialists and communists was challenged by another political party, namely the Sarekat Islam (SI) or Moslem Association. In the SI, a combination of Islamic teachings, nationalism and socialist ideas formed the basic principles. The top leaders and the majority of the membership were opposed to communism. The SI, founded in 1911, soon developed into a popular political movement. Within a couple of years the membership of the SI numbered more than one-and-a-half million, spread over the islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and Celebes. Top leaders of the SI were H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, Abdul Muis, H.A. Salim, R. Sosrokardono and others. Semaun, later the leader of the ISDV and the Communist Party, was in the beginning also affiliated with the Sarekat Islam. He had a considerable following in certain segments of the SI, became chairman of the Semarang branch of the SI, and later succeeded to convert important groups of the SI into communism.

In the trade union movement, the SI had success in acquiring the confidence of the Personeels Fabrieks Bond (PFB), the Perserikatan Pegawai Pegadaian Bumiputera (PPPB) and a number of other unions of Government employees.

Both socialists (communists) and Sarekat Islam leaders soon recognized the importance of uniting the trade union

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movement into a single federation. The first attempt to form a federation of trade unions was undertaken by the ISDV in 1916. The platform was: struggle against the capitalists with the strike as the principal means. This effort met with no success. In the same year, Semaun, as President of the VSTP, sent a message to all unions in which he made the proposal to make the VSTP the representative for all the unions. This second attempt, too, had no success. In 1918, the VSTP organized a conference of trade unions. The result was that a "central committee" was formed which acted on behalf of the unions represented at the conference. A second conference, however, which was gathered later that same year, was attended only by the VSTP and the PPPB (pawnshop employees).

More successful were the efforts undertaken by Suryopranoto and Sosrokardono, two union leaders mentioned earlier in this Chapter, who were also faithful members of the Sarekat Islam. After eight months of preparations, these two leaders called a conference of trade unions in December 1919. The Sarekat Islam and the ISDV also sent delegates to the meeting which was attended by representatives of almost all existing trade unions. The conference adopted a resolution which approved the creation of a central body which was to comprise and represent all trade unions. Thus, the first federation was established; the name approved was Persatuan Pergerakan Kaum Buruh (PPKB) or Federation of Trade Unions.

In August 1920, the new-born Federation held its First Congress in Semarang, the centre of the communist movement. During the whole convention communists and Sarekat Islam men were continuously in disagreement over basic principles. The Congress elected an executive committee of seven members. Semaun was elected President, Suryopranoto and H.A. Salim respectively as Vice-President and Secretary. However, the headquarters of the Federation were to be removed from the communist-dominated Semarang to the nationalistic Jogjakarta. In the meantime, through Semaun and the VSTP, the communists were able to exert mounting influence in the Federation.

During the Second Congress in June 1921, the dissension between the communists and the Sarekat Islam elements in the Federation could not be tempered down. On the contrary, it resulted in a complete split. Semaun and his adherents withdrew from the executive committee and, pending the convention, proclaimed the foundation of a new center, called the Revolutionary Trade Union Central. Fourteen unions, namely the VSTP and most of the unions in private enterprises,

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joined the new organization, whereas the Personeel Fabrieks Bond, the pawnshop employees (PPPB), the several unions of teachers, the employees of the public works (VIP-BOW), and most of the other unions of Government employees remained loyal to the old Federation.

In September 1922, the two trade union movements merged again, mainly through the endeavor of Semaun himself. The name of the unified movement was Persatuan Vakbonden Hindia, abbreviated as PVH. The name meant: Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions. Semaun and his followers again succeeded in gaining considerable influence in the new Federation.

Let us now follow some of the activities of the unions in this period.

With the termination of the First World War the Indonesian trade union movement was challenged by a controversial economic situation. As is known, Indonesia, like Holland in Europe, was not directly involved in the war. The period soon after the war was marked by a tremendous demand from European countries for materials which were produced by Indonesia. Thus, the plantation owners, sugar producers, mine operators, exporters, and other Dutch entrepreneurs had a profitable time. In the meantime, consumer goods like textiles, certain foodstuffs, chemicals, luxuries, and also building materials, tools, and other commodities, needed by the population, which had to be imported from Holland and other countries, increased in price. The Indonesian wage earners, already underpaid, rose in protest. Widespread labor unrest followed. Strikes and threats of strikes marked the years from 1920 to 1923.

The first big strike took place in 1920 in the sugar industry which action was suppressed at the very beginning by the Government. In March 1920, the Personeels Fabrieks Bond presented demands for a substantial wage increase to the Sugar Syndicate, the organization of sugar producers. The employers, while making huge profits, refused to meet the demands. In August 1920 the PFB announced that it was ready to strike in all the sugar-cane plantations and sugar factories. The (Dutch) employers appealed to the Government.

The PFB issued an ultimatum and a few days later the strike was proclaimed. But the Government acted swiftly. The Governor General, without any legal basis, issued an order prohibiting the strike. The reasoning was that the action of the PFB was not for the improvement of working conditions, but that it had political objectives and was

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based on political motives, the ultimate goal of which was the overthrow of the Netherlands-Indian Government! In the meantime, quite in contradiction to the expressed reasoning of the order, the Government advised the employers to do something to lessen the hardships of the sugar workers. Thus, the strike-action was a failure, and the concession made by the sugar producers was insignificant.

In other sectors of the industry the workers also demanded higher wages. Where the employers did not respond satisfactorily, the unions threatened to strike. In many instances strikes did take place. For example, in August 1921 work in the big harbor of Surabaya (Eastern Java) was paralyzed, thus inflicting severe damage on the Dutch-owned industries in that important part of the country.

Another major conflict took place in January 1922 in the Government pawn shops, although this strike was not directly connected with wage demands. This action of the union of pawn shop employees was the result of the arrogant attitude of a Dutch manager of a pawn shop towards Indonesian employees. More than one thousand employees walked out in protest. The Government responded with the discharge of all the strikers. The VSTP and the Red Central organized a campaign to support the strikers financially. But the Government was determined to crush the whole action. Two communist leaders, Tan Malaka and P. Bergsma, who were active in supporting the strikers, were arrested and banished from the country. Thus, the strike of the pawn shop employees collapsed.

In 1923, new and widespread labor unrest upset the country. The reason was a decision of the Netherlands-Indian Government to cut the salaries of the civil servants and of employees of the Government-owned enterprises. The year 1922 had namely been the beginning of a period of economic depression, and the Government had tried to meet this crisis by, among other things, cutting its expenses.

The several unions of Government employees were alarmed by the intentions of the Government. Membership meetings and inter-union conferences were held to discuss the matter. Many union leaders advocated the use of the strike weapon.

During the Congress of the Persatuan Vakbonden Hindia (the Federation) in December 1922 the possibility of a general strike was the main topic. Feeling ran high. In January 1923, the VSTP sent a circular to all the unions in which they were urged to respond to the Government's

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measures with a general strike. However, the reaction of the unions was too slow to Semaun's liking. Thus he decided to act on his own authority, relying on the strength of his railway union. He issued a warning to the managements of the railroad companies that they "should not play with fire". In April, Semaun asked for a conference with the management of the State Railways. At this meeting Semaun gave an explanation of the objections of the VSTP and of the other unions to the announced measures. However, the management of the State Railways found no reason to meet any of the wishes and grievances of the unions. In fact, the Government was determined to put an end to the activities of the unions and, for that purpose, to provoke a clash. Even a proposal of Semaun which called for the setting up of a grievance procedure with a system of arbitration was not acceptable to the Director of the State Railways.

Semaun cum suis had no other choice than to refer the case to the rank and file which meant that a strike was in the offing.

In a meeting of the VSTP on May 6, 1923, Semaun suggested that the strike should start as soon as one of the leaders of the VSTP was arrested by the police, an action on the part of the Government which the union anticipated. The Government seemed to have knowledge about these plans. Two days later Semaun himself was arrested. Immediately the VSTP executive committee came into session and proclaimed the strike. Thousands of employees of the State Railways and of all the other railroad companies in Java stayed out from work, paralyzing the whole transportation system. However, the Government took drastic measures. The leaders of the strike were soon arrested and the strikers themselves threatened with discharge. Furthermore, the union was prohibited from holding meetings. In addition to that, any propaganda in favor of the strike was declared a criminal act. Other measures were taken to prevent the expansion of the strike to other services and enterprises, such as restrictions on the right to hold meetings in certain areas which applied not only to the railroad workers.

The result of these drastic measures was that the strike collapsed within a month.

Semaun himself, without trial, was told that he had the choice of being shipped to a concentration camp somewhere on a remote island, or of leaving the country at once. Thus, Semaun left Indonesia for Europe. He settled down in Holland for a while but went later to Moscow.

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The measures taken by the Government with regard to freedom of speech and the right of assembly were met by the communists and by the people in general with growing resentment, soon resulting in hostile activities. The Communist Party, gathered in congress in December 1924, worked out a plan for the consolidation and strengthening of the communist influence in the trade unions through the establishment of party nuclei and cells. The result was a series of local strikes in vital enterprises through the whole year of 1925, and continuous agitation among workers and peasants in general. The creation of a Secretariat of Red Indonesian Trade Unions, member of the Profintern in Moscow, and set up in accordance with the directives agreed at a conference of the Profintern in Canton, China, in June 1924, coordinated the activities of the Indonesian communists with the international revolutionary movement.

The Netherlands-Indian Government was prepared to meet every eventuality. The activities of the trade unions were subject to strict limitations. Thus, the non-communist PVH was completely paralyzed.

In 1926 matters came to a clash. Throughout Java and in Central Sumatra the Government was suddenly alarmed by signs of an armed opposition. In November 1926, numerous armed bands of Indonesians attacked Government establishments, military barracks and police posts in several parts of Java, especially in Western Java; they broke up railroads, wrecked bridges, cut telephone and telegraph cables, killed civil servants, both Dutch and Indonesians, and committed other deeds of violence. In January of the following year similar disturbances took place in Central Sumatra. The Dutch Government met the situation with the employment of large units of the Colonial Army. Hundreds of Indonesians were killed in action; thousands were arrested and imprisoned. Those who could be tried were convicted and hanged or given other heavy sentences. But for most of the arrested persons there was not adequate evidence for trial. Thus, thousands of political leaders, trade unionists, workers and peasants remained in prisons throughout the country without being tried. After a year or more many of them were released, but about one thousand persons, again without trial, were shipped to New Guinea and thrown into the notorious concentration camp of Upper Digul in a swampy area of the inhospitable island.

The Government referred to the uprisings as communist-led or inspired. However, of the thousands who were imprisoned or brought to Upper Digul only a part were communists. Many were either members of ordinary organizations or people who were completely uncommitted.

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In order to prevent similar disturbances in the future, the Government declared the Partai Kommunis Indonesia and all other communist-influenced organizations illegal. This meant that not only the Communist Party was prohibited, but also trade unions and other organizations which in their work-method and propaganda made use of communist-like or pure socialist principles. Finally, the restrictions imposed on the right of association, of assembly, on the freedom of the press and on free speech, made every revolutionary activity difficult or very nearly impossible.

The Period from 1927 to 1942

Although this was a period first of setback and difficulties, it was later on followed by gradual progress in organizing. Many trade unions were convinced that, in order to survive, they must adjust themselves to the circumstances. They must refrain from methods and action which might remind the colonial authorities of the events before 1927.

In July 1927, a number of railroad employees formed a new union, the Perhimpunan Beambte Spoor dan Tram (PBST), the Union of Railroad and Tram Employees. The new organization had some success. It reached a membership of over five thousand within a few months.

Particularly interesting was the work of Dr. R. Sutomo in Surabaya, Eastern Java. This eminent nationalist, humanist and social worker, beside his activities in the political nationalist movement, also was engaged in organizing various groups of industrial workers, employees in commercial firms and civil employees of the Naval Establishment into genuine trade unions.

The various unions of Government employees which had been founded before 1927, and had suffered under the government's measures before and after the 1926/1927 uprisings, gradually recovered and regained their strength and prestige. For example, in 1927 the various unions of teachers united in a federation.

Although the unions now confined themselves to the promotion of conditions of employment, the political parties did not cease to exert their influence upon the unions. This time it was a competition between the Sarekat Islam and the nationalists who were organized in a new political party, the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), founded and headed by Dr. Soekarno (who later became President of the Indonesian

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Republic). Beside these two political groups there was a third political factor, namely the communists who had escaped the razzia following the 1926/1927 rebellion and now were active either in an underground movement (the "illegal PKI", as it was revealed after the War) or in several organizations with nationalist labels. From time to time the Colonial Government raided certain organizations, caught persons who were suspected of being communists, and sent them to Upper Dibul in New Guinea. For instance, the Politieke Inlichtingendienst (PID), that was the political intelligence agency of the Colonial Government, had for some time been suspicious about the activities of the Sarekat Kaum Buruh Indonesia (SKBI), founded in July 1928 in Surabaya as a federation of local trade unions. The organization employed nationalistic slogans and carried on a nationalistic propaganda. However, the PID received reports that the SKBI was in fact founded by communists and that it maintained relations with Moscow. The organization soon expanded to other areas. In Medan, Sumatra, a branch of the SKBI was founded and headed by Mr. Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, a lawyer who just had returned from his study in Holland. The Government knew that Mr. Iwa Kusuma Sumantri was a leftist and that he had also studied at the Eastern University in Moscow. Thus, in 1929 the police raided the headquarters and the local branches of the organization and arrested its leaders. Mr. Iwa Kusuma Sumantri and several other persons were immediately transported to Upper Digul or other concentration camps, again without trial.

In April 1930, a number of unions of Government employees decided to cooperate in a federation. The result was the formation of the Persatuan Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri or Federation of Unions of Public Servants, abbreviated as PVPN. The President was R.P. Soeroso. However, the Perhimpunan Pegawai Bestuur Bumiputra (PPBB), the illustrious association of Civil Servants, stayed outside this federation.

The following month, unions of workers in private enterprises in Eastern Java responded to the call of Dr. Sutomo of Surabaya to organize in a federation of unions of employees in the private sector of the industry. Thus the Persatuan Sarekat Sekerdja Indonesia (PSSI) was formed.

After the disturbances of 1926/1927, nothing more was heard of the Persatuan Vakbonden Hindia (PVH), the federation which was founded in September 1922. Hence, the two new federations, the PVPN and the PSSI, now took over the leadership of the trade union movement of the 1930's.

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In general, this period was one of quiet activity and of steady progress. The attitude of the Netherlands-Indian Government towards trade unionism was one of vigilance and even of hostility. The police, constantly on the alert, from time to time carried on raids. Persons who were suspected of being communists or revolutionaries in general, were arrested and transported to Upper Digul, without trial.

The PVPN confined its activities within the bounds of pure trade unionism and refrained from politics. In fact, the federation did not cherish political aims. (20) In June 1931, the PVPN joined the International Federation of Trade Unions.

The PSSI, the federation of unions of workers in private enterprises, was also well organized. But it was only a small organization as the majority of the workers remained unorganized, and only a part of the existing unions was affiliated with the federation.

Such was the situation when the Japanese invaded the country in February 1942.

The Japanese Period

Soon after their arrival in Indonesia, the Japanese military authorities dissolved all kinds of organizations of the Indonesian people. Only organizations for the support of the Japanese war effort were allowed and encouraged. Political parties and trade unions were completely irreconcilable with the Japanese policy. Thus, during the whole Japanese period the trade union movement was suppressed.

Many trade union leaders, convinced that, ultimately, the Allies would win the war, the Japanese troops would leave the country and Indonesia would become independent, started to work out plans for the future. Many of them joined the underground movement which was led by socialists, communists and a group of nationalists. These Indonesians refused to collaborate with the Japanese. Instead, they engaged in an illegal propaganda campaign, telling the people that the Japanese war effort was a hopeless case and that democracy was bound to prevail, in the long run. Other trade unionists participated with the nationalists

(20) A.K. Pringgodigdo, Sedjarah Pergerakan Rakjat Indonesia, p. 172.

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in the preparations for the establishment of an independent Indonesia according to the Japanese pattern, but worked out by Dr. Soekarno and Dr. Muhammad Hatta in their own way.

Thus, during the Japanese period and in the preparations for the founding of the Republic many trade union leaders were in close contact with the political leaders.

The Republican Period

This section will only deal with the emergence of trade unions and federations from the time immediately after the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, to the end of 1949. The development from 1950 onwards will be discussed in the following chapter on the current situation of the trade union movement.

Immediately after the Proclamation of Independence by Dr. Soekarno and Dr. Hatta, employees of Government offices, establishments and enterprises, and of privately owned plants which were operated by the Japanese authorities, organized fighting organizations with the purpose of taking over these services and companies from the Japanese and to declare them Republican property. This drive proved to be successful, although in many cases the workers had to fight the Japanese guards.

The workers' leaders understood that the struggle for the realization of the Proclamation of Independence by the workers should be coordinated and carried on in accordance with the principles of the labor movement. Hence, on September 19, 1945, a number of representatives of workers assembled in Djakarta to discuss the role of the workers in the struggle for the establishment of the Republic and to lay down principles for the labor movement in accordance with the demands of the new era. At this conference the labor leaders agreed to create an organization which would unify and represent the existing trade unions and other organizations of the workers. In order to cope with the critical situation, the organization should be given the form and character of a fighting organization, a workers' front. Thus, the organization was given the name of Barisan Buruh Indonesia (Front of Indonesian Workers), abbreviated as BBI. The conference also passed a resolution which consisted of the following points: (21)

(21) Berita Indonesia, Tahun I, No. 3, as quoted in Koesnodiprodjo, Himpunan Undang2, Peraturan2, Penetapan2 Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 1945, p. 288. According to Sarli (Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, June 1, 1950, p. 24), the BBI was founded on October 15, 1945.

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1. The Komite Nasional (22) should recognize the Barisan Buruh Indonesia as the exclusive representative of the labor movement.

2. The Komite Nasional should only recognize the representatives nominated by the BBI.

3. This resolution should be notified by the Komite Nasional to the Government and the People of the Republic through the Minister of Social Affairs. (23)

The Barisan Buruh Indonesia soon started an organizing drive throughout Java. With the other islands contact could not be made due to difficult communications and to the dangerous situation (clashes between armed Indonesian units and the Japanese troops everywhere in the country and the tense relations with the Allied Forces). However, independent from the labor movement in Java, the workers in Sumatra, Borneo, and Celebes, also formed unions and fighting organizations. In Bukit Tinggi, the capital of Sumatra, for example, the civil servants and the employees of all Government offices and establishments were organized in one big Association of Public Servants, the Persatuan Pegawai Negara Republik Indonesia (PPNRI) as early as October 1945.

The Komite Nasional also issued an instruction to the National Committees in the several provinces, residencies, regencies and cities to promote the formation of trade unions and peasants' organizations "in order to strengthen the Republic". (24)

The labor movement in general and the Barisan Buruh Indonesia in particular enjoyed the fullest backing and the active support of the Minister of Social Affairs. The Minister of Social Affairs in this first Government (Cabinet) of the Republic was Mr. Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, who was interned by the Dutch in 1930 after his arrest in July 1929. When the Pacific War broke out, Mr. Kusuma Sumantri was released and returned to Java. At the formation of the Government of the Republic, he was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs.

(22) The Komite Nasional was the Provisional Parliament of the Republic.

(23) The Minister of Social Affairs was in fact the Labor Minister.

(24) Koesnodiprodjo, Himpunan Undang2, Peraturan2, Penetapan2 Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 1945, p. 131.

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One of the first things he undertook was to contact the labor leaders. Thus, it was with the blessings of the Minister of Social Affairs that the Barisan Buruh Indonesia made preparations for a labor congress in November 1945. The idea was to organize a huge General Congress of industrial and agricultural workers and of all other salary and wage earners, encompassing all existing branches of the BBI, all trade unions, other workers' organizations and peasants' organizations throughout the whole archipelago.

On November 7, 1945, the big Congress was opened by Mr. Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, the Minister of Social Affairs. Those attending the convention were not only delegates of BBI branches and of trade unions in Java, but also representatives of trade unions and other workers' organizations from many places in Sumatra and from some other islands, who had come over to Surakarta, in Central Java, where the Congress was held.

During the Congress the leaders of the Central Committee of the Barisan Buruh Indonesia (Sjamsu Harya Udaya cum suis) presented a proposal to transform the BBI into a political party of the working class. A vehement debate developed. Many delegates wanted to continue the BBI and to preserve an independent trade union movement. The result was a compromise. The political party was formed, but the BBI and the trade unions continued to exist.

The political party created at the Congress was given the name of Partai Buruh Indonesia (PBI) which meant the Indonesian Labor Party. Mr. Sjamsu Harya Udaya was elected as the provisional President. The first Congress of the PBI was scheduled for the 28th of November in Jogjakarta. (25)

Those who were opposed to the idea of liquidating the BBI and those who were determined to create a large trade union movement soon started a new organizing drive. The several branches of the BBI were strengthened, for instance the Djakarta-branch with Mr. Njono as leader (the present Secretary General of the SOBSI).

In the course of 1946 and 1947 numerous trade unions were formed. Many of them were small local organizations. But larger unions and national unions soon followed. For example, the Serikat Buruh Gula (SBG) or union of workers in the sugar industry, was founded on March 3, 1946; the Serikat Buruh Kereta Api (SBKA) or union of railroad

(25) Soeara Boeroeh, November 17, 1945.

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employees, on March 13, 1946; the Serikat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (SARBUPRI) or union of plantation workers, on February 17, 1947; the Serikat Buruh Kementerian Perburuhan (SB KEMPERBU) or union of employees of the Ministry of Labor, in the middle of 1947; the Serikat Buruh Daerah Autonoom (SEBDA) or union of employees of the autonomous regions, in June 1947. In the several harbors, unions of dockworkers and seamen were founded. In 1950, these unions merged and formed the Serikat Buruh Pelabuhan dan Pelajaran or SBPP; the Serikat Buruh Pertjetakan Indonesia (SBPI) or printers, on May 22, 1946; the Serikat Sekerdja Kementerian Dalam Negeri (SSKDN) or association of civil servants and of employees of the Ministry of the Interior, in April 1947; and the Serikat Buruh Kementerian Penerangan (SB KEMPEN) or union of employees of the Ministry of Information, on June 6, 1947. (26)

Many of these trade unions were led by persons who had had experience in the past as union leaders. Many of them had spent ten or more years in concentration camps and had been returned to Java after the termination of the war.

Soon, the unions recognized the desirability of having a central organization. At first, there was some dissension as how to undertake this work. Some leaders wanted only a federation of the existing unions, both local and national. Others preferred the establishment of national unions first--which they called "vertical" unions--and suggested then the federation of these national unions. The result was that two federations were formed; one was the Gabungan Serikat Serikat Buruh Indonesia or GASBI (formed on May 21, 1946) which meant the Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions; the second was the Gabungan Serikat Buruh Vertikal (GSBV) (July 1946) or the Federation of Vertical Unions. However, after a few months, those who insisted upon the necessity of only one single trade union movement, got the upper hand. On November 29, 1946, a number of leaders of several unions, called a preparatory conference. The discussions led to the proclamation of a new federation which was to replace the GASBI and the GSBV. The name of the new organization was Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI) or All-Indonesian Central Organization of Labor. (27) Leaders of

(26) Data concerning the date of the founding of trade unions can be found in the Directory of Registered Trade Unions (Serikat Buruh Jang Terdaftar) published by the Ministry of Labor, Djakarta, in 1956. The constitutions of many unions also give information as to this matter.

(27) Sabarmin, "Perkembangan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia," Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, No. 6, October 1950, pp.33-36.

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this federation were Harjono, Asraruddin, Njono and Surjono. (28)

Most of the founders and leaders of the SOBSI were socialists and communists who maintained close relations with the Republican Government. This Government was headed by Sutan Sjahrir of the Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis) and had the backing of this Socialist Party (which at that time embraced both democratic and left-wing socialists), the Communist Party, the Indonesian Labor Party, the Socialist Youth, the Peasant Front and the SOBSI. Trade unionists who opposed the policy of the Sjahrir cabinet and who for that reason, resented the SOBSI, tried to set up another federation. At last they did succeed in creating another center, but it was only a small organization which called itself the Gabungan Serikat Buruh Revolusioner Indonesia (GASBRI) or Federation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Indonesia.

In September 1948, the SOBSI was involved in the so-called Madiun Affair, i.e., the rebellion staged by communists. The revolt was crushed by Government troops within two months. The leaders of the rebellion were caught, court-martialled by the Army and executed in January 1949. Among them were Mr. Amir Sjarifuddin, a former Premier and Minister of Defense, Mr. Haryono, President of the SOBSI and Mr. Oey Gwee Hoat, another top leader of the SOBSI. At the outbreak of the rebellion in September 1948, communists and communist-sympathizers throughout the Republic were arrested. Thus, most SOBSI leaders were imprisoned, or went underground, while the offices of the Federation were closed.

The communist rebellion was followed by a large-scale attack by the Dutch on the Republic on December 19, 1948. Both events temporarily put an end to the activities of SOBSI and of all the other organizations of workers, except the fighting organizations or workers' battalions.

Soon after the outbreak of the rebellion and prior to the Dutch military action, sixteen trade unions, formerly affiliated with the SOBSI, condemned the policy of the SOBSI top leadership and withdrew from the Federation. This group constituted almost 50 percent of the membership of

(28) Harjono was involved in the Communist rebellion of September 1948, was captured and executed in January 1949; Mr. Asraruddin is now Secretary-General of the Labor Party; Mr. Njono is now Secretary-General of the SOBSI and a prominent member of the Communist Party; Mr. Surjono is at present an active member of the Indonesian Socialist Party.

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the SOBSI at that time. After the reinstatement of the Republican Government in Jogjakarta and the evacuation of this area by the Dutch troops in July 1949, the scattered unions, members and former members of the SOBSI looked for ways to restore unity. Many of them agreed to form the Himpunan Serikat Serikat Buruh Indonesia or HISSBI (not to be confused with another HISSBI, organized in 1953). But many other unions, led by persons who were more anti-communist and anti-SOBSI, decided to establish the Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (GSBI) or Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions. The HISSBI did not have a long life, due to the revival of the SOBSI at the end of 1949.

Apart from the trade unions and federations which have been mentioned, note must be made of the Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII) or Islamic Trade Union which was founded on November 27, 1948. The SBII continued its independent life beside the other federations.

Thus, when the Republic entered the new year of 1950, the year of the beginning of a new era for the Indonesian Nation, the Indonesian trade union movement was represented by the SOBSI, the GSBI and the SBII.

In the years after 1950, not only hundreds of new unions were formed by the workers, but also several new federations.

Conclusion

Throughout its whole history, the Indonesian trade union movement revealed its political character. The unions cherished political ideals, were engaged in political activities and maintained close relations with political parties. The movement was also continuously subject to political treatment by others. Political leaders and political parties involved the unions in their business; and Governments, both the Colonial Regime and the Republican Government, dealt with them as political bodies, although in different ways. The Dutch Government considered the trade union movement as politically dangerous and objectionable; trade union leaders were treated as political opponents. Being treated and persecuted in this way the trade union movement during the Dutch period became more and more politically oriented, seeing in the overthrow of the colonial regime the only solution for the problem of poverty, misery, and oppression of the Indonesian working class.

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On the other hand, the Republican Government has always considered the trade union movement as politically necessary and desirable. An example of this view during the early days of the Republic was the Maklumat Presiden (Presidential Decree) No. 1 of 1947 for the implementation of Peraturan Presiden (Ordinance of the President of the Republic of Indonesia) No. 6 of 1946 on the Composition of the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (Provisional Parliament). (29) According to this Presidential Decree, forty trade union leaders were appointed as members of the Provisional Parliament. Since then, the Indonesian trade union movement, especially the SOBSI, has been always closely connected with the management of Government affairs.

(29) Koesnodiprodjo, Himpunan Undang2, Peraturan2, Penetapan2, Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 1946, pp. 249-250, and Koesnodiprodjo, ibid., 1947, pp. 380-388.

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CHAPTER II

THE CURRENT STATUS

OF THE INDONESIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

For 1958, the total population of Indonesia is estimated by the National Planning Bureau (Biro Perantjang Negara) at between 86.2 and 87.5 million. (1) The number of salary and wage earners is between five and six million. This is the number of persons eligible for trade union membership. This figure includes the public servants and other Government employees, and the white-collar workers in the commercial houses and banking businesses. Workers in very small undertakings owned by Indonesians and Chinese, usually do not form associations, and are for this reason not counted in the number of five to six million mentioned above. Of these five to six million persons, at least three million are organized. If we add together the claimed membership of all the trade unions, the total strength of organized labor will even exceed four million.

It is not easy to get reliable and definite data concerning the membership of trade unions in Indonesia. Since the paying of dues is still in the process of development, this method of identifying union members cannot satisfactorily be applied and will not meet the need for measuring the strength of the Indonesian trade union movement. Therefore, it is certainly wise to consider the claims of the unions themselves, their registers of membership, the statements of rival unions, and their actual strength as shown in membership meetings and during such mass actions, as strikes, demonstrations and rallies. (2)

These three to four million organized workers are grouped in at least 150 national unions and several hundreds of local unions, not affiliated with national unions. The

(1) Biro Perantjang Negara, Garis-Garis Besar Rentjana Pembangunan Lima Tahun 1956-1960, p. 13.

(2) Harry Goldberg, "Membership Status of Indonesian Unions," International Free Trade Union News, Vol. 7, No. 6, June 1952.

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national unions range from very large ones, such as the Sarikat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (union of plantation workers) which claims a membership of 600,000, and the Serikat Buruh Gula (workers in the sugar industry) with 305,000 members, to very small unions with only a few hundred members, such as the Perhimpunan Ahli Gula Indonesia (association of higher employees in the sugar industry who call themselves "experts") with 680 members. In fact, half of the 150 national unions are quite small and have branches only in certain parts of the country, although claiming the national label. Not more than sixty national unions are really spread over all the provinces. About eighty of the hundred and fifty national unions are affiliated with federations. About seventy, including the smaller and the smallest national unions, are independent.

The current situation shows the existence of four large national federations, three small federations, and a number of organizations, recently formed and very small in size and membership, but also claiming to be a kind of federation. In addition, there are a number of regional and local federations. The Department of Industrial Relations (Djawatan Hubungan Perburuhan) of the Ministry of Labor (Kementerian Perburuhan) in Djakarta has compiled directories of trade unions and federations since 1950, and of registered unions since 1955. The most recent directory at the disposal of this author is that of September 1957.

The Four Main Federations

The four large national federations are:

1. The Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, abbreviated as SOBSI, with a declared membership of 2,661,970 in 1956. The SOBSI was founded on November 29, 1946; the name means: All-Indonesian Central Organization of Labor.

2. The Kongres Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (KBSI) with a declared membership of 735,100 in 1955. The federation was founded on May 12, 1953, and the name means: All-Indonesian Congress of Labor.

3. The Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII) with a declared membership of 275,000 in 1956. The SBII is a unitary central and was founded on November 27, 1948. The SBII is a Moslem organization.

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4. The Kesatuan Buruh Kerakjatan Indonesia (KBKI), founded on December 12, 1952. The directory of 1956 still shows the figure of 94,477 for the membership of this federation. At present, KBKI leaders claim that they control more than half-a-million workers. The name KBKI means: Democratic Workers' Union of Indonesia.

The Smaller Federations

The three small federations are:

1. The Himpunan Serikat Serikat Buruh Indonesia (HISSBI) which means: Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions. The HISSBI was founded in 1952. In 1952 and 1953 this federation still claimed a membership of over the 400,000. However, during the last four years the HISSBI has lost a great many of its members, so that its membership is now estimated at less than 50,000.

2. The Sentral Organisasi Buruh Republik Indonesia (SOBRI) Like the HISSBI the SOBRI was larger and more important in 1953 than at present. The membership is now estimated at less than 100,000. The SOBRI was founded in February 1951. The name means: Central Labor Organization of the Republic of Indonesia.

3. The Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (GSBI) with a declared membership of 36,382 in 1955. The GSBI was founded in December 1949. The name means: Federation of Indonesian Trade Unions.

Very recently three other Moslem labor organizations were created as a result of the dissension in the Moslem political movement. These organizations are very small, operating only in some areas and hardly deserve to be called federations or central organizations. They are the Sarikat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia (SARBUMUSI) which claimed a membership of 11,000 in 1956, the Gabungan Organisasi Buruh Sjarikat Islam Indonesia (GOBSI-IND) with a few thousand members, and the Kongres Buruh Islam Merdeka (KBIM), formed in 1957 by some dissident SBII members.

A number of Christian workers are also reported to be considering the establishment of a labor movement of their own. Roman-Catholic workers have already founded an organization which they call the Pantjasila after the Five Principles of the Indonesia Republic.

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Regional federations are found in several provinces and parts of provinces, e.g. in North Sumatra, in the Special Province of Jogjakarta, in South Sulawesi (Celebes), on the island of Biliton, on the island of Bali, etc. These regional organizations either comprise unions in several industries of the same region, or unions in the same industry organized separately according to the several companies in the same region. In a few cities, such as Djakarta, Surabaja, Tjirebon, Medan, etc., there are also local federations of unions operating in the same industry, usually in the field of commerce, import, and export, or in small industrial undertakings. The unions which are affiliated with regional or local federations are not part of national unions.

Almost all Indonesian trade unions are organized on an industrial basis, encompassing whole industries or individual corporations. Among the few craft unions, the following are important: the Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI), that is the association of teachers; the Ikatan Penerbang Sipil Indonesia (IPSINDO), that is the association of civil airline pilots; the Persatuan Pandu dan Pelaut Indonesia, that is the union of sea pilots; the Persatuan Ahli Gula Indonesia (PAGI) which is the association of higher employees ("experts") in the sugar industry; the Persatuan Pegawai Polisi Republik Indonesia (P3RI), the distinguished association of police officers.

Here follows a more detailed description of the federations.

The SOBSI

The SOBSI is the largest federation in the country. Its membership constitutes more than 60 percent of the whole of organized labor. Its actual strength, influence, and importance, are even greater. The federation is well organized and most efficiently administered. It has the most disciplined membership. SOBSI has at its disposal well-trained and experienced professional leaders and devout activists and other cadres. It has also at its disposal adequate funds with which it can pay its army of officers and can finance its large-scale actions and activities in the economic, educational, cultural, and political fields. The federation was founded on November 29, 1946, by trade unionists, many of whom had already been active in the Indonesian trade union movement during the colonial period. The First Congress of the SOBSI was held in May 1947 at the height of the Indonesian Revolution. This congress, attended by delegates from many parts of the country and by guests from trade union movements in foreign countries, was an event of the greatest significance in the Indonesian trade union movement and in the Indonesian Revolution.

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The SOBSI now claims a membership of nearly 2,7 million. The directory of trade unions, compiled in December 1956 by the Ministry of Labor, gave the figure of 2,661,970 for the declared membership of this huge federation. SOBSI's claimed membership is certainly exaggerated, but this author would like to warn against underestimating the size and the power of the federation. Unprejudiced Indonesian observers estimate the actual membership of the SOBSI at two million. Some foreign observers, however, mention much smaller figures. This author is afraid that these foreigners have relied too much on sources of information which would like to see the SOBSI smaller and less powerful because of its domination by the Communist Party. (3)

The SOBSI is a federation of unions. But Art. 3 of its Constitution considers the individual workers who are members of the affiliated unions as direct members of the SOBSI. These members are then assumed to believe in and to endorse the principles and the goals of the federation. The SOBSI is organized along industrial lines and on the principle of democratic centralism. Art. 13 of the Constitution states that all workers employed in factories, mines, plantations, Government services, private offices, etc., shall be organized in accordance with their field of employment. Art. 14 prescribes that, for the regulation of internal matters, the affiliated unions each shall have a constitution which shall be determined democratically and which shall not contain provisions at variance with the Constitution of the SOBSI. In practice, the constitutions of the affiliated unions are all true copies of the SOBSI Constitution. The National Congress of the SOBSI, held once in the four years, is the supreme authority in the entire organization of the SOBSI and for the affiliated unions. The Congress has the power to discuss and approve reports submitted by the National Council, to amend the Constitution, to draw up the program of struggle and the policies for the whole SOBSI, including the affiliated unions, and to elect the members of the National Council (Dewan Nasional). The Council is the highest authority between two Congresses, meets once a year, and has the following powers (art. 21 of the SOBSI Constitution):

a. to discuss and approve the reports submitted by the Central Bureau of the SOBSI;

b. to discuss and approve the resolutions of the National Conference (Konferensi Nasional);

(3) International Cooperation Administration, Office of Labor Affairs, Summary of the Labor Situation in Indonesia, p. 4.

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c. to lay down general rules for a work-program concerning matters of organization, social-economy, politics, information and education, culture and sport; to regulate the relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions and other international relations;

d. to approve the budget drafted by the Central Bureau;

e. to simplify the structure of the affiliated unions, taking into account the opinion of the unions concerned;

f. to assist and coordinate the central bodies of the affiliated unions, and to direct the regional bodies of the SOBSI in implementing the Resolutions of the Congress;

g. in the event any office of a member of the National Council becomes vacant, to fill that office by the appointment of a new member;

h. to elect the Central Bureau and the Secretariat of the National Council; this Secretariat consists of a Secretary-General, two deputy Secretaries-General, and two Secretaries; the members of the Secretariat of the National Council are ex officio members of the Central Bureau.

The Central Bureau represents the National Council for the period between two sessions of the Council, and meets at least once each month. The Secretary-General serves as Chairman of the Central Bureau.

Between Congresses a National Conference (Konferensi Nasional, often abbreviated as Konfernas) must meet at least once, attended by representatives of the executive committees of the affiliated unions and of the Regional SOBSI's. The National Conference is a controlling body to improve the functioning of the organization.

The Regional SOBSI (SOBSI Daerah), established in every province and in other important areas, has the task of directing the workers' struggle in the regions. There are also local organizations of the SOBSI which direct the activities of the workers through their respective unions.

The Second National Congress of the SOBSI, held from January 9 to January 20, 1955, in Djakarta, elected a National Council, composed of sixty-one members. The first session of this Council, held on the last day of the Congress, appointed thirteen of the sixty-one as members of the Central Bureau. The Council then also appointed a Secretary-General,

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two deputy Secretaries-General, and two Secretaries, viz. Messrs. N j o n o, (4) Muhammad Munir, Ruslan Wijayasastra, T j u g i t o, and F. Runturambi.

Thirty-nine national and more than eight hundred local unions were affiliated with the SOBSI in 1957. Among them the following unions were the most important:

1. The Sarikat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (union of plantation workers), abbreviated as SARBUPRI, the largest union in the country.
   Declared membership in 1957: 600,000.
   Secretary-General: Suhaemi Rahman (in 1956).

2. The Serikat Buruh Gula (union of workers in the sugar industry) (SBG)
   Declared membership: 305,000 (1957), including seasonal and non-active workers.
   Secretary-General: Sukendar Hadisiswoyo (1956).

3. The Sarikat Buruh Kehutanan Seluruh Indonesia (union of employees and casual workers in the forestry) or SARBUKSI.
   Declared membership: over the 200,000 (1955).
   Secretary-General: Casim (1955).

4. The Serikat Buruh Pelabuhan dan Pelajaran (union of dock-workers and seamen) or SBPP.
   Declared membership: 50,000 (1956).
   Secretary-General: Tuk Subianto (1956).

5. The Serikat Buruh Kereta Api (union of railroad employees) or SBKA.
   Declared membership: 68,000 (1957).
   Secretary-General: Singgih (1957).

6. The Serikat Buruh Kendaraan Bermotor (union of chauffeurs, truckdrivers, and other workers in the motor transport) or SBKB
   Declared membership: 50,000 (1956).
   Secretary-General: Sukiman (1955).

7. The Serikat Buruh Angkutan Udara (union of employees in air transport). Most of the members are technicians and manual workers belonging to the ground personnel. The name is abbreviated as SERBAUD.
   Declared membership: 2,500 (1956).
   Secretary-General: Hanafi (1957).

(4) Many Indonesians have only one name, the given name.

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8. The Serikat Buruh Pos, Telegraf dan Telefoon (union of employees of Postal, Telegraph, and Telephone offices, and of the Department of the Post, Telegraph and Telephone), abbreviated as SB POSTEL.
   Declared membership: 30,000 in 1955. At present the membership is estimated at less than 20,000 due to a split in 1956.
   Secretary-General: Aswani (1957).

9. The Persatuan Buruh Minjak (union of workers in the petroleum industry) or PERBUM.
   Declared membership: 36,000 (1957).
   Secretary-General: R.P. Situmeang (1956).

10. The Serikat Buruh Tambang Indonesia (union of mine-workers) or SBTI.
    Declared membership: 19,570 (1956).
    Secretary-General: Mardjoko (1956).

11. The Serikat Buruh Industri Metal (union of workers in the metal industry) or SBIM.
    Declared membership: 8,685 (February 1957).
    Secretary-General: Ishadi (1955).

12. The Serikat Buruh Tekstil dan Pakaian (union of workers in the textile and clothing industry). No initials.
    Declared membership: 60,000 (1957).
    Secretary-General: Musirin Sosrosubroto (1956).

13. The Serikat Buruh Rokok Indonesia (union of workers in the tobacco and cigarettes industry) or SBRI.
    Declared membership: 51,000 (1957).
    Secretary-General: Ridwan Hariadi (1956).

14. The Serikat Buruh Film dan Senidrama (union of movie and stage actors). Initials: SARBUFIS.
    Declared membership: 5,320 (1956).
    Secretary-General: Kastari (1955).

15. The Serikat Buruh Kementerian Pertahanan (union of civil employees of the Ministry of Defense) or SBKP.
    Declared membership: 60,000 (1957).
    Secretary General: Soerodjo (1955).

16. The Serikat Buruh Kementerian Perburuhan (union of employees of the Ministry of Labor) or SB KEMPERBU.
    Declared membership: 2,000 (1956).
    Secretary-General: Dr. Soeprapto (1957).

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17. The Serikat Buruh Pekerdjaan Umum (union of employees of the Ministry of Public Works and Power, and of the regional public works); abbreviated as SBPU.
Declared membership: 48,000 (1957).
Secretary General: F. Runturambi (1956).

18. The Serikat Buruh Daerah Autonoom (union of employees of the autonomous provinces and cities). Initials: SEBDA.
Declared membership: 73,000 (1957).
Secretary-General: S. Haryawisastra (1956).

19. The Serikat Buruh Pertjetakan Indonesia (union of typographers) or SBPI.
Declared membership: no figure available.
Secretary-General: Soenadi (1955).

The SOBSI is affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Mr. Njono, the General Secretary of the SOBSI is a vice-president of the WFTU. Several other SOBSI leaders also hold important posts in the General Council and in the various bodies of the WFTU.

The KBSI

The KBSI was founded on May 12, 1953, as an amalgamation of several small national and regional federations which had been cooperating for a couple of years in the Dewan Serikat Serikat Buruh Indonesia (DSBI), the Council of Trade Unions, composed of non-communist unions. At its foundation, the KBSI was a huge organization, encompassing a large number of important unions. It looked as if Indonesia was going to have a large single trade union movement beside the SOBSI and the SBII. However, within a year a schism took place among the leaders of the young federation as a result of the clash between the nationalists and the socialists after the formation of the First Cabinet of Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo which was led by the Nationalist Party, but was opposed by the Indonesian Socialist Party and the Masjumi Moslem Party.

In December 1953, Mr. Rh. Koesnan, elected President of the Federation, resigned. It was reported that Mr. Koesnan took the step at the request of his political party, the Indonesian Nationalist Party. (5) However that may be, it was strange, because it was Mr. Koesnan who had carried the lion's share in the efforts to create the KBSI as President of the DSBI and of the GSBI. Mr. Koesnan's withdrawal from

(5) Pedoman, December 4, 1953.

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the Federation was soon followed by that of a number of the affiliated unions, especially those which had been members of the GSBI. Upon leaving the KBSI the dissident unions revived the GSBI, except for the PGRI (teachers) which preferred to be independent after the bad history of political controversies. So, the KBSI suffered tremendous losses in membership and in influence. The number of members certainly fell to half (400,000) of the total figure at its inauguration in May 1953. However, under the energetic leadership of its new President, Mr. Kusna Puradiredja, a lawyer and devout trade unionist (President of the PBKA, the second union of railroad employees) the KBSI gradually regained a good deal of its original strength and influence. At present the Federation combines the strength of twelve national unions and a large number of local unions, with a total membership of three-quarter of a million.

The KBSI is a pure federation, dealing only with the affiliated unions and exercising no direct control upon the rank and file. Eligible for membership in the Federation are: national unions, federations of unions in the same field, local unions with at least 2,000 members, and local federations with at least 5,000 members.

The KBSI is based on the principle of social justice and cherishes as its ultimate goal the establishment of a new society based on social justice. The KBSI stands for democracy, is independent, and free from any political affiliation.

The governing bodies of the KBSI are:

1. The Unity Congress (Kongres Persatuan),
2. The Plenary Executive Committee (Dewan Pimpinan Pleno),
3. The Daily Executive Committee (Dewan Pimpinan Harian),
4. The Secretariat (Sekretariat).

The Daily Executive Committee which runs the daily business, consists of a General President (Ketua Umum), a First President (Ketua I), a Second President (Ketua II), a General Secretary, two Secretaries, and a Secretary for Organization. The present General President is Mr. Kusna Puradiredja, while Mr. A.H. Siregar and Mr. Andi Zaenal Abidin (also a lawyer like Mr. Puradiredja) are respectively the First President and the General Secretary. They were elected to their offices by the Second Congress of the KBSI

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held in June 1956 in Bandung, Java. Other officers are: Mr. Kuswari, assistant to Mr. Abidin, and Mr. Afnan, in charge of the treasury.

The following unions form the backbone of the Federation:

1. The Persatuan Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (union of plantation workers), abbreviated as PERBUPRI.
   Declared membership: 165,000 (1956).
   President: Mr. Humala Silitonga (1955).

2. The Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api (union of railroad employees or PBKA.
   Declared membership: 20,000 (1956).
   President: Mr. Kusna Puradiredja (1957).

3. The Serikat Kaum Buruh Minjak (oilworkers union) or SKBM.
   Declared membership: 5,000 (1955).
   President: J.A. Datuk Radja Bangun (1956).

4. The Serikat Buruh Penerbangan (union of airline employees) or SBP.
   Declared membership: 2,500 (1957).
   President: A.H. Siregar (1957).

5. The Serikat Buruh Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (union of employees of the Royal Dutch Shipping Company) or SBKPM.
   Membership: no figure available.
   President: W. Marpaung (1956).

6. The Organisasi Buruh Perniagaan Seluruh Indonesia (organization of employees of commercial houses) or OBPSI.
   Membership: no figure available.
   President: R.A. Saboer (1956).

The KBSI is not affiliated with any international federation.

The SBII

The Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia was founded on November 27, 1948, by members of the Masjumi Moslem Party who realized the importance of a trade union movement within the sphere of influence of the Party. The SBII is affiliated to the Masjumi as a so-called "special member."

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The membership of this political party consists of individuals and of Moslem organizations. The formidable progress made by the SOBSI since 1954 generated an acceleration also in the organizing drive and activities of the SBII. The SBII seemed to be determined to catch up with the communist-dominated SOBSI.

The SBII is a so-called "unitary central," having the rank and file as direct members, and directing them according to a unified policy and uniform tactics. All the SBII branches in the several factories, plantations, mines, offices, etc., have the name of SBII. The Central SBII has special departments to deal with the several industries and economic units.

The SBII claimed a membership of 275,000 in 1956.

The SBII derives its ideas and ideals from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an which call upon all Moslems to live in peace and to pursue the establishment of social justice. The conference of Ulama's (religious scholars) and trade unionists, held in 1948 on the eve of the founding of the SBII concluded that there was not any provision in the Holy Qur'an dealing with labor problems, but that there was some indications in the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad that showed the way to solve problems of laborers. The conclusion of the conference was that the needs and problems of the Moslem workers should be dealt with according to a humanistic approach.

The President of the Central SBII is Mr. Jusuf Wibisono, a lawyer who is also a member of the Presidium of the Masjumi Party, and a former Minister of Finance. Vice-President is Mr. Muhammad Dalyono, also a lawyer, a prominent member of the Masjumi and a member of Parliament. General Secretary is Mr. S. Narto, an energetic young trade unionist who has studied labor relations in Britain. Mr. Narto is also a member of the Masjumi Party as are all other leaders of the SBII.

In 1957 the SBII became affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The SBII is also active in establishing relations with trade union movements in other Moslem countries.

The KBKI

The Kesatuan Buruh Kerakjatan Indonesia, originally the Konsentrasi (Concentration) Buruh Kerakjatan Indonesia was founded in December 1952 by trade unionists who had

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close relations with the Indonesian Nationalist Party. In its statement of principles the KBKI states that it co-operates with the Nationalist Party in its struggle for the achievement of its goals. The KBKI is based on Indonesian Socialism called "Marhaenism," and believes in democracy.

Especially since 1955 the KBKI has made considerable progress. In 1955 the claimed membership still showed the figure of around 95,000. A president of a union affiliated with the KBKI told this author very recently that the KBKI had more than half-a-million followers at the beginning of 1958.

The KBKI has a very able leader in the person of its President, Mr. Ahem Erningpradja, who joined this Federation a few years ago. Before that, Mr. Erningpradja was the Vice-President of the SARBUPRI and member of the National Council of the SOBSI. Other leaders of the KBKI are Mr. A.M. Datuk (Vice-President) and Mr. Iskandar Wahono (General Secretary). All leaders of the KBKI are members of the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Nationalist Party). In fact, it was the tremendous progress of this Party which gave impetus to the great achievements of the KBKI since 1955.

The Federation favors cooperation with trade union movements of other countries and participates in international activities. It prefers, however, to stay outside either the World Federation of Trade Unions or the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The HISSBI

The Himpunan Serikat Serikat Buruh Indonesia was founded in 1952 by trade unionists who had close relations with the Partai Buruh (Labor Party). During the first three years of its existence the federation grew rapidly (together with the growth of the Labor Party) and reached a membership of 413,975 in 1955. However, since 1956 the influence of the federation has declined. The successes of the other federations, especially the SOBSI and the KBKI, since 1955, were among others at the expense of the HISSBI. At present, the membership of the HISSBI is estimated at less than 50,000.

President of the federation is Mr. A.M Fatah, a member of the Labor Party.

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The SOBRI

The Sentral Organisasi Buruh Republik Indonesia is the labor movement of the Partai Murba, the party of anti-stalinist communists. The official Indonesian Communist Party calls them "Trotskyites."

The federation was founded in February 1951, grew gradually, claimed a membership of 469,490 in 1955, but has declined since then. Like the HISSBI, the SOBRI suffered from the successes of the other federations. Its membership is now estimated at not more than 100,000.

Leaders of the SOBRI are: Mr. S. Budhiarto, a lawyer, Mr. Sjamsu Harya Udaya and Mr. Slamet Djoyosumitro, all members of the Murba Party. The SOBRI is affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The GSBI

The Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia was founded in December 1949 by nineteen unions, among them such important ones as the PGRI (teachers union), the SEBDA (Employees of autonomous regions) and SBPU (public works). These three large unions are now no longer in the GSBI. The SEBDA and the SBPU are now affiliated with the SOBSI, while the PGRI has become an independent union. The establishment and growth of the GSBI was linked to the name of Mr. Rh. Koesnan, the Nestor of the postwar Indonesian trade union movement. It was Mr. Koesnan who made the GSBI participate in the Dewan Serikat Serikat Buruh (DSBI), a Council of Trade Unions and Federations of Trade Unions, founded in 1952. In May 1953 the DSBI, with the GSBI in it, was transformed into the KBSI. Less than a year later, Mr. Koesnan withdrew from the KBSI, followed by several affiliated unions which were formerly members of the GSBI, among others the PGRI. The GSBI was soon revived, however, without the PGRI and some other unions previously members of the GSBI. At present the GSBI is a small federation of a number of unions, mostly of Government employees, comprising some 36,000 members.

Mr. Koesnan himself did not participate in the leadership of the new GSBI. The presidentship went to Mr. Agus Sutadi.

Regional Federations

Important regional federations are:

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1. The Gabungan Serikat Sekerdja Pemerintah Daerah Istimewa Jogjakarta (GSSPDIJ), that is a federation of seventeen unions of public servants of the several Departments of the Special Province of Jogjakarta. (6) Several leaders of this federation are members of the Nationalist Party.

2. The Gabungan Organisasi Buruh Indonesia (GOBI) in South Sulawesi (Celebes) with thirty-three affiliates. The president of GOBI, Mr. H. Pijo, and some other leaders of this federation are members of the Partai Buruh.

3. The Gabungan Buruh Indonesia (GBI) on the island of Bali with eleven affiliates. A number of Socialists are active in this organization.

Independent Unions

In 1955, the Ministry of Labor registered sixty-seven trade unions which were not affiliated with any of the existing federations. The most important of these independent national unions were:

1. The Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI), the union of teachers, with 84,000 members.
   General President: M.E. Subiadinata
   First President: Soedjono

2. The Persatuan Pegawai Polisi Republik Indonesia (P3RI), the association of police officers.
   Membership: no figure available.
   President: Mr. Memet Tanuwidjaya, a senior police officer and member of Parliament.

3. The Organisasi Buruh Perkebunan Indonesia (OBPI), a union of plantation workers in North Sumatra.
   Declared membership: 100,000.
   President: Dr. Maas, a former Minister of Labor.

4. The Serikat Buruh Listrik dan Gas Indonesia (SBLGI), the union of employees in the electric and gas services.
   Declared membership: 8,855 (1956).
   President: Kobarsjih.

(6) Jogjakarta is called a Special Province (Daerah Istimewa), because it is headed not by a Governor, but by a Sultan, the Sultan of Jogjakarta.

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5. The Serikat Buruh Bank Seluruh Indonesia (SBBSI), the union of employees in the banking businesses.
Declared membership: 6,000.
President: R.B. Sitohang.

6. The Serikat Sekerdja Pos, Telegraf dan Telefoon (SSPTT), the second union of the employees of the postal, telegraph and telephone services, and of the Department of Post, Telegraph and Telephone.
Declared membership: 20,000.
President: Mr. R. Asraruddin, a member of Parliament, a former Minister of Communications, and the Secretary-General of the Labor Party.

7. The Serikat Buruh Kementerian Penerangan (SB KEMPEN), the union of employees of the Ministry of Information
Membership: 9,577 (1956).
President: Soetedjo Dirdjosoebroto.

8. The Serikat Pelajar Seluruh Indonesia (SPSI), a union of seamen.
No figure available for membership.
President: A.R. Jans.

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CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

From the very beginning, Indonesian trade unions have always been subject to the influence of political ideologies, namely nationalism, Islamic political ideas, and, especially, socialism. This chapter will deal with the impact of these ideologies upon the nature, principles, goals, and structure of the unions.

The Impact of Nationalism and of the National Revolution

The influence of nationalism upon the Indonesian trade union movement can easily be understood when we observe the fact that the movement was born at the same time as the political nationalist movement. Both were products of Dutch imperialism which subjugated the Indonesian people to a foreign regime and foreign capitalist exploitation. Both movements were generated by the Nationalist Reveille, the awakening of modern Nationalist consciousness at the beginning of this century. The first pure Indonesian trade union, namely a union with Indonesians both as leaders and as members, (1) was founded in 1908, the same year that the first nationalist association was established. (2)

Students of modern Indonesian history, when dealing with the various movements which were active in Colonial Indonesia, such as the political parties, the youth organizations, the women's movement, the social and economic associations, and the trade unions, always think of them as belonging to the larger nationalist movement. The nationalist movement was the political movement which carried on the political struggle against Dutch imperialism.

(1) The "Vereeniging van Spoor- en Tramweg Personeel" (VSTP), a union of railroad employees.

(2) The "Budi Utomo" (Noble Endeavor) which later became a political party.

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In colonial Indonesia the whole economy was controlled by the Dutch; plantations, oil fields, mines, factories, railways, shipping, imports, exports, banking, public utilities, etc., were owned or run by the Dutch. And it was the daily experience of the workers that the Dutch, in exploiting the workers, in denying their reasonable demands for better wages, and in suppressing their legitimate rights, always could rely on the power of the Colonial Government. Was it therefore strange that the workers looked upon the Dutch regime as the source of all evil, as the mainspring of all injustice done to them? Indeed, it was quite natural that the trade unions cherished political aims, the ultimate form of which was the overthrow of Dutch imperialism and the establishment of a sovereign country.

In pursuing these political aims, the unions felt the need for political theories and tactics. Thus, the unions became political-minded from the very beginning of their existence. And the accepted procedure was for them to knock at the door of the nationalist political leaders for guidance. Hence, the integration of the trade union movement in the political nationalist movement was soon accomplished. Political leaders became leaders of the trade unions. Trade unionists participated in activities sponsored by the nationalist parties. Throughout the entire pre-Independence period, the unions, besides their activities in the economic field, retained their position in the nationalist movement; and when Indonesia proclaimed its Independence on August 17, 1945, and the Era of the National Revolution began, the trade unionists, suppressed by the Japanese militarists for three-and-a-half years, proved to be true sons of their country. They established associations in the form of fighting organizations, mobilized workers' batallions, and maintained units which had as their task the destruction of vital objects in the case of a Dutch invasion.

The Revolution persisted even after the transfer of sovereignty by the Dutch to the Indonesians on December 27, 1949. Highlights of this new stage of the Revolution were: the relinquishing of the federal structure of the state (which was, in fact, "made in Holland") and the establishment of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia on August 16, 1950; the abrogation of the Round Table Conference (RTC) Agreements in February 1956, the struggle for the liberation of West Irian (West New Guinea), which has been conducted by the Indonesian Government and people continuously and with increasing vehemence through the years since 1950, and the liquidation of Dutch economic interests in December 1957.

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The formal recognition of Indonesian Independence by the Dutch on December 27, 1949, was certainly a landmark in the Indonesian Revolution; but, it was only the end of one and the beginning of a new and higher stage in the Revolution. (3)

The transformation of the colonial economy into a national economy and the extirpation of the remnants of colonialism and other forms of foreign dominance were among the outstanding objectives of this new stage of the Revolution. The practice also witnessed the relentless struggle for power among the political groups into which the nation has been divided.

It is fallacious to assume that the Indonesian Revolution was concluded with the formal transfer of state sovereignty from the Netherlands to the Indonesians. Such assumptions will result in a lack of understanding, or even in misunderstanding of comtemporary Indonesian problems and of the whole course of events in Indonesia of the last eight years.

A comprehension of the present stage of the Indonesian National Revolution is also necessary in order to understand the nature, structure, and behaviour of the Indonesian trade unions.

In many respects the Indonesian trade union movement is an image of the Revolution. The structure of the unions is designed in such a way that they can easily function as tools or vehicles of the Revolution. This structure bears the marks of simplicity, flexibility, mobility, and the other prerequisites of a fighting organization. The administration of the unions is dynamic, unbusinesslike, and sometimes illogical. The behaviour of the unions, which betrays their political nature, is subject to spontaneity, emotion, impulses, and outbursts of enthusiasm or rage, and of a fighting spirit.

Compared with the constitutions of labor unions in the United States, the constitutions of most Indonesian unions are brief, succinct and simple. The provisions

(3) The transfer of sovereignty is never commemorated by the Indonesians. In fact, it has been almost forgotten. About this new stage of the Revolution, radicalists like to refer to it as the stage of the Social Revolution. No, says President Soekarno, it is still the National Revolution, but in a new and advanced stage.

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which stipulate matters of jurisdiction, administrative divisions, functions and responsibilities are concise and limited to what is most necessary. On the other hand, lengthy statements are inserted in the preambles of the constitutions which deal with political problems and goals.

All unions want the complete liquidation of remnants of colonialism and the transformation of the colonial economy into a national economy, as a phase in the realization of a socialist structure. Moreover, all unions want the immediate liberation of West Irian and are ready to fight for it.

Furthermore, many unions and federations have in their constitutions articles referring to the duty and readiness of these organizations to uphold and defend the integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Republic. There are even unions and federations which mention nothing in their constitutions about direct economic goals, such as the increase of wages and the betterment of other working conditions, but do give room to the description of political ideas and aims.

Here follow some examples of how Nationalism and the National Revolution find expression in the constitutions of trade unions and federations.

In the preamble of their constitutions, the SOBSI and the unions affiliated with this federation say that the struggle of the Indonesian workers for the improvement of living conditions and in the political field during the period of Dutch colonialism was an important part of the nationalist struggle of the Indonesian people. Before the abrogation of the RTC Agreements Indonesia already had in actuality a Government run by Indonesians, but the country was in fact still a semi-colony due to the RTC Agreements. Hence, it was the duty of the Indonesian workers to fight for the achievement of the full independence for the country.

The KBKI declares in article 4 of its constitution that it is the task of the movement to defend and to uphold the independence of the Indonesian Republic.

The SOBRI says in article VIII of its constitution that the program of the federation includes the struggle for the defense of Indonesian Independence.

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And many individual unions, both those affiliated with federations and those which are independent, have clauses in their constitutions which state that it is part of the task of the organizations to defend the country. Such is stated, for example, in the constitutions of the PBKA, PGRI, and SSPTT.

The Influence of Islam

Since the foundation of the Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII) in 1948, pursuant to a resolution passed by the conference of the Masjumi Party in 1947, one could speak of a specific and purposeful influence of Moslem teachings upon the labor movement in Indonesia. During that conference, the Masjumi discussed the problems of the labor movement, and decided that a special conference should be held of Ulamas (religious scholars) and trade unionists to view the question more thoroughly. This second conference, held in 1948, dealt with the question of whether it was necessary to constitute a special trade union based on Islam, and, if so, what should be the religious basis for the movement. The conference concluded: (4)

a. There was no specific labor question in Islam; every problem relating to labor should therefore be settled as being one of a humanistic nature.

b. According to Islam there were some problems that closely affected laborers, and there were indications in the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad that showed how labor questions should be solved.

c. Generally speaking, Islam did not talk of special interests of special groups of people; but Islam looked further to the social developments of peoples in a special period of time, and in such cases Islam had at its disposal a collection of directives which could be applied. Thus it would not be a mistake if a special trade union was founded on Islam.

Thus, the SBII was created, under the supervision of the Masjumi and as a special member of this political party. Such was in accordance with article XIV of the constitution of the Masjumi which stated that, for the carrying out of specific tasks of the party, separate

(4) Mr. M. Dalyono, "A Short Biography of SBII," Voice of SBII, April 1957, p. 3.

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bodies should be established which should have an autonomous status. The relation of these special bodies to the Masjumi should be regulated in specific agreements. Under such an agreement the relationship of the SBII became that of a special member of the Masjumi. Art. V of the Masjumi constitution provided that the membership of the party would be composed of members (individuals) and special members (non-political Moslem organizations). Further, Art. 3 paragraph (3)(b) of the Standing Orders of the Masjumi stated that every special member of the party should recognize the Masjumi as the only organization for the political struggle.

As a consequence of this status of the SBII, in political matters, this union must rely on the Masjumi, and receives its ideological and political guidance from this party. What counts for the Masjumi in the ideological field also counts for the SBII. Art. III of the constitution of the Masjumi which states that it is the ultimate goal of this party to implement the teachings and the law of Islam in the life of the individual, in the society and in the Indonesian Republic, also applies to the SBII.

One of the reflections of this ideal in the trade union movement of the SBII is that the SBII rejects the theory of the class struggle and stands for cooperation with management in looking for ways to improve wages and working conditions. Both management and workers are in duty bound to work towards the realization of harmony between management and workers, through such means as the establishment of proper wages and just conditions of employment. Management, the workers, and the whole community, it is believed, will benefit from such good industrial relations.

This conception of labor-management relations sounds very much like the so-called "solidarity principle" advocated by the religious trade union movement in Western Europe.

In dealing with the influence of Islam, the author has only wanted to discuss the position of the SBII and has left the SARBUMUSI, the GOBSI-INDONESIA and the KBIM out of consideration, for two reasons; first, that these two movements were only founded very recently so that their ideological attitudes and their behaviour are still to be studied; and secondly, that they will certainly have the same Islamic conception of social problems, with the exception only that the SARBUMUSI receives its political directives from the Nahdatul Ulama Party and the GOBSI-IND from the Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII), while the KBIM is independent.

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The Influence of Socialism

Socialism has played an important role in the trade union movement of all countries. In Indonesia, the influence of socialism has been decisive in shaping the movement and in determining the policies and tactics of the unions. Socialist ideas, socialist aims, and socialist agitation have been the dominant force in the development of the Indonesian trade union movement.

The Moslem unions, too, although denouncing Marxism, are often guided by socialist ideas and pursuing socialist aims, to the extent that these ideas and aims are derived from the Qur'an. The phrases used by many Moslem unionists in their daily activities are, however, often identical with the regular socialist terminology. And many Moslem unionists and Masjumi members like to call themselves "religious socialists."

As elsewhere, in Indonesia here, too, socialism appears in several manifestations and under several names. The factions of and trends in socialism known in Europe, have found their way to Indonesia. During the Dutch regime, the militant socialist propaganda captured the minds and aroused the imaginations of thousands of Indonesians. It was especially the teachings of Marx and Engels which were eagerly accepted and looked upon as the best basis for conviction and directives which were needed by the Indonesians in their struggle against Dutch imperialism and exploitation. As one writer on Indonesian politics put it: for most Indonesian nationalists, "Marxism was required reading." (5)

The Marxian socialists in Indonesia can be divided into those who are convinced that socialism and democracy are one, because dictatorship makes a mockery of socialism, and those who accept the interpretation and elaboration of socialism by Lenin. The first category call themselves disciples of democratic socialism, and the second group are, of course, the communists.

The democratic socialists are mostly organized in the Partai Socialis Indonesia (PSI), that is the Indonesian Socialist Party and in the Partai Buruh (Labor Party). There are, however, also democratic socialists who are members of other parties, and still others who are not affiliated with any political party.

(5) Peggy Durdin, "Indonesia's Communists," in William W. Wade, US Policy in Asia, p. 87.

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The conception which the Indonesian Socialist Party has of Marxian democratic socialism is characterized in the following Statement of Principles and Policy of the PSI: (6)

> In general, the people in our country are more conscious of the ideas of democracy and humanism than those in countries where the atmosphere in which life took its course before the change of the economic founctions of their society had taken place, was still genuinely feudal. In our country people positively reject serfdom and feudalism and for this reason they are also opposed to autocracy and the totalitarian system. Nevertheless, we in Indonesia have not gone through the tradition of liberalism either, we did not experience the development of industrial and capitalist society like in the Western world. In essence, the problem that we are facing is the same as for the other Asian countries, but our way of life and our mentality have characteristics of their own. In the face of this situation and this reality, the Indonesian people have to determine their progress by trying to change their living conditions in order to acquire a greater aptitude in ensuring their existence.
>
> The Indonesian Socialist Party conceives of the socialism it stands for in this sense. It will endeavour to bring about social progress and change. It wishes to change the low and rural type and level of life in Indonesia into a society capable of providing for the livelyhood of its tens of millions of people by utilising the treasures of science and technique which are at the disposal of mankind.
>
> For this purpose it employs the methods of analysis and the conceptions used by modern socialism with regard to the capitalist world. It employs the analyses used by Marx-Engels with regard to the development and the organization of capitalist society.

(6) Pendjelasan Azas dan Garis Politik (Statement of Principles and of Policy) Partai Sosialis Indonesia, pp. 32-34. The English translation used here is taken from "Socialism," published by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Burma Socialist Party. The accuracy of this translation has been checked by this author.

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Then a series of principles and views are mentioned of which the following points are typical:

1. The change and progress of society and life in Indonesia can only be brought about with the guidance of socialism.

2. If at the birthplace of capitalism in the Western world capitalism is now in an impasse, in a large part in Asia where it had never had the opportunity to develop like in the Western world, it is unable any more to develop because the space it needs for its growth has been filled up by Western capital already. In Asia (excepting Japan) capitalism will always be weak and small in size, and it will therefore not have the opportunity to repeat the history of capitalism in Europe, as the impetus for social progress and as the force of expanding the productive apparatus. It is unable to become a progressive force for the advancement of society in Asia.

3. In Asia, and especially in Indonesia, where poverty is evenly divided and where the well-to-do class only constitutes a very small group, the ideals of socialism are not only the ideals of a single group but they constitute the hope of the whole people and society which crave for an improvement of their living conditions and a level of existence more worthy of a human being.

4. Socialism in Asia, especially in our own country, is faced with the task of increasing the means of production through mutual effort. This is in Asia more important than the transfer of property rights of the existing means of production from the hand of an individual or a small group to the control by the community. Socialism in Asia is faced with a lack in means of production.

5. Socialism as we see it, is a socialism based on democracy, in other words, a socialism which upholds the human values and recognizes and respects the equality of man. The appreciation for the individual is expressed in the respect and treatment of the individual in the theory and practice of socialism. It is this respect for the human individual and this outlook which in fact is the essence of all the great architects of socialism like Marx-Engels, etc. Socialism in fact is nothing but consummation of all democratic ideals, i.e. human freedom and emancipation in the real sense of the word. Each human being should be really free to fully develop his life and all his potentialities. Socialism will succeed to create those conditions in which material economic conditions will not any

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longer constitute an obstacle for progress and development of all the potentialities of each human being towards goodness and beauty.

6. The Indonesian socialists differentiate themselves from the socialism as taught by Moscow or the Cominform. Not only does the Cominform differ with the Indonesian socialists because of its different appreciation of the human individual which it considers merely as an abstract part of the concept of group, class or collectivity, or that it considers the individual merely as man-power, merely as a factor of production. It also differs from the socialists in spirit and mentality. It denies not only in theory but also in practice the unity and equality of man. It is familiar with the concept of class solidarity in theory, but in practice it only aims at party discipline. In practice, it considers and treats all those who do not abide by the discipline and teachings of their party as enemies who can be dealt with without any moral scruples. The spirit and mentality of Cominformism is completely contrary to the socialism based on democracy as we see it.

The Partai Buruh (Labor Party) states in Art. 4 of its constitution that:

> (The Party) is based on the principles of scientific socialism as taught by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, elaborated and enriched with the outcome of the study made of the peculiar conditions found in Indonesian society, and of the development of capitalism and imperialism, especially after the Second World War and its context for Indonesia.

Further it is stated that the socialist society desired by the Labor Party is that society in which the individual human being receives the highest appreciation and will possess all fundamental human rights.

As stated before, the democratic socialist ideas as conceived by the Socialist Party and the Labor Party are not only the property of the members of these two parties but have also followers in other political parties, among non-partisan people, and among vast masses of the trade unions' rank and file.

What Marxian socialism means to the communists is obvious and needs no further explanation. In the constitution

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of the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party), it is determined that the whole activities of the PKI (Partai Kommunis Indonesia) shall be based on the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and the ideas of Mao Tse-tung. The PKI considers itself as the vanguard and the highest class organization of the Indonesian proletariat. The PKI represents the national interests of the Indonesian people. In the present stage the PKI struggles for the materialization of the system of people's democracy in Indonesia, while the next goal will be the establishment of a socialist society as the first phase towards a communist society in Indonesia.

The ideology embraced by the members of the Partai Murba (Party of the Indonesian Proletariat) is also communism, although their interpretation of Marxian and Leninian theories is different, in the sense that it pays more attention to specific Indonesian conditions and ideas. It was especially Tan Malaka (killed in 1949) who was responsible for this type of Indonesian communism. The official Communist Party liked to call Tan Malaka a Trotskyite and a Titoist.

The influence of Marxism, especially as propagated and practiced by the PKI activists among the Indonesian workers is tremendous. Therefore, in this study great attention will be given to the several postulates of Marxism-Leninism as they have been accepted by many trade unions.

Marxian socialism, including both democratic socialism and communism, is to be distinguished from any other type of socialism known in Indonesia. This author especially takes note of that socialism which has become the basic ideology of the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), the Indonesian Nationalist Party. This socialism is known as Marhaenism, a name first used by Dr. Soekarno (now President of the Republic) more than thirty years ago. The term Marhaenism stems from the word Marhaen which is the typical Indonesian small man, whether he is a poor peasant, a small businessman, a common laborer, a small trader, a small artisan or a low-ranking Government servant, all of them living in simple conditions.

According to the PNI, Marhaenism is a type of socialism, but it is a socialism which is particularly adapted to the Indonesian community and spirit. The Marhaenists believe in Socio-Nationalism, that is nationalism based on humanitarianism and mutual help, nationalism which wants cooperation with other nations in the world. The

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Marhaenists believe in Socio-Democracy, which means complete democracy, not only in the political field, but also democracy in economic and social life. The Marhaenists want the land and capital to be controlled by the state for the benefit of the whole people, so that wasteful competition between enterprises will be eliminated, the worker be assured of his standard of living, unemployment will vanish and, if the system spreads to the rest of the world, economic crises will disappear. The Marhaenists struggle for the establishment of a Marhaenist society, that is a socialist society based on the above-mentioned principles. Although the Marhaenists believe in radical and revolutionary changes in the Indonesian community, they wish to achieve them through a political party. This party is the Nationalist Party which works on the principles of Marhaenism and wishes, through democratic means, to gain control in the Government of the country, and so put its philosophy into practice. To achieve success, the leaders of the Marhaenist movement must be able to influence and lead all the members of the Marhaen to work for the establishment of the ideal society. To achieve success, any political party working on democratic principles must have mass backing. The Marhaenists are therefore expected to be active in the peasants' movement, the trade union movement, the youth movement, and the women's movement. (7)

The PNI leaders like to state that Marhaenism is a specific type of socialism, based entirely on indigenous Indonesian values, namely the Indonesian spirit, Indonesian ideals of cooperation, mutual help, co-prosperity, peace and happiness, Indonesian religious life and traditions. The Marhaenists see in the Indonesian spirit and ideals the moving force for the proposed development of Indonesian society. Such ideas are in contrast to dogmatic Marxism which considers economic conditions and economic motives as the sole driving force of history.

After this brief account of the several types of socialism known in Indonesia, this author will point out that the whole Indonesian trade union movement has accepted one or another form of socialism as the source of conviction and strength, for determining goals, strategy and tactics. The following survey will attempt to identify the influence of socialism upon the several trade unions.

(7) Manifesto of Marhaenism, issued by the Party Council of the Partai Nasional Indonesia, pp. 7-14.

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The SOBSI

The SOBSI, the largest federation of trade unions in the country, is the socialist trade union movement par excellence. It is also looked upon as the federation controlled by the Communist Party, although SOBSI leaders insist that the federation and its affiliated unions are non-party, independent, and not dominated by any political party whatever. That the SOBSI is a socialist trade union movement is clear from everything the federation has said and done on all major issues both in the political field and with regard to industrial relations. The present constitution of the SOBSI, adopted at the National Conference in October 1952 and approved by its Second National Congress on January 20, 1955, does not mention the word "socialism" at all. But many parts of this constitution. especially the preamble and the articles on the principles of organization give evidence of a socialist spirit and of communist views. The description of the misery and sorrows of the Indonesian proletariat and the exploitation by the Dutch and other foreign capitalism and imperialism resembles the classic socialist conception of the capitalist system as does the expression of the desire for peace and the abhorrence of war. The reference to the United States as the main instigator of war, (8) is a well-known communist theme. And finally, the declaration that the SOBSI joins the World Federation of Trade Unions completes the requirements for being the trade union movement within the communist orbit. The socialist nature of the SOBSI has also been revealed by the statements made, the resolutions passed, and the activities undertaken during its course of life. The same can be said for the affiliated unions. Reports submitted to the conferences and congresses of the SOBSI and its unions, and the discussions of these matters give a full account of their socialist leanings. Furthermore, the previous constitution of the SOBSI, namely the one which was approved during its First Congress in May 1947, and which was replaced by the present constitution in 1952, made no secret of the socialist ideas and aims of the federation. Art. 2 of the 1947 constitution stated that the SOBSI was based on socialism and on the principle of the class struggle. Art. 4 defined the socialist society as the ultimate goal, while art. 5 called upon the working class to combat capitalism and imperialism. A statement of ideology, added to this constitution, described the historic development of society according to the classic

(8) Konstitusi SOBSI, p. 13. Cf. Peraturan Dasar SARBUPRI, p. 13; Peraturan Dasar PERBUM, p. 13. etc.

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Marxian conception of the inevitability of the collapse of the capitalist system. This statement ended with the Leninian pronouncement that "...without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." (9)

One may raise the question why the old constitution of the SOBSI was replaced by a new one which does not use the word socialism at all. The official explanation of the change in 1952 was that the previous constitution was obsolete and inadequate. Certainly, the new provisions on structural and organization matters are a great improvement. Moreover, art. 3 of the new constitution on membership, the article which makes of the SOBSI a unitary central with direct individual membership, responds to the purpose of the SOBSI towards the integration of the whole movement, making the whole SOBSI rank and file subordinate to a single command. The writer is however ignorant of any official clarification as to why the phrases socialism, socialist society, etc. were abandoned when the new constitution was drawn up, while the SOBSI certainly continued as a socialist and Marxian trade union movement. The assumption can be made that the purpose of the amendment was to present the SOBSI as a non-political trade union movement, free from association with any political party (read: the Communist Party). (10)

The conclusion that the SOBSI is a socialist movement brings the affiliated unions also into the socialist camp as a consequence of the system under which these unions and the whole rank and file pledge acceptance of and loyalty to the constitution of the SOBSI.

The KBSI

This federation states in art. II of its constitution that it cherishes the ideal of social justice. The common interpretation of this phrase is that it means just "socialism." Art. IV says that it is the goal of the federation "to establish a society based on social justice." The writer is of the opinion that this is only another name for "socialist society."

That is about all that the KBSI mentions in its constitution with regard to socialism. As a matter of fact,

(9) Lenin, "What is to be Done?," in Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 47.

(10) The new strategy and tactics were discussed and agreed upon during the National Conference (Konfernas) of the SOBSI which took place from September 27 to October 12, 1952.

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the KBSI leadership guards against encouraging other people to look upon the movement as a political organization with links to a specific political party, say the PSI (Socialist Party). However, with the identification of the leaders of the KBSI, any doubt will disappear as to the influence of Socialists upon the Federation. Many of these leaders are members of the PSI. (11) An exception is the President, Mr. Kusna Puradiredja, who is not a member of any political party. The personal contact of this author with the KBSI and with many of the affiliated unions, strengthens his conviction that the KBSI is a socialist trade union movement, and that the socialist faith of the KBSI is democratic socialism, as described earlier in this study.

The unions of the KBSI are certainly also followers of democratic socialism. The Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api (PBKA) or union of railroad employees, the backbone of the federation, the President of which is also President of the KBSI, states in its new constitution, adopted at the Fourth Congress of the PBKA in October 1955, that the union is based on the idea of social justice, humanism, and democracy (art. 2). Further, the union wants the abolition of exploitation of the workers (art. 4c). Paragraph d of art. 4 wants the realization of a structure of society and the economy wherein everyone can live a reasonable life. The economy should therefore be conducted according to a specific plan. This is of course a socialist conception of the production process. The influence of democratic socialism in the PBKA is further accentuated by the fact that several prominent leaders of this union are members of the Socialist Party. (12)

The PERBUPRI (plantation workers), also an important union within the KBSI, shows many indications of a socialist leaning. The preamble of its constitution gives an account of society, of the economic structure, of social movements, and of human rights, perfectly in accordance with the socialist philosophy and method. The preamble concludes with the declaration that the union is ready to struggle for the transformation of the present society into a new one which shall be based on justice and prosperity, peace, and happiness. In addition, art. 2 of the constitution accepts the class struggle principle, and states

(11) Mr. Andi Zaenal Abidin, Secretary-General of the KBSI, Mr. A. H. Siregar, Vice-President, and Mr. Kuswari, deputy Secretary-General, are prominent members of the PSI.

(12) B.K.J. Tambunan, R.A. Santoso, Sudarsono, and others of the PBKA's Executive Committee are members of the Indonesian Socialist Party.

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that the union will combat the exploitation of men. In the leadership of the PERBUPRI, too, are several members of the PSI, among others the President itself, Mr. Humala Silitonga.

The KBKI

The KBKI definitely declares in art. 2 of its constitution that it is based on Marhaenism, that is, the socialism of the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI); and in art. 3 that it pursues the establishment of a Marhaenist society, that is, a socialist society according to the picture given by the PNI. In its statement of policy which also includes a clarification of its principles, this Marnaenism is further outlined, completely in accordance with the definition of Marhaenism found in the constitution of the PNI.

Since the KBKI is a unitary central, with branches in the several enterprises and plants with the same name of KBKI and under the same constitution--although there are also some separate affiliated unions--the ideology of the central KBKI applies to the whole movement.

The HISSBI

This federation states in art. 3 of its constitution that its aim is the establishment of a society where there is no place for oppression, exploitation and misery, a society based on social justice and democracy. Furthermore, the fact that most leaders of the HISSBI are members of the Partai Buruh (Labor Party), promotes the dissemination of socialist ideas of this political party.

The SOBRI

The close relationship of this federation with the Partai Murba (Proletariat Party), and the fact that most leaders of the SOBRI are members of this political party, determine the socialist character of the SOBRI. Moreover, art. II of the SOBRI constitution says that the federation is based on socialism. This statement is followed by others setting forth its opposition to imperialism, capitalism, fascism, feudalism, and colonialism! Art. 3 defines the goal of the SOBRI, namely the establishment of a socialist society, and art. VIII paragraph 5 demands the nationalization and socialization of banks, industries, and agricultural enterprises.

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The GSBI

This small federation adheres to the principles of socialism based on democracy (art. 2 of its constitution). Art. 3 mentions the socialist society as the goal of the federation, while other clauses also refer to socialist ideas and methods.

The Independent Unions

The position of the independent unions shows a variety of ideological influences.

The big and important PGRI (teachers), while stating in art. II of its constitution that the union is based on the principle of social justice and democracy, the union does its utmost to show that it keeps itself away from the influence of political parties. The fact is however that socialists, communists and marhaenists all have some influence on the union.

The SBBSI (employees of banking businesses) also has socialist ideas and wants social justice. Its President, Mr. R.B. Sitohang, is a socialist and member of the Labor Party. The same is the position of the SSPTT (the non-SOBSI postal employees); its President, Mr. R. Asraruddin, is the General Secretary of the Labor Party.

The SB KEMPEN (employees of the important Ministry of Information) has a great many PNI (Nationalist Party) members among its leaders and rank and file so that marhaenism is a topic of frequent discussion in this union.

Finally, the SPSI (union of seamen) counts several members of the Socialist Party among its leaders.

Summary

This survey shows that the whole Indonesian trade union movement has committed itself to socialist aims and ideas, if one agrees that the Moslem unions are also socialistic in their outlook. This determines the political character of the Indonesian trade union movement. This means that the agitation and the activities of the unions will serve the socialist cause in Indonesia.

The crucial question is whether it will be democratic

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socialism or communism which is to prevail in the long run whether it will be the democratic socialists (including the Nationalist Party) or the Communist Party which will emerge as victors from the present struggle for power on the Indonesian political scene.

In the following pages an account will be given of the various ways in which the socialist influence operates. An attempt will also be made to trace and identify the origins and sources of the several socialist concepts on questions of trade unionism.

Class Consciousness and the Theory of the Class Struggle Trade Unions as Class Organizations

The influence of socialism on Indonesian trade unions has brought along with it the dissemination of the concept of the workers as a class and agitation based on the theory of the class struggle. As has been noted earlier, the socialism propagated in Indonesia since the 1910's has always been that based upon the teachings of Marx and Engels. And, in interpreting Marxism, the prescriptions of Lenin have been accepted, consciously and unconsciously. Hence, even those trade unionists who do not regard Marxism in its entirety as being suitable to Indonesian conditions, and who definitely reject Leninism, are nevertheless thinking, talking, and acting in terms of class controversies. Only the Marhaenists openly denounce the socialism of Marx, including the Marxian conception of the relentless class struggle. Instead, the Marhaenists want cooperation among all the national groups of the Indonesian nation. The Moslem unionists definitely declare the class struggle invalid and contrary to Moslem teachings.

The SOBSI

The SOBSI and its affiliated unions base their outlook entirely upon Marxist and Leninist principles, including the doctrine of the class struggle. They do not mention these principles in their constitutions, since the SOBSI and its affiliates for years have carefully observed the rule of avoiding any use of Marxist and Leninist terminologies in their constitutions. But in their congresses, conferences and educational sessions, the reports, discussions and lectures contain the traditional Marxist-Leninist paraphrases, with ample citations of the actual words of Marx, Engels,

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Lenin, and Stalin, including frequent references to the experience of the comrades in the great Soviet Union, in China, and in the other people's democracies.

The old constitution of the SOBSI, which was replaced by the present one in 1952, did specifically mention in art. 2 that the federation based its activities on the class struggle. And the National Conference of 1952 which gave birth to the present constitution, discussed a report by Mr. Njono, the Secretary-General, in which the complaint was raised that the SOBSI had made many mistakes in the past. Among others, it was pointed out that the SOBSI had failed to apprehend and to explain the class struggle in its fullest meaning and consequences, together with its application to Indonesia's particular conditions. In that same conference, the representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions, M. Henri Turrel, reiterated the importance of a genuine observance of the class struggle line.

The concept that the workers form a class, separated from and antagonistic to the other classes, has constrained the Marxists to consider and to build up the trade unions as class organizations. This means, on the one hand, that all workers, regardless of race, color, sex, religion and political belief, should join trade unions, and, on the other hand, that people who are not wage earners must be kept out of these organizations. Being a class, the workers must rely on their own strength and must develop a power through unity within the class by carrying on the class struggle continuously and relentlessly. The trade unions, as class organizations, exist to unite the workers, to make them more and more conscious of their class and their destiny, to develop strength and to cultivate power. Through their unions the workers will be able to fight the individual capitalists incessantly, and, by doing so, to make a habit of fighting capitalism!

While urging the strict observance of the class theory and of the class struggle, the SOBSI, however, is of the opinion that the present stage of the Indonesian Revolution requires the unity and the determination of the whole Indonesian people to combat foreign capitalism and to resist the danger of imperialism which is still threatening the sovereignty of the young Republic. For the time being, the SOBSI therefore suggests a close cooperation of all the national groups, except the reactionaries, the compradores and the henchmen of foreign capitalism and imperialism. For this purpose, the establishment of a United Front is an important part of the program of the SOBSI.

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The KBSI

The KBSI and its affiliated unions are silent about the question of the class struggle, both in their constitutions and in their official statements and resolutions. However, there is reason to believe that this Marxist doctrine does play a role in the minds of many leaders and members of the KBSI and its affiliates, since many members of the Socialist Party are active in this federation, as discussed earlier in this thesis.

The SBII

And what is the position of this Moslem union? Being a Moslem movement and a subsidiary of the Masjumi Party and vehemently opposed to communism, the SBII rejects all Marxist theories definitely and completely as a matter of principle. This trade union movement has therefore no room for such conceptions as the "working class" and the "class struggle." Instead, the SBII advocates mutual understanding and cooperation between all people, between labor and capital, between union and management for the benefit of both and in the interest of the community as a whole. This guiding principle is derived from the Qur'anic pronouncement that "There should not be any hostility except against evil" (in Arabic: "Fala 'udwana illa 'ala 'dlolimien"). (13)

The KBKI

The KBKI gives a survey of Marxist doctrines in its statement of policy, and concludes that the socialism followed by the movement is entirely different from Marxism. Being Marhaenists and working towards the establishment of harmonious cooperation among all national groups in order to create a large Indonesian family living in oneness and happiness, the KBKI members cannot believe in a class war within the Indonesian nation. All resentment and hostility must be directed against the foreign exploiters and oppressors!

The HISSBI

This federation is more definite and overt in the acceptance of the theory of the class struggle. The HISSBI

(13) Anggaran Dasar SBII, art. II (b).

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says that it bases its struggle on the strength of the working class and this struggle must be viewed and carried out as a revolutionary class struggle. (14) Marxism plays an important role in HISSBI propaganda and agitation. However, the HISSBI leaders are of the opinion that Marxism should not be considered as a dogma, as all-embracing (in terms of time and of place) and as inviolable. On the contrary, Marxism is a product of industrialized Europe and of the middle of the nineteenth century. (15) Marxism is the theory of society in motion. In justifying this critical judgment of Marxism, the HISSBI theoreticians (who are at the same time leaders of the Labor Party), invoke the historic words of Engels and Lenin. "Our teaching," said Engels, referring to himself and to his friend Marx, "is not a dogma, but a guide to action." (16) And Lenin once said: "We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the cornerstone of the science which socialists must further advance in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life." (17)

Hence, HISSBI leaders contend that they can be Marxists as pure as possible, without becoming communists or having to be identified with the SOBSI. "Our differences with the communists are considerable," HISSBI and Labor Party leaders use to explain, "and these differences stem from the fact that we interpret, advance, enrich and apply Marxism in our own way, taking into account the peculiar Indonesian conditions and the current world situation, with the interest of Indonesia as first objective." (18) In short, the result is that the HISSBI considers itself genuinely Marxist, in the sense that it does not deviate from any Marxist teaching deliberately in looking for new ways and new thoughts. The HISSBI leaders are of the opinion, indeed, that some of the exact wordings of the Marxist

(14) Anggaran Dasar HISSBI, art. IV.

(15) Learned through personal contact of the author with the HISSBI.

(16) Lenin, quoting F. Engels, in "Certain Features of the Historical Development of Marxism," Marx, Engels, Marxism, p. 294.

(17) Lenin, "Our Program," Marx, Engels, Marxism, p. 126.

(18) The author is familiar with the ideas of the HISSBI and the Partai Buruh (Labor Party) through personal contact.

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doctrines cannot, or cannot yet, be applied in Indonesia; that Marx fell short in giving directives for specific problems and needs now prevailing in Indonesia in the given stage of the Revolution. An important departure from Marxism is that the HISSBI shows respect for religion, and that among the HISSBI leaders and rank and file there are good Moslems and Christians.

The SOBRI

This federation, well-known for the revolutionary phrases, abundantly employed by its leaders in season and out-of-season, declares in its constitution that its struggle is based on the principle of the class struggle, that the class struggle is the "inalienable property of the working class"!

The GSBI

This federation is silent about the class struggle. Being now a federation of unions, mostly of Government employees, the GSBI has no need for such revolutionary doctrines. However, since the federation is also within the socialist orbit, it is likely that the concept of the workers as a class and the theory of the class struggle are well-known among the GSBI leadership and rank and file.

The Independent Unions

As discussed earlier, the independent unions are also socialistic in their outlook and aspirations. This and the fact that socialists play a role in many of these unions, imply the dissemination of such theories as those of the working class and the class struggle.

Summary

This concludes the account of the degree of acceptance of the theory of the working class and the class struggle by the majority of Indonesia's organized labor. And, since socialism has been widely spread through decades and throughout the country, including many of the Marxian ideas and slogans, such terms as the "working class," "class consciousness," and the "class struggle," have become common notions among large segments of the Indonesian people. And

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one should not underestimate the significance of this circumstance. At least, it has made agitation and propaganda among the Indonesian workers highly revolutionary. It has made the Indonesian trade unions militant and aggressive. It has made of the country a bulwark for revolutionary movements.

Trade Unions as Schools of Socialism

The socialists in general, and the communists in particular, give special significance to trade unions as educational organizations. Very early they discovered that trade unions were schools, schools of socialism, schools of communism. Socialists look upon unions as schools, not only as schools in the literal sense of the word, namely as institutions where people get classical instruction in the form of prepared lectures by specially designated teachers and instructors, but especially as practical training centers where the workers draw lessons from their experience in organization, learn from the battles against the capitalists, discern the benefits of unity and the dangers of dissension and get acquainted with the tactics, strength, and weaknesses of the enemy, namely the capitalists.

Trade unions assemble and rally huge masses of workers, without regard to race, color, sex, religion, political creed, and level of education. And usually, the workers lack any political experience and training. Hence, the unions offer a prime opportunity for political strategists and agitators to win broad masses of people for their ideas and purposes.

In his famous pamphlet, "What is to be Done?," Lenin made the point that there could not yet be social-democratic consciousness among the workers.

> It (social-democratic consciousness) can only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc." (19)

(19) Lenin, "What is to be Done?," Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 53.

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Hence, this social-democratic consciousness must be brought to the workers through some system of instruction, namely political education. About this political education Lenin had the following to say:

> Is it sufficient to confine oneself to the propaganda of working class hostility to autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough to explain to the workers that they are politically oppressed (no more than it was to explain to them that their interests were antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Advantage must be taken of every concrete example of this oppression for the purpose of agitation (in the same way that we began to use concrete examples of economic oppression for the purpose of agitation). And inasmuch as political oppression affects all sorts of classes in society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in various spheres of life and activity, in industrial life, civic life, in personal and family life, scientific life, etc., etc., is it not evident that we shall not be fulfilling our task of developing the political consciousness of the workers if we do not undertake the organization of the political exposure of autocracy in all its aspects? In order to carry on agitation around concrete examples of oppression, these examples must be exposed .... (20)

This task of educating the masses of workers in the spirit of socialism (social-democracy, later: communism) should be given to the organization of the workers themselves, namely the trade unions. In his speech delivered at a joint meeting of Delegates to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, members of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and of the Moscow Gubernia Council of Trade Unions-Members of the RCP (B), on December 30, 1920, Lenin said that:

> ... they (the trade unions) are educational organizations, organizations that enlist, that train; they are schools, schools of administration, schools of management, schools of communism. They are not the ordinary types of school, for there are no teachers and pupils; what we have is an extremely peculiar combination of what capitalism has left us, and could

(20) Ibid., p. 78.

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> not but leave us, and what the revolutionary advanced detachments, so to speak, the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, promotes from its own ranks. (21)

Prior to Lenin, Marx already had the idea that trade unions should be "schools of socialism." In summarizing Marx's views on this matter, A. Lozovsky (22) tells us that

> Marx considered the trade unions organizing centres, centres for collecting the forces of the workers, organizations for giving the workers an elementary class training .... The fact that the scattered workers, competing with one another, were now beginning to close their ranks and come out jointly (was most important for Marx). In this he (Marx) saw a guarantee that the working class would develop into an independent power. Marx and Engels repeatedly refer in their works to the idea that the trade unions are schools of solidarity, schools of socialism. (23)

As early as 1848, Marx and Engels pointed out that "The real fruit of their (that is of the workers with their trade unions) (24) battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers." (25)

Lozovsky goes further: (26)

> ... the trade union is a "class school." It collects scattered workers, carries on preliminary work to turn these workers into a class, and they are turning into a class not by knowledge gained from textbooks, but knowledge

(21) Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. IX, p. 4.

(22) Pseudonym for Salomon Dridzo, formerly head of the Red International of Trade Unions.

(23) A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, pp. 15-16.

(24) Parentheses added by writer.

(25) Marx-Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Moscow 1953, pp. 60-61.

(26) A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, pp. 175-176.

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> gained in class battles. In the capitalist countries this instruction occurs in the battles against capitalism (strikes, demonstrations, revolts, or any other form of struggle.

Lozovsky then refers to the following words repeatedly stated by Lenin: (27)

> The trade unions are schools for unification, schools of solidarity, schools for learning administration and management.

This idea of making the trade unions the means for the indoctrination and training of the masses of workers for the great socialist cause was carefully studied and brought into practice by the Bolsheviks in building up their trade unions, before, during, and after the October Revolution. The principle is now embodied in the Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR.

In another book, Lozovsky describes one of the major tasks of the trade unions in the Soviet Union as " ... the task of educating the masses in the spirit of Communism. The trade unions have vast organizational and material means at their disposal for carrying on this work." (28) And further:

> The trade unions of the USSR, as schools for the re-educating the masses, for teaching them how to manage and how to rule, as schools of Communism, take a most active part in building the new Socialist State, take an active part in the political and economic life of the country in strengthening the defensive capacity of the country. The trade unions carry on political education work with a view to drawing their 22 million (in 1937) (29) members into the task of ruling the Socialist State, with a view to making them into conscious fighters for building a communist society. (30)
>
> ...

(27) Ibid., p. 177.

(28) A. Lozovsky, Handbook on the Soviet Trade Unions, p. 93.

(29) Parentheses added by writer.

(30) A. Lozovsky, Handbook on the Soviet Trade Unions, p. 95.

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> One of the most important tasks of the trade unions is the task of imbuing the masses with a spirit of internationalism. (31)

The Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR defines in its preamble the educational task of the Soviet trade unions as follows:

> The trade unions instil in their membership the spirit of Socialist patriotism and a Communist attitude to work and to public socialist property; they engage in the communist training of the working people and in advancing the cultural and professional standards of the workers to those of engineering personnel; they imbue their members with a sense of proletarian internationalism and fight for the unity of the international working class movement and for lasting peace and democracy throughout the world. (32)
>
> The trade unions "are an educational organization, an organization for enlisting and training forces, they are a school, a school of administration, a school of management, a school of Communism. (33)

And further on in this preamble:

> The trade unions help union members to raise their level of ideological and political understanding and general education; disseminate political and scientific knowledge and extensively popularize improved production methods. (34)

In paragraph I, section 3, of this Constitution it is declared that the trade union member is in duty bound to improve his proficiency, to master his calling thoroughly.

This line extends to other communist countries where the workers are "imbued with the same spirit," thanks to the "blessings" of communist trade unionism.

(31) Ibid.

(32) Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR. Preamble.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Ibid.

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Let us take China as an example. In May 1953, the Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions was convened in Peking, principally to adopt a new constitution for the Chinese federation of trade unions. In introducing the draft of the new Constitution, Mr. Hsu Chih-chen, one of the twenty-four members of the Presidium and at the same time one of the eight members of the Central Secretariat of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, delivered a preliminary address in which he endorsed Soviet ideas of the trade union movement. Among other things he told the convention that: (35)

> The trade unions of China should educate the broad masses of the workers in the spirit of patriotism and communism and constantly educate them to understand the identity of state and individual interests, and of long-term and immediate interests, and strive for the raising of their political, cultural and technical levels. They must fully develop the spirit of internationalism, actively participate in the international working class movement, strive for the unity and solidarity of this movement and for the defense of a lasting peace in the Far East and throughout the world.

The Congress then adopted, on May 10, 1953, the new "Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China." In the Preamble of this Constitution, it is stated that:

> The trade unions, under the leadership of the Party, have become a school of administration, a school of management and a school of Communism for the workers.
>
> The most important tasks of the trade unions of China during the period of national construction are to strengthen the unity of the working class, ... to educate the workers to observe consciously the laws and decreed of the state and labour discipline. ... (The trade unions of China) must take collective leadership, persuasion and education as main methods of their work. They must show concern over the interests of the masses, crystallize their views and promote criticism and self-criticism.

(35) Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions, p. 88.

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> The trade unions of China must constantly educate the workers in internationalism and actively take part in the international working-class movement.

And art. 4 of the Constitution obliges the members of the Chinese trade unions "to assiduously engage themselves in political, technical and cultural studies so as to raise their class consciousness and working ability. (36)

Mr. Hsu Chih-chen's advice was thus accepted by the Congress, and the Chinese trade union movement was then actually and formally integrated into the world communist trade union movement on the level reached in the established Peoples' Democracies; namely a trade union movement which openly and formally accepts the leadership of the Communist Party and which becomes a sort of official organ of the Communist State.

Let us now examine the influence of this Marxist-Leninist concept upon the trade unions in Indonesia.

There is no doubt that the SOBSI and its affiliated unions adhere to the idea of making the trade unions subservient to the great task of educating the millions of the Indonesian toiling masses, of making them class conscious and of preparing them for the great struggle to establish a new order in Indonesia. However, the SOBSI Constitution itself does not contain the designation of the unions as schools of socialism, as is the case with the Soviet and Chinese trade unions' constitutions. This is, of course, logical, since Indonesia, and the Communist Party in Indonesia, have not yet reached a position on the level of those countries and of the communist parties in those countries. The important thing in Indonesia is that the SOBSI leaders know and understand this task of the trade union movement. This author knows from personal observation that the leaders and activists of the SOBSI and of the affiliated unions fully comprehend this task and carry it out with devotion and full knowledge. And the Indonesian masses of workers need education and training, indeed, while the social, economic and political conditions of the country, and the revolutionary sphere, just offer excellent opportunities for such a work.

The theme that trade unions are the best place for the workers to learn, is a favorite topic of union

(36) Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China, 1953, art. 4.

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propagandists. The misery, exploitation and backwardness of the Indonesian working class, the shortcomings of the Indonesian community and State (Government) are constantly exposed in glaring colors. The workers are urged to learn from their experiences with strikes, demonstrations, mass rallies and other concerted actions, from the Government practices with regard to labor and in other fields, from the reactionary attitudes of the foreign capitalists, and from the encroachments made by the imperialists upon the sovereignty of the Indonesian Republic, and from everything the workers come in touch with in their struggle for a better life and for the well-being of the country and people. "Learning from experience, learning from practice, learn and learn again," these are the words repeatedly said to the trade unionists. In art. 5, sub (b) of the Constitution of the SOBSI, the SOBSI members are instructed to submit reports concerning matters pertaining to the development of the respective trade unions and the federation. To conduct this learning from experience, regular discussions are held by the SOBSI and the unions in which the members are encouraged to participate. Further, the members have the duty to follow, read and disseminate the publications of the federation.

The publications mentioned are numerous. First, there are the periodic organs of the Central SOBSI, namely the "Bendera Buruh" (Worker's Banner) and the "SOBSI Bulletin." In addition, pamphlets and leaflets are published and distributed on important occasions. These periodicals, pamphlets and leaflets carry articles on organizational, political and economic questions and give analyses which conform to conventional communist pattern and style. The task of the SOBSI and of its affiliated unions to educate and train the Indonesian working class is discussed regularly in articles written both by theoreticians and field workers. Mr. Tjugito of the Central SOBSI and Warsosukarto and Hassan Raid of the SARBUPRI are regular contributors to the SOBSI and SARBUPRI periodicals. Reports submitted by the members on their experiences and the result of the discussions in membership meetings are also published so that others can benefit from these experiences and discussions. This author has been a close observer for a number of years of the activities of the SOBSI and of other unions. And in the course of these years the unions have achieved a great improvement indeed, both in methods and in practices. Infantile disorders have been surmounted, and mistakes have been corrected, through better theoretical guidance and through the method of criticism and self-criticism.

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The SOBSI not only puts emphasis on learning from experience, from the battles the workers have been engaged in with the capitalists, from their successes and from their failures, but also pays the greatest attention to classical instruction. For the rank and file there are opportunities to be acquainted with the basic problems of the labor movement and with elementary rules of trade unionism. The best among the membership are then given the chance to qualify themselves for union posts. In this way talents are discovered and prospective cadres and leaders are recruited from the rank and file.

For this purpose regular courses are given and complete schools are established. On October 23, 1956, the Central Bureau of the SOBSI was called into session, particularly to discuss the educational program of the federation. A resolution was passed according to which the following year the federation should establish SOBSI schools, both at the central niveau and in the regions. In these schools SOBSI cadres were to be given instruction and training in the history of the labor movement, in social and economic programs, in methods of unifying the Indonesian working class, and of strengthening the organization of the SOBSI and of the affiliated unions. In order to finance the program, a special campaign was to be held to collect money from the whole membership of the SOBSI on a voluntary basis. (37) At the opening ceremonies of the Djakarta school, Mr. Tjugito, on behalf of the National Council of the SOBSI, delivered a speech in which he emphasized how important it was for the SOBSI leaders and cadres to improve their knowledge continuously. (38)

The SARBUPRI, the union of plantation workers, demands from its members that they read and follow the publications of the union and of the SOBSI, and that they help the further dissemination of this reading-matter. The members are also urged to attend the meetings, sessions, discussions, lectures and courses, which are organized by the union at regular intervals. (39)

The concept that the trade unions form a great school for the working class, was again stressed by Mr. Warsosukarto,

(37) Bendera Buruh, December 5, 1956, p. III.

(38) Ibid., August 15, 1957.

(39) Peraturan Dasar SARBUPRI, art. 5.

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a leader of the SARBUPRI. In an article in the "Warta SARBUPRI" (SARBUPRI News), he wrote: (40)

> This means that the trade union is the place where the workers are educated in order to become conscious of their class. Through their experience, the workers should realize that they are an exploited class, a class which has to fight for its emancipation, a class where the workers are trained to carry on actions, where cadres are formed ....

The writer further pointed out that the method of classical instruction was correct, but that it should not be the only system.

To carry out its aim of educating the members, the SARBUPRI organizes regular courses. This subject was considered to be of such importance that it formed a special agenda during the Fourth Congress of the union held in October 1956. The Congress adopted, among other things, a resolution on education. In short, the resolution called for the establishment of courses in the local unions under guidance of the central Presidium. The resolution further urged the membership to make use of these schools, and recommended intensive reading of the union's publications by all members of the SARBUPRI. (41)

As to the experience with the SARBUPRI schools, we read the following in the SARBUPRI News: (42)

> The school, established in accordance with the resolution of the Fourth Congress, was operated from April to July 1957 in Djakarta. The school was attended by all the staff-members of the SARBUPRI who were employed at the headquarters of the Union. The purpose of the school was the advancement of the knowledge and the working abilities of the staff-members, in order to improve the consciousness of organization, the spirit for study and the sense for work ....

(40) Warsosukarto, "Kedudukan dan Tugas Serikat Buruh" (Status and Task of Trade Unions), Warta SARBUPRI, August 1955, p. 145.

(41) Directives given by the National Council of the SOBSI.

(42) Warta SARBUPRI, September 1957, pp. 33-34. Translation by this author.

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> In accordance with the directives given by the National Council of the SOBSI, the schedule of the courses included the history of the labor movement, organizational problems, social-economic issues and the question of the United Front. The emphasis was put on organizational problems which took ten lectures; the history of the labor movement was completed in six lectures, and social-economic issues and the problem of the United Front each in four lectures .... At the end of the semester the students had to pass examinations and write reports.

The basic idea of all these educational activities is, of course, that "the trade unions assist the workers in acquiring experience especially in the form of organized struggle for the defense of the interests of the workers; that the unions take in hand the training of cadres for the leadership of the working-class." (43)

The SBPP (dockworkers and seamen), PERBUM (oilworkers), SBG (workers in the sugar industry), SBKA (railroad employees), SBPU (public works), and other affiliated unions of the SOBSI, covered by this study, all have in their constitutions (Peraturan Dasar) provisions which oblige the membership to read, to study and to disseminate the reading material of the respective unions and of the SOBSI; to submit reports and to participate in discussions. The topics of this material are always actual problems viewed and analyzed according to classic Marxist and Leninist methods. And at regular times, the authors pontificate upon the original teachings of and quotations from the great leaders of the international working-class: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Georgi Dimitrov, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi-minh, and D.N. Aidit. (44)

In concluding this survey of the educational activities of the SOBSI and its affiliated unions, this author would like to express his conviction that these activities have greatly contributed to the raising of the educational level and the advancement of the class consciousness of the Indonesian workers, and at the same time have tremendously served the cause of the Communist Party.

The SOBSI is not the only group which is active in

(43) Ibid., August 1955, p. 144.

(44) Mr. D.N. Aidit is the present Secretary-General of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI).

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carrying on the educational task of trade unions. The other unions and federations have also understood the importance of education through their organizations. And many of the non-SOBSI trade unionists have, in fact, got the idea from the same source as the communists. They, too, look upon the unions as schools of socialism, or as educational centres.

The HISSBI observes it to be its task to make its members and the workers in general conscious of the class struggle. (45) The HISSBI, too, pursues this goal by organizing regular courses and conferences, Since 1953, this federation has regularly provided for courses in the history of the labor movement, socialist theories, organizational problems, politics, and economics. Many of the lectures are given by leaders of the Labor Party. The HISSBI, too, can look back on satisfactory results with its educational program.

The SOBRI, which is in fact a communist movement, follows the pattern of the SOBSI. In the SOBRI teaching program, special reference is given to the views of Tan Malaka, that great communist leader, who was the declared foe of the official Communist Party, and was killed in Eastern Java in 1949.

The KBSI and its unions, which are within the sphere of influence of democratic socialism, are also very active in conducting educational programs. An advantage is that this federation has at its disposal brilliant intellectuals, many of them members of the Socialist Party, who are always ready to teach and to conduct seminars under the auspices of this federation. The PBKA (the non-SOBSI union of railroad employees) is especially well-known for its school for workers in Bandung. The excellent financial resources, (46) the experience and the devotion of the PBKA leaders, added to the availability of first-class instructors, have made a great success of the PBKA's educational program. The prospects of the KBSI and PBKA in this field are even better, since these organizations regularly send young trade unionists to Great Britain, the United Stated and other countries to study labor problems and to qualify themselves as prospective union leaders or workers' educators.

The SBII (Moslem Union), realizing that the success of

(45) Anggaran Dasar (Constitution) of the HISSBI, art. 6.

(46) The PBKA has a checkoff system in operation.

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the communists is, to a great extent, the result of the educational activities of the SOBSI, for years has also organized periodical educational sessions. The study of Islamic ideology, of course, plays an important role in the program. Regular lecturers in the SBII classes have been: Mr. Jusuf Wibisono (President of the SBII, member of the Presidium of the Masjumi Party, several times Minister of Finance, and a lawyer), Mr. Mohammad Natsir (President of the Masjumi and ex-Premier of the Republic), Mr. Sjafruddin Prawiranegara (formerly Minister of Finance, Governor of the Bank Indonesia, and member of the Presidium of the Masjumi), and other leaders of the Masjumi Party.

Finally, the KBKI is also active in conducting educational programs. It is taken for granted that leaders of the Nationalist Party are regular instructors, and that the doctrines of Marhaenism and the ideals of the PNI are favorite subjects of the lectures.

A rather dissappointing phenomenon is that many of the classes are occasionally used by certain lecturers to advocate views and objectives of specific political parties, and to attack political adversaries, rather than to concentrate on the needs of the trade union movement. But this is the inevitable outgrowth of the political character of the unions. The eradication of this evil is, however, a great problem.

The Conception of Trade Unions as Mass Organizations

The idea that trade unions are or should be mass organizations stems from the Marxist-Leninist school. The trade union movement within the communist orbit functions as the link of the "vanguard" (the Communist Party) with the masses. The unions have the task of rallying the masses and welding them into a "grand army." This vanguardism is one of the most exciting chapters in Leninist literature which has fascinated millions of restive workers and now fascinates large segments of the young generation in parts of Asia, including Indonesia.

In Indonesia, as in other countries, the non-communist socialists also understand the significance of the conception that trade unions are mass organizations. They know the advantages of this organizational principle. And they want

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to benefit by it as the communists have done. And even non-socialist trade unionists, who have organized their unions along industrial lines and profit from the mass character of such unions, are, in fact, employing the same method.

The Leninist postulate is that trade unions should be mass organizations; should have the widest mass character, in order to make the unions most popular and democratic; should bring the unions within the reach of every worker, so that the unions become the home, the protector, benefactor, and the daily friend of the whole working class.

But that is certainly not the only explanation. An important consideration is that, being mass organizations, reaching and rallying broad masses of the toiling masses, the trade unions, which in the meantime have also become "schools of communism" and the "grand army" in the class struggle under the supreme command of the "vanguard," form an invaluable link between the Communist Party and the masses.

The Western version of this communist concept is that the trade unions have to serve as front organizations and as a means of showing strength and suggesting widespread popular support while the Communist Party itself is in fact a minority group.

The communists, through these mass organizations, especially trade unions, have been very successful, indeed, in controlling and directing masses of people who are not yet indoctrinated, but who enthusiastically respond to agitation.

The application of the principle to the Soviet trade union movement is introduced with the following formula in the preamble of the Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR:

> In the Soviet trade unions which are a mass non-party public organization, workers and other employees of all occupations are united on a voluntary basis without distinction of race, nationality, sex or religious beliefs.
>
> The Soviet trade unions conduct all their activities under the guidance of the Communist Party, the organizing and directing force of Soviet society.
>
> The trade unions of the USSR rally the masses of workers around the Party of Lenin and Stalin.

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For the purpose of reaching and unifying all workers the Soviet trade unions deny every limitation of the admission of members, declaring the membership in the trade unions "is open to all citizens of the USSR, employed in industrial establishments of offices, or studying at institutions of higher learning or technical or occupational schools." (47) On transferring from one trade union to another, the member retains his trade union standing and is not obliged to pay a new entrance fee. (48) If a foreign worker belonged to a trade union abroad before he came to the USSR, he, too, is exempted from paying the entrance fee when joining a Soviet trade unions. (49)

In China, during the Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions, Mr. Hsu Chih-Chen, in his report on the Draft of the new Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China--earlier mentioned in this study--pointed out that:

> ...the trade unions of China are the mass organizations of the Chinese working class. (50)...
> The trade unions of China are ... a unified mass organization of the working class of the whole country. (51)
> ... one of the fundamental roles of the trade unions is to educate the workers and the way to educate and raise the level of class consciousness of the workers who are not conscious is by organizing them into the trade union....
> ... only when the rights of members are clearly stipulated and protected, can trade union work be genuinely based on the masses, be constantly improved and strengthened by the active participation and support of the broad masses of workers. Since the trade unions are the mass organizations of the working class, trade union work means work among the masses. (52)

(47) Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR, art. 1.

(48) A. Lozovsky, Handbook on the Soviet Trade Unions, p. 19.

(49) Ibid., p. 27.

(50) Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions, p. 85.

(51) Ibid., p. 89.

(52) Ibid., pp. 90, 92.

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The new Constitution, then adopted by the Congress, states, in the preamble, that:

> The trade unions of China, led by the Communist Party, have rallied the broad masses of the workers aroung the Party and have thus become transmission belts between the Party and the masses.... The trade unions of China are mass organizations of all manual and non-manual workers living entirely or mainly on their wages, formed on a voluntary basis without distinction of nationality, sex, or religious beliefs. (53)

This mass character finds further expression in art. 1 of the Constitution which stipulates that "Membership in the trade unions shall be open to all manual and non-manual workers whose wages constitute their sole or main means of living, and who accept the Constitution of the Trade Unions."

Prior to this Congress, the Central Pelple's Government of China promulgated a special law dealing with the trade union movement. This "Trade Union Law of the People's Republic of China" of June 29, 1950, was passed for the purpose of defining in explicit terms the legal status, functions, and duties of trade union organizations in the new State and for the purpose of enabling the working class to become better organized and thus play its proper part in "New-Democratic construction." (53)

Thus, three years before the Seventh Congress of the Trade Unions, the Communist Government already wanted Soviet principles to be the principles of the Chinese trade union movement. For this purpose the Law prescribes inter alia:

> The trade unions are mass organizations of the working class formed on a voluntary basis. All manual and non-manual wage-workers in enterprises, institutions and schools in Chinese territory whose wages constitute their sole or main means of livelihood, and all wage-workers in irregular employment shall have the right to organize trade unions. (54)

(53) Trade Union Law of the People's Republic of China, Preamble.

(54) Ibid., art. 1.

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Then, for the sake of good order, the Law refers to the congresses of the trade union movement, stating that "Trade unions are mass organizations formed in accordance with the resolutions and Constitution adopted by the All-China Labor Congress and various Congresses of industrial unions." (55)

Can there be better evidence of the subservience of the Chinese trade union movement to the Government and, through the Government, to the Communist Party? The Seventh Congress of 1953 and the Constitution adopted for the trade unions were there only to carry out the directions of the Law of three years earlier, not only with regard to the mass organization idea, but also concerning all other principles of the trade union movement.

The conception of trade unions as mass organizations has met wide response among Indonesian trade unionists, not limited to the communists among them.

The SOBSI and its affiliates were, of course, the first to endorse and carry out the principle. Since 1946, the Indonesian trade unionists of Marxist-Leninist propensities have also advocated this idea When labor leaders gathered in November 1946 for the proclamation of the SOBSI, the mass organization concept was understood. In the SOBSI National Conference of 1952 and the Second SOBSI Congress of January 1955 (which approved the present constitution of the SOBSI), the question was once again discussed and the advantages studied. New directives were formulated in order to bring about the greatest results. This Second SOBSI Congress (and the 1952 National Conference which earlier adopted the new constitution), apparently did not deem it necessary to insert the definition of the mass organization principle in the constitution. Only the implementation of the principle is embodied in the provision concerning membership:

> Eligible for membership of the SOBSI are all workers who are already organized, through thei their unions, both national and local, without distinction of nationality, race, descent, sex, religion, and political conviction; both those who are employed in Government services and in private enterprises; and they shall become members voluntarily and upon acceptance of the principles and goals of the SOBSI. (56)

(55) Ibid., art. 3

(56) Konstitusi SOBSI, art. 3.

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Quite reminiscent of the Soviet and Chinese model, indeed!

The constitutions of all the trade unions affiliated with the SOBSI have, without exception, a similar provision concerning membership, with the further stipulation that the members of the unions become automatically members of the SOBSI; and that the unions are organized along industrial lines. The SARBUPRI, the big union of plantation workers, states in its Constitution that: (57)

> Eligible for membership of the SARBUPRI are all Indonesian citizens employed in plantations, both privately and Government owned; further those persons needed by the organization, retired and laid-off plantation workers who still receive half-pay, without distinction of race, religion, political beliefs, sex, position, and office. One becomes a member voluntarily and with acceptance of the principles of the SARBUPRI and of the SOBSI.

Furthermore, several affiliated unions of the SOBSI do state in their constitutions that the unions are mass organizations. (58)

The fact that the SARBUPRI and several other unions of the SOBSI, like the SBG (union of workers in the sugar industry, 305,000 members) and the SARBUKSI (forestry workers, more than 200,000 members) are composed of people who are still bound to village and country life with its traditional social ties, means that the mass organization principle of the SOBSI has been successful, indeed, in reaching, rallying, influencing, and directing the broad masses of the common population in many areas of the Republic. And taking into account the fact that the plantations and sugar cane estates are economic centers on which many small towns and villages depend, we can infer that the sphere of influence of the SOBSI is even greater than among its direct members only. As a matter of fact, the SOBSI and its unions, as a result of the implementation of

(57) Peraturan Dasar SARBUPRI, art. 3. Cf. the Peraturan Dasar (Constitutions) of the SBG (art. 3), of the SARBUKSI (art. 3), of the SBPP (art. 3), of the SBKA (art. 3), of the PERBUM (art. 3), etc.

(58) Art. 1 of the Peraturan Dasar (Constitutions) of the SBG, PERBUM, SBPU, SBRI, SEBDA, SB KEMPERBU.

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their organizational principles, through their educational programs, propaganda and agitation, by virtue of their ability and devotion, and in view of its being favored by so many opportunities, have captured the mind and aroused the imagination of millions of restive Indonesians living and working in the villages, around the plantations and the sugar mills, around the oilfields and refineries, in the vicinity of harbors--which are numerous in this country of islands--and in cities, large and small. It was the SOBSI and its unions and the other communist-inspired mass organizations, (59) which were to a great extent responsible for the success of the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI) in winning thirty-nine of the 260 Parliamentary seats in the 1955 general elections and for the even greater gains in the following elections of the 520 members of the Constituent Assembly. In the 1957 provincial and municipal elections, the Communists even emerged as the leading party in many cities of Central Java (population 19 million) and in Eastern Java (population 20 million) where they achieved an absolute majority in certain important cities; while in West Java (population 16 million) they became the second largest party, only surpassed in size by the Masjumi Party. On the other hand, in most parts of the outer islands (islands other than Java), where the SOBSI (and other communist mass organizations) are much smaller (due to the absence of large-scale industries), the Communist Party also appears weaker or even negligible. In two places in Sumatra, however, namely in the Eastern part of Northern Sumatra, however, namely in the Eastern part of Northern Sumatra--for a hundred years a center of intensive and large-scale estates--and around Palembang in South Sumatra where the Shell/BPM and the American Standard Vacuum Oil Company drill their oil and run two huge refineries, the SOBSI is very active, and the Communists are strong in influence and in power. The same situation exists around the Caltex-Pacific (a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of California and the Texas Oil Company) establishments in Eastern Central Sumatra, and in Balikpapan where the Shell/BPM has another import- and petroleum refinery in operation.

(59) The other communist-inspired mass organizations are: the Barisan Tani Indonesia or BTI (Peasant Organization), the Pemuda Rakjat (People's Youth), a Women's Movement, the LEKRA (artists), the PERBEPSI (veterans and ex-guerilla fighters), the Committee for the Promotion of World Peace and the various International Friendship Societies.

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As mentioned earlier, the idea of trade unions as mass organizations has also met with wide response among non-communist trade unionists, especially among the socialists in the KBSI, HISSBI and SOBRI and in some independent unions. Even non-Marxist unionists are not unmoved by the idea, although their reactions do not stem from classic Marxist-Leninist sources, but from considerations of a purely practical nature.

For the KBSI leaders, many of them students or former disciples of Marxist strategy and tactics, the advantages of the mass organization principle are clear. Moreover, among the PSI (Indonesian Socialist Party) cells in the KBSI there may be many who have had experience in the past in conducting trade union affairs along Marxist-Leninist lines. Such experience could have been gained when socialists still lived and worked as one big family cooperating with the communists. At that time a number of socialists, including some persons who now are members of the Indonesian Socialist Party and are active in the KBSI and its affiliated unions, were active as leaders, organizers, activists and theoreticians of the trade unions which were already federated in the SOBSI. (60) Acquaintance and experience with Marxist-Leninist ideas and methods cannot be easily forgotten. Since in the KBSI at present these ideas are still influential, it is very likely that they include the conception of trade unions as mass organizations, and still form a source of inspiration and tactics.

As to the HISSBI, it is the influence of the Partai Buruh (Labor Party) which has made this federation familiar with Marxist concepts. As a matter of fact, in the

(60) Up to July 1947 the Indonesian socialists were united in the Partai Sosialis (without the appendix Indonesia). Prominent democratic socialists like Sutan Sjahrir, Djohan Sjahruzah, Subadio Sastroasatomo, Wijono and the late Supeno constituted the nucleus of this party together with the Leninist socialists like the late Amir Sjarifuddin, Tan Ling Djie and Abdul Madjid Djoyoadhinigrat. In July 1947, the schism in the socialist camp took place, the split which had been smouldering for some time. This event also put an end to the existence of the Sajap Kiri (Left Wing Front), the Joint Action Committee of the Partai Sosialis, the Partai Kommunis Indonesia, the Partai Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor Party), the Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia or PESINDO (Socialist Youth), the Barisan Tani Indonesia (Peasants' Organization), and the SOBSI. The democratic socialists (still Marxian in prin-

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HISSBI Marxist theories form a subject of intensive study. The agitation and propaganda by HISSBI activists are carried on along Marxist lines. Accordingly, the HISSBI unions are thought of and explained as mass organizations.

The SOBRI, being led by communists too, follows the same lines as the SOBSI. For the SOBRI leaders, who at the same time are members of the Partai Murba, trade unions are the only means of reaching the masses of uncommitted workers.

Because of their principles, KBKI leaders are not supposed to favor Marxist ideas and methods. However, in order to meet the challenge of the SOBSI and the competition with other unions as well, the KBKI cannot do otherwise that imitate the successful practices of the others. Moreover, the KBKI is not adverse to benefitting from the advantages of the mass organization concept.

The same position is held by the Moslem SBII. In order to be able to compete with the communists the Masjumi and the SBII leaders have to look for methods which will give them access to the millions of Indonesian workers, most of them Moslem by faith.

Finally, the GSBI and the independent unions too have not been unmoved onlookers at the successes of the SOBSI upon the masses. These unions, too, like to present them-

---

ciple) quit the Partai Sosialis and, in February 1948, founded the Partai Sosialis Indonesia under the leadership of Sutan Sjahrir. The pro-communists remained for a while in the Partai Sosialis under Amir Sjarifuddin and Tan Ling Djie. The following year the big integration process among the Leninists became a fact. Preceded by a joint action in the Front Demokrasi Rakjat (People's Democratic Front), the Partai Sosialis, Partai Buruh Indonesia and the Partai Kommunis Indonesia merged in a new Partai Kommunis Indonesia. Interesting to note was the "confession" of Mr. Amir Sjarifuddin that since 1935 he had been always an illegal communist! About this remarkable Amir Sjarifuddin, who was one of the most brilliant intellects and eloquent orators this author has ever known in Indonesia, the following should be told. After having succeeded Mr. Sjahrir as Premier of the Republic in July 1947, he was replaced by Dr. Hatta in January 1948, then was involved in the communist uprising in September the same year, later captured and executed in January 1949.

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selves to their membership and to the workers in general as mass organizations.

This author does not want to deny the possibility that the non-SOBSI unions have really benefitted from the employment of Marxian methods, including the mass organization concept. However, by doing so, many unions which are not really familiar with Marxist-Leninist methods and sources of information, have, in fact, only served to disseminate these ideas in favor of the SOBSI. As is the case with the political parties, the organizations of the non-communist workers, lacking principles of their own, and imitating the communists, often unwittingly serve the cause of the communists in Indonesia.

The Concept of Democratic Centralism

Men organize themselves in order to become strong, to develop power. For the workers, to unite or to remain scattered, is a matter of to be or not to be. Lacking the possession of the means of production, the attributes par excellence of strength and power, the workers have sought and found the alternative to material property in unity, organization and concerted action.

Subsequently, the search has been for methods which would get as much as possible out of the organization, make the organized devoted to the organization, establish solid leadership and secure loyalty and discipline.

Lenin ventured to try to work out two irreconcilable concepts, namely democracy and absolutism. He called the result: "democratic centralism." He developed an organizational system which would take full advantage of the externals of democratic proceedings (reports, discussions, criticism, voting, elections, etc.), but at the same time one which was based on that exercise of monolithic power of principles so characteristic of communists. Thus limited and operating within the shadow of a merciless power, subordinates would not be likely to have the opportunity, the ability or the courage to express an independent opinion, let alone to oppose the established leadership. Critics of communism, therefore, use to refer to democratic centralism as a means of controlling the rank and file, ensuring obedience, creating strict discipline, stifling opposition and establishing undisputable leadership. Opponents of communism see in democratic centralism the end of democracy and the beginning of dictatorship.

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The concept of democratic centralism was for the first time introduced by the Bolsheviks during their conference in Tammerfors in December 1905. The Sixth Congress of the Party in August 1917 adopted the principle as a matter of organizational necessity. In the new Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as revised by the Nineteenth Congress of 1952, democratic centralism was still stated as the guiding principle of the organizational structure of the Party, and defined as:

a. the election of all party bodies from bottom to top;

b. the periodic accountability of party bodies to their party organization;

c. strict party discipline, and the subordination of the minority to the majority;

d. the unconditional mandating of the decisions of the higher bodies upon the lower ones.

The principle of democratic centralism was also adopted by the Comintern. Article 12 of the "Twenty-one Conditions of Admission," approved by its Congress in 1920, determined that "Parties belonging to the Communist International must be based on the principle of democratic centralism." The principle found its way into the final constitution of the Comintern, adopted at the Sixth Congress of September 1928. (61)

Lenin himself popularized the concept as "Freedom in discussion, unity in action." Communists all over the world followed the pattern.

Mao Tse-tung, the unrivalled leader of China, was from the beginning of his rise to power concerned with the question of how to reconcile democracy with the growing need for unity in action and discipline. Writing a draft resolution for the Ninth Conference of the Communist Party organization of the Fourth Army of the Red Army in December 1929, Mao gave his directives on the rectification of incorrect ideas in the Party as follows: (62)

(61) A brief account of the origins of democratic centralism is given in R.N. Carew Hunt, A Guide to Communist Jargon, pp. 53-55.

(62) Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. I, pp. 109-110.

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> ... to enforce strictly the democratic way of life under centralized guidance. The line for this is as follows:
>
> (1) The leading body of the Party must give a correct line of guidance and find solutions when problems arise, in order to establish itself as a leading centre.
>
> (2) The higher body must clearly understand the conditions of the lower bodies and of the life of the rank and file, so as to secure an objective basis for correct leadership.

As we see, Mao was in fact only looking for a justification for his autocratic ideas, talking like an enlightened despot of some centuries ago and advocating a kind of benevolent dictatorship. On another occasion Mao said: (63)

> The so-called democratic system in modern nations is usually monopolized by the bourgeoisie and has simply become an instrument for oppressing the common people.
>
> As to the question of "political structure," it is the question of the form of structure of political power, the form adopted by certain social classes in establishing their organs of political power to oppose their enemy and protect themselves. Without an adequate form of political power there would be nothing to represent the state.... But a system of really universal and equal suffrage, irrespective of sex, creed, property or education, must be put into practice so that the organs of government elected can properly represent each revolutionary class according to its status in the state, express the people's will and direct revolutionary struggles, and embody the spirit of New Democracy.
>
> Such a system is democratic centralism. Only a government of democratic centralism can fully express the will of all the revolutionary people and most powerfully fight the enemies of the revolution....

(63) Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy," Selected Works, Vol. III, pp. 120-121.

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> The state system--joint dictatorship of all revolutionary classes. The political structure--democratic centralism. This is new democratic government.

And in February 1942, while opening the Party Academy, Mao Tse-tung made a speech in which he criticized the remnants of intra-party sectarianism, among others, those who clamored for independence, as follows: (64)

> They do not understand democratic centralism in the Party and do not realize that the Communist Party need not only democracy, but, even more urgently, centralization. They forget democratic centralism, which subordinates the minority to the majority, the lower level to the higher level, the part to the whole and the whole Party to the Central Committee.

Earlier, the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, convened in Moscow from July to September 1928, formulated the tasks of the Party, one of which was: (65)

> (to) realize true democratic centralism; maximum democracy within the Party should be guaranteed within the limit of secrecy; decide important issues through collective discussions and collective decisions; but at the same time, oppose the tendency towards extreme democracy, because it can destroy Party discipline, encourage an attitude of irresponsibility, and damage confidence in the Party leadership.

The application of democratic centralism to non-political bodies does not alter the basic concept. The Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China prescribes that "The trade unions of China are organized along industrial lines, based on democratic centralism." (66)

As to what this democratic centralism means, the Constitution gives the following description: (67)

(64) Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 38.

(65) Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank, A Documentary History of Chinese Communism, p. 149.

(66) Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China, Preamble.

(67) Ibid., art. 6.

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(a) The leading bodies of the trade unions of all levels are to be elected democratically from the bottom up by the membership and should submit reports on their work at regular intervals to the membership.

(b) The trade unions of all levels shall carry on their work in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the trade unions.

(c) The trade unions shall make decisions only by a majority vote of the members present at the meeting.

(d) The lower trade union organizations shall obey the higher trade union organizations.

The Trade Union Law of the People's Republic of China declares this principle of democratic centralism as the law of the country with regard to trade unionism. The Law provides in article 2:

> Trade unions shall be organized on the principle of democratic centralism, in accordance with the Constitution of the All-China Federation of Labor, as adopted by the All-China Labor Congress.
>
> Trade union committees at all levels shall be set up by election at general membership meetings or representative conferences.
>
> Members of trade unions shall have the right, in accordance with the constitution of their trade union, to dismiss and replace at any time any representative or committee-member whom they have elected. Trade unions at all levels shall submit reports on their work to the rank and file membership they represent or to their representative conference, and shall observe the decisions and directives of their respective higher trade union organization.

All these pronouncements, of course, follow the Soviet model. The Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR stipulates in paragraph 12 that:

> The trade unions are built up on the principles of democratic centralism which means that:

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(a) All trade union bodies from the bottom up are elected by the membership and accountable to them.

(b) Trade union organizations decide all issues of union activity in conformity with the constitution of the trade unions and the decisions of higher union bodies.

(c) Trade union organizations pass their decisions by a majority vote of the membership.

(d) Lower trade union bodies are subordinate to higher ones.

This account of the origin of the concept of democratic centralism and the incorporation of the concept into the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Statutes of the Comintern, and into the Constitutions of the Trade Unions of the USSR and of China certainly give the impression that the communist leadership was in the first place concerned with the problem of how to secure discipline and to control the situation. This author is, however, of the opinion that the concept per se does not necessarily exclude the exercise of true democratic rights. It seems to him that the concept is flexible enough to be put into practice in forms and degrees varying from strict centralism in the sense of autocracy to the enjoyment of full democratic procedures. Much will depend on the circumstances in which the system is supposed to operate. For many Indonesians the concept of democratic centralism has its attraction. For centuries the Indonesian people have been conscious of the ideas of democracy and have always enjoyed the freedom of democratic procedures, though limited to the village level since the Dutch had usurped power on the regional and national levels. (68) Moreover, since the achievement of independence the Indonesians are animated by that one overwhelming idea of building a new country and a new society. And according to the Constitution of the Indonesian Republic social justice will prevail in the new society and the national economy is to be built up along socialist lines. (69) This

(68) Dr. B. J. Haga, in his Indonesische en Indische Democratie gives an account of democratic procedures in indigenous Indonesian village government and community.

(69) The Constitution of the Indonesian Republic contains certain socialist principles and, in Art. 38, outlines a socialist structure of the national economy.

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means: planning, a high degree of organization, and leadership, which are accepted as reconcilable with democracy. As long as democratic centralism means the exercise of such essentials as the freedom to criticize, to discuss and to express opposing views, and the right to vote, to elect, to replace functionaries and to carry on a loyal opposition, many Indonesians are ready to accept the centralized guidance of a leadership composed of persons elected democratically and pursuing policies laid down by a majority of votes. But most Indonesians will certainly oppose a system which makes a mockery of fundamental rights and freedoms; they will turn away from a democratic centralism which, in effect, will only put an end to democracy and open the way to dictatorship.

It is against the background of this state of mind of the Indonesian people that we have to see the role of the democratic centralism concept in the Indonesian trade union movement. Beside the SOBSI, many other trade unions adhere to the idea although not all of them are familiar with the Bolshevik origin of the nomenclature, and many of them do not use the term democratic centralism at all. For these Indonesians the term "guided democracy" or "democracy with leadership" (as distinct from "democracy in anarchy") is probably more congenial.

The SOBSI accepts democratic centralism as the principle of its organization. And they do it very cleverly, namely by avoiding any reference to restrictions on democracy and by stressing only the democratic features of the system. Art. 9 of the Constitution of the SOBSI stipulates that:

(a) All leading bodies shall be elected democratically from the bottom up.

(b) All leading bodies shall submit reports and render accounts at regular times to the bodies which have elected them.

The third paragraph of this article 6, which states that "Every SOBSI member shall obey and carry out every decision of the organization, and a minority shall obey a majority, and a lower trade union organization is subordinate to a higher organization," is accepted, obviously, as a matter of organizational logic.

Accordingly, in the SOBSI organs, and in speeches by SOBSI leaders, when dealing with the concept, the emphasis

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is always put on the true democratic character of the system, namely the freedom to criticize, to participate in discussions, to ask functionaries to submit reports and to render accounts, the right to vote and to elect, and to replace union officers. The term democratic centralism itself is not mentioned at all in the present SOBSI Constitution. The old Constitution did use the term when it stated in art. 3 that the organization of the SOBSI was based on democratic centralism (70) The new Constitution, although neglecting the inclusion of the name in its articles, continues to follow the principle. As a matter of fact, the SOBSI, since 1952, insisted upon the most strict observance of the concept. In the National Conference of 1952 and in the Second Congress of 1955, democratic centralism constituted a point of thorough discussion, because in the past the principle seemed to have been somewhat neglected and had appeared in the (old) Constitution as window dressing. The Secretary-General of the SOBSI, Mr. Njono, in his report to the National Conference, complained that the SOBSI had failed to apply the democratic centralism principle correctly, and urged the conference to consider the question and to give new directives. The Secretary-General's complaint touched both the democratic part as well as the central guidance of the system, pointing out that in the past too few congresses, conferences and membership meetings were held by the SOBSI and its unions, and that, on the other hand, the SOBSI top leadership had failed to give the guidance so needed by the trade union movement.

Although the new SOBSI Constitution does not mention the word democratic centralism itself, it does give a description of the concept in terms quite similar to the Soviet and Chinese pattern (Art. 9 of the SOBSI Constitution mentioned earlier). The unions affiliated with the SOBSI also have in their constitutions definitions of the democratic centralism principle as laid down in the SOBSI Constitution. (71)

(70) The old Constitution of the SOBSI can be found in the Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan of June 1, 1950.

(71) Peraturan Dasar SARBUPRI, 1956, art. 9; Peraturan Dasar SBG, (1956) art. 12; Peraturan Dasar SARBUKSI, 1957, art. 10; Peraturan Dasar PERBUM, 1953, art. 10; Peraturan Dasar SBPP, 1956, art. 8; Peraturan Dasar SBKA, 1957, art. 9; Peraturan Dasar SBPU, 1956, art. 12; Peraturan Dasar SEBDA, 1956, art. 11; Peraturan Dasar SB KEMPERBU, 1957, art. 10; Peraturan Dasar SBRI, 1956, art. 9; etc.

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Among the non-SOBSI federations and unions, the HISSBI and the SOBRI specifically mention in their constitutions (Anggaran Dasar) that they base their organization on the democratic centralism principle. (72) In their explanations of the concept the HISSBI and SOBRI leaders make use of argumentations and justifications reminiscent of those of the SOBSI, although it should be noted that the HISSBI theoreticians insist on upholding fundamental democratic rights and freedoms and warn against any form of totalitarian practice.

The KBKI and the GSBI, formally, do not use the democratic centralism concept. But that the idea itself is not unknown to them is evident from the fact that the KBKI and some GSBI leaders have stated that they agree with President Soekarno's concept of "guided democracy" or "democracy with leadership" (demokrasi terpimpin).

The KBSI is silent about democratic centralism, although some socialists among the KBSI leadership may be familiar with the concept as they are with the mass organization idea.

The SBII apparently sees in democratic centralism the beginning of communist methods and rejects it as a matter of principle.

In closing, this author would like to express his opinion that the concept of democratic centralism has been accepted by most unions because it is observed as the best method to put true democracy into practice in Indonesia with its peculiar conditions and with its specific need for unity and guidance. The future will show whether it will be genuine democracy which will prevail or whether autocratic centralism will become the rule. In the meantime, for many unions, especially for the SOBSI and its affiliates, the concept has already resulted in stability, discipline and strength.

(72) Anggaran Dasar HISSBI, 1952, art. 5; Anggaran Dasar SOBRI, 1951, art. V.

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CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIP OF THE TRADE UNIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES

The previous chapters have already revealed the political character of the Indonesian trade union movement. This characteristic is also evident in the close association of the trade unions with political parties.

In many countries, where a similar association exists, this association often gives the unions the opportunity to play an important role in determining the policies and handling the internal affairs of the political parties. In Indonesia, where the unions are less stable, not so well-established, and younger than the political parties, and where political elements, i.e., members of so-called "cells" of political parties occupy key positions in many unions and federations--instead of powerful union leaders holding important posts in the party leading bodies--we have the opposite constellation. In Indonesia, political parties have made of many unions a kind of subsidiary or satellite, using these unions as front organizations to assist the parties in their political campaigns. Unions perform important services for the parties in enlarging and extending the sphere of their influence. They organize political rallies and other demonstrations of strength and power. The concepts of trade unions as mass organizations and as "schools" in themselves serve this purpose.

This situation has been made possible as certain political parties were successful in the creation or reorganization of trade unions and federations. For it is undeniable that the very creation of certain unions and federations was in fact the work of certain political parties.

The communists took the initiative in the establishment of the SOBSI in 1946 and in the further building up of this huge federation. In the course of years communist influence grew until it became dominant and exclusive. The reorganization of the SOBSI in 1952--when the First National Conference was held--and in 1955 (Second Congress of the SOBSI) was entirely the work of communist-oriented union

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leaders. Since then the keynote of the SOBSI has been communism. Communists were also the driving forces in the formation and/or reorganization of the unions affiliated with this federation, especially of the SARBUPRI (union of plantation workers), SBG (workers in sugar industry), SBPP (dockworkers and seamen), SBKA (railroad employees), PERBUM (oilworkers), SBIM (metalworkers), and so on.

The establishment of the KBSI in 1953 was mainly the result of the desire of non-communist unions to unite and to check the growing power of the SOBSI. Socialists (members of the PSI) and nationalists (members of the PNI) were the leaders in the undertaking. Mr. Koesnan, at that time President of the GSBI and who was an experienced trade union leader and also an outstanding figure in the Nationalist Party, Mr. Sukatja and Mr. Rivai S. Atmadja, both of the Partai Sosialis Indonesia, were the principal organizers of the new federation. Since the withdrawal of Mr. Koesnan and several PNI-inspired unions from the KBSI at the end of 1953 and in the beginning of 1954, the Socialists have had more freedom of action. They have, however, consistently had to take into account the resentment on the part of some KBSI members against the intrigues of political parties in their federation.

The creation of the SBII (Moslem Trade Union) was entirely the work of the Masjumi Party. During a convention of this party in 1947, the formation of a trade union based on Islamic principles, was a point of discussion and consideration The following year a conference of Ulama's (religious scholars) and labor leaders of Islamic Affiliation approved the foundation of the SBII.

As to the KBKI, the Nationalist Party (PNI) was responsible for the creation of this movement. The organization was an outgrowth of a special bureau within the Nationalist Party--originally named the HIMBI or Himpunan Buruh Indonesia--which was in charge of the handling of affairs relating to labor problems and the labor movement.

During the preparations for the formation of the HISSBI in 1952 and 1953, prominent members of the Partai Buruh (Labor Party) played a dominant part. Since then the development of this federation has been connected with the ups and downs of the Labor Party.

The SOBRI was founded in 1951 by members and sympathizers of the Partai Murba (Party of the Proletariat).

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The SARBUMUSI was founded as an implementation of a resolution passed by the Nahdlatul Ulama Party Council in September 1954. (1) This resolution approved the creation of a trade union movement as a substructure or subsidiary of the Nahdlatul Ulama Party in order that it could compete with the Masjumi Party in the field of the labor movement as well as in the political sphere.

Finally, the third Moslem Party in the country, the Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII), did not want to be left behind, and recently founded the GOBSI-IND.

The above-mentioned facts clearly indicate the intentions of the several Indonesian political parties in regard to the trade union movement. They clearly look upon the trade unions as front organizations in their struggle for political power.

Forms of Relationship

The relationship of trade unions to political parties can take various forms. The union or federation can be organizationally linked to a political party either as an affiliated member (as in the case of the relationship of the SBII to the Masjumi) or as a subsidiary or substructure (as in the case of the relationship of the SARBUMUSI to the Nahdlatul Ulama and of the GOBSI-IND to the PSII), or the union (federation) may be an associate of the party, the one cooperating with the other as two equal partners. This form of relationship applies to the KBKI-PNI association.

As to the relations between the SOBSI and the PKI (Communist Party), here we do not have any formal organizational connection whatsoever. In a formal organizational sense the SOBSI is a completely independent organization. The relationship exists in the identity of ideological principles and political outlook and in similarity of strategy and tactics, established by the operation of communist cells in the federation and in the affiliated unions.

The KBSI is also a independent federation in the sense that it has no organizational links whatsoever with any political party. The alleged domination of this federation by the Socialist Party is an exaggeration of the--not very successful--efforts of some PSI exponents in the leadership of the federation to create a pro-PSI sphere in the KBSI.

(1) Pedoman, September 16, 1954.

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The HISSBI and the SOBRI are two independent organizations where respectively the Labor Party and the Murba Party have their men in the key positions of the federations.

The GSBI is completely free from direct influence of any political party. However, among the leaders and the rank and file of this federation there is a number of nationalists (members of the PNI).

This account of the relationship of the federations with political parties shows that the Indonesian trade union movement is not a compact and homogeneous one, but is divided, and classified along political lines. Cooperation or controversies among the political parties immediately result in cooperation or controversies among the trade unions.

The Relationship of the SOBSI to the PKI

As stated before, the SOBSI is, organizationally speaking, a completely independent movement. Against the accusations of others that the federation is controlled or dominated by the Communist Party (PKI), SOBSI leaders time and again reiterate that their federation is independent, is non-partisan, and is in no way dominated by or associated with any political party whatsoever. From the PKI side the same denial is repeated given. "Both organizations are only one in their love for the country and the people of Indonesia," both spokesmen used to say. Both organizations have, indeed, the same ideas about the evils which plague the nation and about the remedy to eradicate these evils. The PKI and the SOBSI share the belief that the nation can only be saved by a national policy aimed at the relinquishment of foreign capitalism, colonialism and imperialism and their henchmen. And this gigantic task of "Save the Nation!" and "Destroy the Enemies of the People!" must be carried out by a United National Front encompassing all national groups, political parties, and workers' organizations, in which the PKI and the SOBSI are ready to participate and to assume responsibilities. (2)

The SOBSI bases its claim for its independence on the following line of argument:

(a) The Constitution of the SOBSI and the constitutions of the affiliated unions guarantee that the SOBSI and its

(2) These and other paraphrases of this kind are the substance of the protestations in the Communist press in Indonesia over the last eight years.

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affiliates are independent, are "non-party" (non-partisan). (3)

(b) The SOBSI has a completely independent organization

(c) Many SOBSI leaders and members are not communists; most of the rank and file do not belong to any political party; some of them are communists, but among the rank and file there are also members of other parties; at least one member of the National Council of the SOBSI belongs to a political party other than the Communist Party. (4)

The weakness of the argument is obvious.

Let us examine the first point; namely, that the SOBSI is "non-party" (non-partisan). The term non-party usually has two meanings. Non-party can mean that an organization, in our case the SOBSI, is completely neutral toward all political parties, that it is not an appendage or subsidiary of a political party. Secondly, non-party means that the SOBSI itself is not a political organization, that it is not supposed to behave or act like a political party.

Both meanings were given to the phrase during the heated debate in Russia before the October Revolution over the question of what kind of relationship should exist between the trade unions and the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (the predecessor of the Bolshevik Party).

The consensus was that the trade unions should be non-party organizations, in the sense that they should not work and act as political bodies or political parties. The economic struggle should be their primary task, but this economic struggle must be viewed as a part of a greater struggle, namely, the single class struggle of the whole working class against the whole capitalist class, which struggle was in effect a political struggle. In recognizing that there should be division of tasks between

(3) Konstitusi SOBSI, art. 1; cf. art. 1 of the Peraturan Dasar (Constitutions) of the SARBUPRI, SBG, SARBUKSI, SBPP, SBKA, PERBUM, SBRI, SBPU, SEBDA, SB KEMPERBU, and of most of the other affiliated unions.

(4) Mr. Karsono Werdoyo, who is a member of the Permai Party, a small political party of non-communist radicals. Mr. Werdoyo has been in the leadership of the SOBSI during the last eight years.

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the Party and the trade unions, and that the unions should devotedly carry on the day-to-day struggle against the capitalists for the betterment of working conditions, Lenin also warned repeatedly against so-called "economism," namely the trend among many comrades at that time to consider the struggle for direct economic gains as the only task of the trade unions, disregarding the political struggle entirely. (5) The conclusion was then reached that the trade unions were not political associations, that their specific task was the economic struggle; however, the political struggle, especially that part of it which was of importance for the economic struggle and for guaranteeing union freedom and workers' rights, must also be a matter of concern of the trade union movement. And most important,it was the understanding that, in waging this political struggle, the trade unions must have the guidance of the Social-Democratic Labor Party (Communist Party).

The trade unions should also be non-party in the sense that they should not have organizational ties with the Party, and that their organization should be separate and independent. However, the Party should have influence upon the trade unions. The question of how and to what extent this influence of the Party should be exerted, depended on the stage or phase of the proletarian struggle. When the Party and the trade unions had to work in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances, because the ruling capitalist government was very hostile to the movement and the Party and the unions themselves were still young and weak, the influence of the Party upon the unions should be exerted carefully, sparingly, gradually, and secretly. But when the Party had become a respectable power in the country and everything could be exposed to the outside world, then the Party should assume control over the trade union movement, overtly and definitely. (6)

Thus, it can happen that in present-day Russia the trade unions are still referred to as "non-party" organizations, of course, only in the sense that they are not political associations. (7) At the same time, the trade unions of the USSR are under control of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union). With the victory of

(5) Cf. Isaac Deutscher, Soviet Trade Unions, pp. 7-8, and Thomas T. Hammond, Lenin on Trade Unions and Revolution, pp. 15-33.

(6) Cf. Thomas T. Hammond, op. cit., pp. 60-75.

(7) Constitution of the Trade Unions of the USSR, Preamble.

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the working class through the October Revolution, the Soviet trade unions have become an apparatus of the ruling class with their main task: the preparation of the masses of workers for their role as builders of the new society. How was this task to be carried out by the Soviet trade unions?

> The tasks charged to the trade unions are not carried out by them at random, but in an organized way, under the leadership of the Communists active in the trade union movement. The millions of working people consciously and voluntarily recognize the leadership of the Communist Party, ... (8)

In present-day Soviet Union, how does the Communist Party exercise its leadership in the trade unions? About this we read in Lozovsky the following explanation: (9)

> It (the Communist Party) does so through the medium of the Communists working in trade union bodies. Party members in trade union committees of factories and institutions, in presidiums of regional, territorial and central committees of the trade unions, in the AUCCTU, (10) constitute Party groups that are subordinate to the respective Party organizations. Thus, for example, the Party group in the factory trade union committee is subordinate to the factory Party committee.
>
> The task of the Party groups is to explain the policy of the Party to the non-Party workers and convince them to accept it. However, they do so not by forcing their proposals on the non-Party workers, but by explaining and proving to these workers that their proposal is the only correct one, that it is for the good of both the given collective and society as a whole.

In China we have the same situation The unions are not political organizations and they are subject to the guidance of the Communist Party. (11)

(8) A. Lozovsky, Handbook on the Soviet Trade Unions, p. 120.

(9) Ibid., p. 121.

(10) AUCCTU are the initials of "All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions."

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Placing the SOBSI against the Soviet and Chinese background, and recalling the situation in those countries before the victorious Communist Revolutions, we see the relation between the SOBSI and the Indonesian Communist Party appearing in a clear light. For example, the phrase in art. 1 of the SOBSI Constitution which states that the federation is a "non-party" organization, only means that the SOBSI is not a political association. But the phrase does not imply independence of the SOBSI from the PKI.

The current meaning in Indonesia of the term "non-party" is: not affiliated with a political party. Did the SOBSI mean the same when it adopted article 1 of its Constitution? It is unlikely, because the federation, of course, took the phrase from the Soviet model and from the situation there prior to the October Revolution. SOBSI leaders, who were advanced students of communist theories and methods, knew perfectly what the "non-party" character of the trade unions meant. That they did not adopt that other clause of the Soviet model, namely that the trade unions worked under the guidance of the Communist Party, was also well-reasoned. Indonesia had not yet reached the stage for such outspoken policy!

Let us now consider the second argument of the SOBSI, namely that it has a completely independent organization, separated and free from any organizational links with the Communist Party or with any other political party. Conceding this, this author would like also to refer to the situation in Russia before the 1917-Socialist Revolution and in present-day USSR and China where the Federations of Trade Unions likewise were and are separately organized free from formal organizational links with the Communist Party, for reasons that the trade unions must be and must remain mass organizations, which the Communist Party is <u>not</u>.

An important subject is raised by the SOBSI leaders when they say that most of the rank and file of the SOBSI are not communists and that only a certain number of the SOBSI leaders are communists.

That many or most of the members of the SOBSI and of the affiliated unions are not communists or that among them are even members of other political parties, completely suits the mass organization conception of the

(11) <u>Constitution of the Trade Unions of the People's Republic of China</u>, Preamble.

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trade union movement. One can become a member of the SOBSI without distinction of race, sex, religion, political belief, etc. The clue, however, is that a number of communists are employed in the top and regional leadership of the SOBSI and in the leadership of the affiliated unions. The communist conception of Party-Trade Union relations is that members of the Party should be active in various posts in the unions and in the SOBSI as cells or special agents.

The members of the Indonesian Communist Party who hold positions in the SOBSI are first class communists and experienced trade unionists as well. Of the nine persons, elected in 1956 to the Central Bureau of the SOBSI, six are prominent card-carrying members of the Indonesian Communist Party, all of them having seats in Parliament as members of the Communist fraction. These six are: Njono (Secretary-General of the SOBSI), Tjugito (Secretary of the National Council of the SOBSI), Djoko-sudjono (member of the National Council, Suhaemi Rahman (member of the National Council), Sudoyo (member of the National Council), and Singgih Tirtosoediro (member of the National Council) (12) Two others, S.Runturambi and Soeprapto, are also well-known as close associates of the PKI, and are now members of Parliament, elected in 1955 on the PKI ticket. This author believes that these two gentlemen will soon become official members of the Communist Party. Thus, it is only the ninth member of the Central Bureau of the SOBSI who is a member of another party. Mr. K. Werdoyo, also a member of Parliament, is a leader of the Permai Party.

In their statements, insisting on the independent character of the SOBSI, spokesmen both of the federation and of the Communist Party, while admitting the presence of so many communists in the SOBSI, always try to minimize the significance of this situation. They contend that their presence is only a fortuitous coincidence, caused by the correctness of their principles and policies and their devotion to the national well-being of the Indonesian people. Typical of this kind of communist mentality is the content of a letter written and sent on December 4, 1954, by Mr. Njono, Secretary-General of the SOBSI, to Mr D.N. Aidit, Secretary General of the Partai Kommunis Indonesia, on the occasion when Mr. Njono applied for the PKI membership after having been the top leader of the SOBSI and a

(12) Bendera Buruh, March 7, 1956, p. IV, and Parlaungan, Hasil Rakjat Memilih Tokoh-Tokoh Parlemen, p. 267.

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strong sympathizer of the Communist Party for many years. Mr. Njono concluded his letter with the expression of the expectation that his application for Communist Party membership would certainly be seized upon the capitalists and reactionaries to renew their accusation that the SOBSI was dominated by the Communist Party. (13)

With Mr. Njono at the head, the communists and communist-sympathizers in the SOBSI ranks and in the affiliated unions for ten years have carried out the difficult work of converting the SOBSI from a combination of loose unions of scattered principles into a well-organized and highly efficient organization under the monolithic guidance of experienced and devout communists. Thanks to these tireless professional revolutionaries (or, as a version of Lozovsky's words: "Thanks to the consistent and correct revolutionary policy of the Communists and their persistent explanatory work among the masses, the latter soon saw who was leading them along the correct path, and recognized the Communist Party as the only leading force,"), (14) the SOBSI has become what it is now: a mighty organization and a powerful weapon of the communists which can be depended upon on every occasion.

Let us now turn our attention to the other federations.

The KBSI

The adversaries of this federation and the political foes of the Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI), and especially the communists, like to refer to the KBSI as a subsidiary of the PSI and a "tool in the hands of these reactionary rightwing social-democrats." This alleged domination of the KBSI by the Socialist Party stems from the fact that a number of socialists occupy key positions in the Central Executive Committee of the Federation, coupled with the fact that the KBSI has assumed the role of competitor and opponent of the communist-dominated SOBSI.

Since the Socialist Party has displayed a highly critical attitude toward the first and second Cabinets of Dr Ali Sastroamidjojo of the Nationalist Party (August 1953-August 1955 and April 1956-March 1957) and the Social-

(13) Harian Rakjat, December 6, 1954.

(14) Lozovsky, Handbook on the Soviet Trade Unions, p. 119.

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ists in the KBSI were suspected of having a hand in stirring up this federation during those periods, the Nationalist Party and other parties which supported Mr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, plus the respective trade union movements (KBKI, GSBI) were added to the already numerous opponents of the KBSI and the PSI.

What is the truth about this alleged domination of the KBSI by the Socialist Party?

The KBSI spokesmen repeatedly insist that the federation is an independent organization having nothing to do with any political party whatsoever. Art. VIII of the KBSI Constitution declares that the organization is based on democracy and has an independent and non-party character. Mr. Kusna Puradiredja himself, the KBSI President, has done everything to keep his federation out of party politics and to preserve the character of the organization as a genuine trade union movement, concerned only with the economic well-being of its members. He himself, a devout trade unionist, watches with dismay the balkanization of the Indonesian trade union movement by political parties. How far is he successful in making of his federation a genuine and independent trade union movement? How far have the socialists in the KBSI been successful in making of the federation a pro-PSI movement?

This author knows from personal contacts that the KBSI is a well-organized federation under an excellent management. That is also the case with several of the affiliated unions, especially Mr. Puradiredja's own union, the PBKA (union of railroad employees). But as far as the independence of the federation is concerned, Mr. Puradiredja's success has been somewhat checked by the activities of the PSI elements in the federation and in many of the affiliated unions. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the socialists have achieved the goal of their alleged subversive efforts, namely that of making of the federation a satellite of the PSI. At best, the socialists have contributed to the creation of a sphere of sympathy among many KBSI members toward socialist ideas and aims. It seems therefore to this author that the "domination of the KBSI by the Socialist Party" is only a myth, a malicious provocation from the side of its rivals and political enemies, and possibly, a product of the wishful thinking of some PSI leaders.

Let us now look at some facts. Those in the KBSI leadership who are members of the Socialist Party are: Mr. A.H.

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Siregar, Vice-President of the federation, Mr. Andi Zainal Abidin, Secretary-General, Mr. Kuswari, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Afnan, Treasurer, and some others. The President, Mr. Kusna Puradiredja, is not affiliated with any political party, although he sympathizes in general with democratic socialist ideas. In the regional KBSI committees there are also socialists active in key positions. That is also true of several of the affiliated unions. In the executive committee of the PBKA, Mr. B.K.J. Tambunan (secretary for organization), Mr. R.A. Santoso (secretary for information) and Mr. Sudarsono (in charge of educational programs) are members of the Socialist Party. In the executive committee of the SBP (airways employees), Mr. A.H. Siregar (President), Mr. Lauw Beng Hien (Vice-President) and Mr. Sukanto (Secretary-General) are also convinced members of the Partai Sosialis Indonesia.

At the time that the pro-PNI and anti-PSI unions were still in the KBSI, i.e., before the mass withdrawal of those unions from the federation in 1954, the socialist leaders in the federation continuously aroused resentment among these unions. Alleged pro-PSI activities, especially ascribed to Mr. Sukatja, the former secretary-general of the federation, and Mr. Rivai S. Atmadja, another former key figure in the KBSI executive committee, led to tensions. Efforts to ease the tensions, among other things by curbing the activities of the socialist members of the KBSI leadership met with no success, and left the suspense and accusations unabated. In December 1953 it was reported that Mr. Rh. Koesnan, the President of the KBSI at that time, was about to resign due to differences of opinion with the socialists in the executive committee of the federation. In a statement, the executive committee told the public that Mr. Koesnan's decision to withdraw from the KBSI was Mr. Koesnan's own problem and responsibility. (15) The newspaper which carried the statement suggested that it was the Nationalist Party, Mr. Koesnan's political party, which was, in fact, responsible for Mr. Koesnan's decision. A few days later, an affiliate of the KBSI, the union of employees of the Government-operated people's banks (the SBBRI), charged a number of members of the KBSI executive committee with unfair practices, i.e. pro-PSI activities. The union demanded the suspension of Sukatja and Rivai S. Atmadja from the KBSI. (16) The reason was that these two KBSI functionaries were reportedly involved in

(15) Pedoman, December 4, 1953.

(16) Pedoman, December 7, 1953.

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an effort by the Socialist Party to influence the designation of delegates to the convention of one of the affiliated KBSI unions, the SSKDN (Association of Employees of the Ministry of Home Affairs). The SBBRI also supported the demand of the PGRI (Teachers Union), at that time also associated with the KBSI, that the federation should hold an emergency congress as soon as possible in order to reorganize the federation and to oust those individuals in the leadership of the federation who had misused their position at the expense of the non-party character of the federation. The majority of the affiliated unions, however, did not agree with the proposal to hold a congress, with the result that in the following months several unions withdrew from the federation.

Further alleged pro-PSI activities by KBSI functionaries led to the expulsion of some Socialists from the Bandung branch of the federation in May 1954. At the same time an official KBSI statement, signed by Mr. Kusna Puradiredja on May 10, 1954, denied the existence of any evidence that the Socialist Party was or had been managing to dominate the KBSI. (17) In May 1955 the accusation against the federation of being a political tool in the hands of the Socialist Party reached its height, derived from the fact that in May 1955 the federation and its affiliated unions were involved in a large-scale strike, meant as a protest against the Government for its alleged failure or refusal to take measures against soaring of commodity prices and other steps which would lessen the hardships of the workers. (18) The Government, the political parties and unions which were supporting the Government and the Pro-Government press (19) condemned the action of the KBSI as ill-advised, malicious, reactionary, detrimental to the interests of the workers, and inspired by political groups which were opposing the Government, especially the Socialist Party. The Government was urged to take drastic measures against the ringleaders of the strike. Well, the KBSI survived the crises, although the protest action itself had only meager success due to the limited strength of the participating unions, and, at least according to the KBSI, due to the employment of strike breakers provided by the SOBSI. (20)

(17) Pedoman, May 12, 1954.

(18) Abadi, May 7, 1955; Pedoman, May 7, 1955.

(19) Merdeka, May 9, 1955; Harian Rakjat, May 6, 7, 9 and 11, 1955.

(20) Pedoman, May 9, 1955.

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In summarizing, this author can say the following about the position of the KBSI:

(a) Many leaders of the federation and of the affiliated unions are sincere in their efforts to make of the KBSI an independent and non-political organization.

(b) The Partai Sosialis Indonesia, or at least certain leaders of this party, would like to bring the federation within the sphere of influence of the party through the operation of party cells in the federation. In these efforts the PSI has achieved considerable success, but has also met some resistance and caused unrest and tension.

(c) Whether the PSI in the long run would be successful in controlling the federation completely, such depends on the future of this party itself. If the PSI is able to survive the crisis which has hit the party since about 1955 and to emerge again as an influential factor in the Indonesian political scene, then it might be possible for the party to control the KBSI definitely. However, the chances for the PSI to regain its former influence are not very great.

The KBKI

This federation, which has been relentless in chiding the KBSI for having improper relations with the PSI, maintains itself close relations with a political party, the Partai Nasional Indonesia, while at the same time having an equal status as partner in a voluntary cooperation with this party. All the leaders of the KBKI, including its President, Mr. Ahem Erningpradja, are members of the Nationalist Party (PNI). In a press-interview, Mr. Erningpradja, discussing the relations between the SOBSI (his former organization) and the Communist Party, expressed the opinion that he would not be surprised if Mr. Njono (the Secretary-General of the SOBSI who had just applied for Communist Party membership) followed communist policies in the SOBSI, since he himself (Mr. Erningpradja), as a member of the Nationalist Party, was always ready to do his utmost to convert his trade union movement, the KBKI, to the principles and policies of the Nationalist Party. (21)

(21) Pedoman, December 9, 1954. This readiness of Mr. Erningpradja to make of the KBKI a kind of extension of the PNI was superfluous, since it was already determined in the KBKI Statement of Principles that the federation adhered to the principles and policies of the PNI.

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The SBII

With the SBII, the political relationship is very simple. The SBII is affiliated with the Masjumi Party as a special member, and all leaders of the union are also members of the Masjumi.

The HISSBI and the SOBRI

The relationship of the HISSBI to the Labor Party is solely based on identity of ideas and ideals. All leaders of the HISSBI are members of the Labor Party. Apart from that, the HISSBI is a completely independent organization.

The SOBRI is also independent, but follows the policies of the Partai Murba. All SOBRI members are members of this party.

The Independent Unions

The main reason that many unions prefer to stay outside federations is that they resent the affiliations of the federations with political parties. Some of these unions have been members of federations in the past, but now have withdrawn from those organizations due to disillusionment and bitter experience with intrigues of political parties. Since their own members belong to several political parties or do not like political parties at all, the very existence or safety of these unions would be imperilled if they stayed in or became members of federations.

The PGRI (Teachers Union), formerly affiliated with the KBSI, and before that, with the GSBI, is now independent, as result of the specifically expressed fear of its rank and file of being subject to political intrigues.

The natural consequence of this state of affairs is that the independent unions are free from affiliations with specific political parties. However, this does not mean that the political parties themselves have not endeavored to exert their influence, or that among the membership there are no elements with affections for certain political parties. Interesting to note is the experience of some top leaders of the PGRI during the last few years. Early in 1954 this union withdrew from the KBSI. The Seventh Congress of the PGRI, held at the end of November 1954, reaffirmed the decision of the union to remain in-

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dependent. This Congress also elected a new executive committee, among others composed of Mr. Soedjono as General President, Mr. M.E. Subiadinata as First President and Mr. Hermanu Adi as Second President. (22) Soon after the Congress the membership of the PGRI was alarmed by news in the press that Mr. Soedjono and Mr. Hermanu Adi had been nominated by the Communist Party in the Parliamentary elections, and that their names appeared in the candidacy list of the PKI as respectively General President and Second President of the PGRI. Apparently due to pressure from the membership, the executive committee of the PGRI sent a protest-note to the Communist Party against using the name of the union following the names of Messrs. Soedjono and Hermanu Adi. (23) Many branches of the PGRI were quite stirred, indeed, by the event. (24)

Mr. Soedjono is now a member of Parliament, but the following Congress of the PGRI, held in June 1956, replaced Mr. Soedjono by Mr. Subiadinata as General President of the union. However, the strong position of Mr. Soedjono among his fellow-members in the union was clearly demonstrated when Mr.Soedjono was elected as the second man, namely as the new First President of the PGRI. After all, he is a very intelligent man and a good leader for the PGRI. But, it could also mean that the Communist Party has a strong following within the union.

(22) Pedoman, December 6 and 13, 1954.

(23) Pedoman, December 23, 1954. The newspaper did not tell whether Mr. Soedjono and Mr. Adi also signed this note.

(24) Cf. Pedoman, December 30, 1954.

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CHAPTER V

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The Indonesian trade union movement, politicized as it is, does not confine its attention to the economic field. It is also active in the political field.

In the first place, the movement is concerned with Government policy with regard to labor and with labor legislation. Secondly, it is also interested in political problems which have no direct connection with labor.

Above all, the movement has assumed a great responsibility for the safety and integrity of the country, for the preservation and perfection of the independence and sovereignty of the Republic and for the well-being of the Indonesian people at large. The unions are ready to participate in the development and reconstruction of the state and for this purpose are willing to bear certain hardships patiently. In addition, the country's foreign policy and world affairs in general are also matters of interest to the federations and to many unions.

This interest in political problems finds expression in various statements and resolutions, in joining committees and conferences, in lobbying, in exercising pressures and in organizing mass meetings and huge demonstrations. The political strike is also not an unknown weapon. Of a somewhat violent character was the action of taking over Dutch enterprises in December 1957 following a general strike in all those enterprises throughout the country. These actions were taken by the unions as retaliation to the Dutch policy with regard to West Irian (West New Guinea).

Unions' Activities in Connection with Government Labor Policy and Labor Legislation

In Indonesia, the Government is considered to be in duty bound to protect labor, to uphold workers' rights and to promote just working conditions. It is taken for granted that the Government stands at the side of the workers in their struggle against exploitation and oppression. This is

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quite natural since the Indonesian Republic is the product of a revolution in which workers had an active part. The Republic is the result of forty years of struggle in which "freedom from exploitation and from oppression" was the great issue.

The assumption by the State of duties toward the working people is embodied in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, while Article 20 recognizes the right of all residents to freedom of assembly and association. Referring to the rights of workers in particular, Article 21 declares that the right to demonstrate and to strike is recognized and shall be stipulated by law. In addition, Article 29 guarantees the right of everyone to form and to join trade unions for the protection and the promotion of his interests. With regard to employment and conditions of employment Article 28 says:

1. Every citizen, according to his ability, has the right to work, worthy of a human being.

2. Everyone has the right to free choice of occupation and to just conditions of work.

3. Everyone has, under equal conditions, the right to equal pay for equal work and to equally favorable labor contracts.

4. Everyone who works has the right to just remuneration, ensuring an existence consonant with human dignity for himself and his family.

The revolutionary conception of the State and the reflection of it in the above-mentioned Constitutional provisions have placed the Indonesian Government in a situation subject to insistent pressure by the people, and especially, by the trade unions. It is obvious that the realization of principles and aims of such high standing must be coupled with difficulties and must lead to misunderstanding, discord and tensions. Apart from difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the provisions, the trade unions often accuse the Government of not being sincere and of lacking the determination to put the principles into practice. On the other hand, the Government tends to respond with the counter-charge that many unions are unrealistic, that they are not reasonable in their demands, that they overlook the precarious economic situation of the country and that the people and the

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workers in particular, have first to work hard before thinking of a welfare state and a workers' paradise. Such an argument results, of course, only in endless talk which leads to nothing.

In the meantime, the workers' appraisal of the Government's good faith and abilities usually depends on the question of who is in power at a given time. Usually, a Government, certain ministers, and especially the Minister of Labor, are even before their assumption of office, labelled as either reactionary or progressive, anti- or pro-labor by the unions. And once having been labelled as anti-labor, a minister or ministers will have continuous difficulties with many unions. However, that may sound worse than it really is, because the various unions and federations are seldom unanimous among themselves in their attitudes toward the Government. The position of an individual union will depend on its political line. A Cabinet or a minister, once declared by the Communist Party as reactionary, will never be able to do anything good in the eyes of the SOBSI and its unions. Such a fate will befall the ministers of the Masjumi and of the Socialist Party. On the other hand, once having received the blessings of the Communist Party, such minister will be looked upon with sympathy by the SOBSI. The First and Second Cabinets of Mr. Ali Sastroamidjojo had this experience. But even when a Government or a minister has been declared persona non grata by a certain faction of the trade union movement, this does not necessarily mean that such a minister cannot do business with these unions. Between leaders of these unions and the minister a good understanding can actually be reached on certain matters, although such will never be admitted publicly by these union leaders. As stated earlier, on the whole, Indonesian unions are ready to spare no pains in the interest of the country and of the community at large. In public, however, they must continue to show a tough attitude!

Let us now review certain aspects of Government labor policy of which the unions have made major issues in their political activities.

The Right to Strike and the Settlement of Labor Disputes

With the restoration of peace and the resumption of economic activities in 1950, (1) the trade unions consolidated themselves and soon presented their demands for higher wages and better working conditions in general, especially

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on the plantations, in the sugar industry, and in other large enterprises under foreign (Dutch) management. And there was certainly reason for discontent. The wages in these enterprises lagged far behind the prevailing costs of living, (2) while other conditions of work were reminiscent of the old colonial days. The Dutch managements, however, refused to meet any of the demands, calling them unfounded and unreasonable. They asserted that the union leaders were irresponsible, and ascribed their activities to extremism and communist instigation.

In its report for 1950, 1951, and 1952, the Council of Employers for Indnesia in The Hague, Holland, referred to the majority of Indonesian trade unions as ill-natured organizations with the sole purpose of undermining systematically the economic position of the big corporations. The report further accused the leaders of the Indonesian trade union movement of willfully failing to remind the workers that they also had duties as well as rights, and of endangering the equilibrium between the workers' position and the well-being of the general public. The report ascribed all these evils to communist and other leftist agitation and subversion. (3)

(1) In December 1949 the Round Table Conference in The Hague resulted in the transfer of sovereignty by the Dutch to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia. According to the Financial and Economic Agreement, also agreed upon at the Conference, the rights, concessions, and licenses of Dutch corporations in Indonesia were recognized by the Republic. (Resultaten van de Ronde Tafel Conferentie, Financicele en Economische Overeenkomst, Article 1, p. 28). Hence, the Dutch were reinstated in their plantations, sugar estates, mining establishments, etc., and soon resumed their activities.

(2) For instance, in the first half of 1950, the minimum wage per day in the plantations and in the sugar estates in Java was 65 rupiahcents in cash plus the equivalent of 80 cents in king, thus in total 1.45 rupih per day; that was about 12.7 US cents, the dollar being fixed at 11.40 rupiah since March 1950. In the plantations of Sumatra, the minimum daily wage was Rp. 1.15 in cash plus Rp. 0.80 in kind, or Rp. 1.95 in total. (Verslag De Javasche Bank over Het Boekjaar 1951-1952, p. 131).

(3) De Ondernemersraad voor Indonesië. Verslag over 1950, 1951 en 1952, pp. 42-45. The Ondernemersraad or Council of Employers was an organization of Dutch big business operating in Indonesia.

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The result of the rejection of the demands and of the general anti-union attitude of theDutch managements was that in August and September 1950 and in January and February 1951 more than 700,000 plantation workers went on strike in Java and Sumatra. In addition to that, other strikes, large and small, took place throughout these main islands.

The Central Government, lacking any legal procedure for handling labor disputes, could not do very much to cope with the situation. But, military commanders in several regions, taking advantage of the theoretically still prevailing martial law, issued military decrees which prohibited strikes. Due to the mounting crisis, Mr. Mohammad Natsir, Premier and at the same time Minister of Defense ad interim, then decided to take emergency steps. Backed by the whole council of ministers, Mr Natsir invoked the provisions of martial law, and on February 13, 1951, promulgated Military Decree No. 1. The Decree banned strikes in vital enterprises and referred labor disputes to special committees for settlement. The unions, reluctantly, complied with the order, but soon started a campaign for the repeal of the Military Decree.

During preparations for the formation of a new Government after the resignation of the Natsir Cabinet on March 21, 1951, the abolition of the strike ban was an important issue. The trade union movement, especially the SOBSI, urged the political leaders who had been designated by the President to form the new Cabinet to adopt a Government program which would restore the workers' right to strike. The pressure of the workers was not without success. The new Cabinet, headed by Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo and inaugurated on April 27, 1951, announced that the Military Decree would be replaced by a law on the settlement of labor disputes which would not include a strike ban. The Minister of Labor in the new Government soon made preparations for drafting of such a new law. For that purpose he conducted hearings, not only with political leaders, but also with exponents of the trade union movement and with representatives of industry. During the hearings, the union leaders showed a great sense of realism, and agreed with the idea that the Government should be given certain powers for coping with difficult labor disputes. However, they insisted that the right to strike should not be limited in any way. Most of the political parties, represented in the Government, were of the opinion that the Government should be vested with sweeping powers to end dangerous disputes and to "prevent" strikes.

The result was that in September 1951 a law was passed by the Government, known as Emergency Law No. 16 on the

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Settlement of Labor Disputes. (4) The law introduced a waiting period of three weeks for unions after they declared their intention to strike, and for employers who wanted to lockout their workers. Further, the Law prescribed a system of compulsory mediation and compulsory arbitration. The Minister of Labor, as Chairman of the Central Committee for the Settlement of Labor Disputes, and as a sort of supervisor over the Regional Committees, was the key figure in the system. Thus, during labor disputes, when strikes were threatened or had actually taken place, the attention of the parties in dispute, and especially of the union concerned, was concentrated on the Minister of Labor. Many unions, but particularly those affiliated with the SOBSI, were highly critical of Emergency Law No. 16, and challenged many decisions of the Central Committee. These unions soon started a nationwide and vigorous campaign against the Law and against the Central Committee for the Settlement of Labor Disputes.

At the same time, pending the settlement of disputes by the Central Committee, the unions concerned, including those affiliated with the SOBSI, and the SOBSI itself, made a habit if visiting the Minister of Labor, in order to win favorable decisions. Such occasions were also welcome to the Minister, because they provided the Minister with a good opportunity to lecture the visitors and to explain the merits of the case as the Government saw it, in the interest of the country and of the workers themselves. The result was that the unions became a great factor for the Government to consider its day-to-day policies.

Due to the mounting demands of the unions, especially of the SOBSI, that the Emergency Law be repealed, the matter became an important point in the program of the political parties and of every Government. Every cabinet--and Indonesia changed its Government almost every year--in turn, invariably promised the workers that a new law would be drafted to replace the controversial Emergency Law. Whenever a Government fell, as happened in February 1952, June 1953, July 1955 and March 1956, the trade unions and federations carried on a campaign by sending cables, letters or special delegations

(4) An "emergency law" was a law passed by the Cabinet, without the cooperation of Parliament. Such a law, once having been promulgated, had to be submitted to Parliament for approval. Emergency Law No. 16 was never approved by Parliament owing to continuous deadlock during the proceedings in Parliament. It was valid till April 1957 when it was replaced by a new Law.

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to the political leaders called to form a new cabinet and to the President of the Republic, demanding that the new Government should immediately take measures to replace the Emergency Law, and that the person to be appointed as Labor Minister in the prospective cabinet should be a man who was considered friendly to labor. Many non-SOBSI unions were also in favor of another law to replace the Emergency Law, but in their statements these unions were less extreme than the SOBSI, knowing that the latter had particular reasons for opposing the Law. A candidate for Labor Minister if proposed by the SOBSI, usually met resistance from the other unions, and vice versa. In agitating against the Emergency Law and against the awards of the Central Committee for the Settlement of Labor Disputes, and against a Minister of Labor, the SOBSI not only made statements and passed resolutions, but also frequently sent delegations to the Government, to Parliament, to the President of the Republic and to the main political parties. Sometimes they also organized mass meetings and other demonstrations. Especially during the May Day celebrations when hundreds of thousands of workers gathered in huge rallies in every city, the abolition of the Emergency Law was a favorite issue.

At last, in April 1957, the 1951-Law was repealed and a new one was passed by Parliament. The new Law on the Settlement of Labor Disputes was, however, likewise not to the liking of the SOBSI, since, in fact, it was only a modification of the old system, leaving, as it did, the main principles intact, namely compulsory mediation and compulsory arbitration as well as certain limitations on the right to strike, although without the objectionable three-week cooling-off period.

In dealing with disputes, the Central Committee could either make recommendations or give binding awards. In most cases, however, these decisions were binding and subject to enforcement by law, thus leaving to the parties no choice other than to accept them. Several times it happened that a union, feeling that it was unjustly hurt by such a binding decision, protested, demanding a reexamination of the case. Under the Emergency Law no such possibility existed. An appeal was likewise excluded since the Central Committee was the highest instance, and the Supreme Court had ruled that the regular courts of justice had no jurisdiction over collective labor disputes which were covered by the Emergency Law. The only way open to the union had been to defy the award and to face prosecution which could lead to fine or imprisonment for the responsible union leader. Some unions found out another way, namely by

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making an appeal to the Minister of Labor himself for advice and support. According to the law the Minister could do nothing. However, in several cases a Minister of Labor had endeavored to ask the Central Committee to reopen or to re-examine the case, based on new evidence. But very often too, the Minister would hold long talks with the leaders of the union trying to convince them of the correctness of the award and urging the union to comply with it. In some cases the Minister was successful, but occasionally he was not. In the latter case the union leaders would go home to urge the rank and file either to acquiesce reluctantly or to strike. In a few cases such illegal strikes really led to prosecution and punishment.

If the Minister felt that the protesting union had a strong case and yet the Minister did not like to take the step of asking the Central Committee for a reexamination of the case, he would invite the employer for talks with him. In several cases this talk with the employer had the result of persuading him to meet the demands of the union to an extent higher than had been decided by the Committee. All this, of course, happened unofficially and in privacy. But it showed clearly the influence of the Labor Minister, and, of the unions! The unions maintained close relationship with the Government, and the Government with the unions. Indeed, in Indonesia, conferences with union leaders are part of the daily business of a Minister of Labor. The present Minister of Labor (Mr. Samsono) even started his responsibilities in the middle of 1957 by paying visits on the headquarters of all the federations in order to create an atmosphere of confidence between the Government and the trade union movement.

The Right to Organize

The guarantee of the right to form or to join trade unions, contained in Article 29 of the Constitution, led to the opinion among the stronger unions, especially the SOBSI, that the Government or the State should not have any right of interference whatsoever in the organizational affairs of the unions. For this reason the SOBSI has denounced every attempt of the Government to bring about, through legislation, a settlement in the confusion which has troubled the Indonesian trade union world since 1950. Several bills, drafted by the Ministry of Labor and dealing with trade union organization, with union recognition and with union registration, have all been rejected by the SOBSI. Many other unions also declined to support the

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proposals, some of them only for reasons of prestige. Thus, for "political reasons," the Government postponed further works on drafts of the law.

In May 1954, a law was passed by Parliament, dealing with collective agreements. (5) According to this Law on Collective Agreements, registered trade unions could conclude collective contracts with employers. In April 1955 the Minister of Labor issued a Ministerial Order dealing with the registration of trade unions. (6) As simply a Ministerial Order and not a Law, this regulation could only provide for voluntary registration, so that unions which did not like the idea of being registered, could remain unregistered, and yet enjoy all the rights of being a union. And if such an unregistered union succeeded in concluding a contract with a company, no one could prevent or prohibit the union or the company from having such a contract.

Thus, mainly due to the opposition on the part of organized labor, especially the SOBSI, Indonesia does not have any legislation regulating trade unions beyond a Ministerial regulation on voluntary registration which has no legal enforceability.

This example again shows the power of the trade unions, especially of the SOBSI. Moreover, Governments and political parties, having enough political foes, do not want to add the anger of the trade unions to their problems, and have decided: all right, then no legislation on trade unions!

Protective Labor Legislation

In 1947 and 1948, at the height of the Revolution and when the Republican-controlled areas were limited to parts of Java and Sumatra, the rest being occupied by Dutch colonial troops and Dutch-sponsored puppet governments, the Republican Government and Provisional Parliament, seated in the revolutionary capital of Jogjakarta, passed three laws on labor; namely, the Law on Industrial Accidents of 1947, the Labor Code of 1948--a law which reduced working

(5) Law of May 28, 1954, No. 21 on Collective Agreements between Trade Unions and Employers.

(6) Order of the Minister of Labor of April 16, 1955, No. 90 on the Registration of Trade Unions.

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hours, prohibited child labor, restricted labor by women, and introduced other protective measures--and the Law on Labor Inspection of 1948. With the inauguration of the United States of Indonesia in December, 1949, and the re-establishment of the Unitary Republic in August, 1950, there was doubt whether these three pro-labor laws were still in force. There were even voices raising the question of whether it was desirable for the Republic to have such laws, especially the Labor Code which prescribed the seven-hour day and the forty-hour week. The trade union movement, perceiving danger, took swift action. In and outside Parliament a campaign was launched for the enactment of labor laws which would protect labor. The representatives of labor in Parliament, led by Mr. Agem Erningpradja, Asraruddin and Werdojo, succeeded in having a motion approved which called upon the Government to introduce bills and to take other measures for the protection of workers' rights and the improvement of working conditions. Several months later, the Government presented three bills to Parliament which would make the three old laws valid in the new Republic. Within a few days, in January 1951, the laws were passed and the unions victorious! (7)

There are many examples of the activities and the power of the Indonesian trade union movement in the field of politics pertaining to labor. Another evidence of the high esteem trade unions enjoy in Indonesia, is the fact that many union leaders have seats in Parliament. Up to 1956 there was even a special "Labor Fraction" (Fraksi Buruh) in Parliament, composed of SOBSI leaders. In the present Parliament several union leaders serve as members, not representing labor officially, but belonging to the various political parties. The top leaders of the SOBSI are now, for instance, all members of Parliament.

Political Activities in Fields Outside Labor

As stated before, the Indonesian trade union movement is concerned with general and fundamental political prob-

(7) These laws are:
1. The Law of January 6, 1951, No. 1 which declares the Labor Code of 1948, No. 12, of the Republic of Indonesia (Old Style), operative for all Indonesia (the new Republic).
2. The Law of January 6, 1951, No. 2 which makes the Law on Industrial Accidents of 1947, No. 33, operative for all Indonesia.
3. The Law of January 6, 1951, No. 3 which makes the Law on Labor Inspection of 1948, No. 23, operative for all Indonesia.

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lems, such as the security of the country, the safety and perfection of Indonesia's independence, the reconstruction of the State and economic development. The unions are also interested in the foreign policy of the Republic, and in world affairs in general.

In exerting their influence and putting pressure in these fields, the unions and federations employ the same methods as with regard to Government's labor policy. Statements are made, resolutions passed and posters displayed, expressing the views and wishes of the unions. Delegations are sent to the President of the Republic, to the Prime Minister, the individual ministers, the Speaker of Parliament, the President of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and to any other conceivable Government Authority, in order to explain the position of the trade union movement and to stress its wishes. Thousands of letters and cables are sent for the same purpose. Mass rallies and other demonstrations add to the strength and power of the unions. The art of lobbying is also understood and cultivated, while Parliament members of union origin take care of the appropriate legal procedure. On the whole, the Indonesian union leaders follow the same methods as their colleagues in many other democratic countries, the only difference being the emphasis given by the specific character of the Indonesian trade unions.

Activities with respect to the Safety of the Country and the Perfection of Indonesia's Independence

The defense of Independence and the perfection of the Sovereignty of the Republic are the main political issues which have kept the political parties, trade unions, other organizations and the whole people concerned since the outbreak of the Revolution in August 1945, and which have not been tempered down by the formal transfer of sovereignty by the Dutch in December 1949.

Since the transfer of sovereignty, the activities of the political parties and the trade unions have centered around relations between the Republic and the Netherlands. The Netherlands-Indonesian Union, the Financial and Economic Agreement and other products of the Round Table Conference (RTC), and the refusal of the Dutch to withdraw from West New Guinea, became the big political issues. The Netherlands-Indonesian Union was looked upon as an encroachment on the sovereignty of the Republic. The Financial and Economic Agreement was nothing more than the

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continuation of Dutch domination in the economic field which would in effect leave the country's natural resources in the hands of Dutch monopolists and would make impossible the liquidation of the colonial economic system and the development of a national economy. And finally, the continuing occupation of West Irian (West New Guinea) by the Dutch was an infringement upon Indonesian territory, an encroachment on the sovereignty of the Republic, a blow to the national honor, represented a constant danger to the security of the country, was in fact a violation of the RTC Agreements themselves and was even an act of aggression. These were the considerations.

The dissolution of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union and of the other RTC Agreements and the liberation of West Irian thus became the political demands of the Indonesian trade union movement after 1950.

The SOBSI and its affiliated unions considered the problems arising out of the RTC Agreements of such importance that the issue was inserted in the preamble of their constitutions. All the constitutions of the SOBSI unions have looked upon the RTC Agreements as the continuation of Dutch imperialism, and the source of the misery of the Indonesian workers, and the cause of all evils which have plagued the country. In addition to that, the SOBSI, its unions, other federations and unions have issued statements of policy in which they have condemned the RTC Agreements and have expressed their readiness to fight for the liberation of West Irian.

The hostile attitude of the trade unions toward the RTC Agreements and toward the Netherlands in general was certainly to a great extent the work of political parties and of political leaders who were active in the unions. But it stemmed also from the ranks of the unions themselves. In general, the workers could not easily forget the arrogant and arbitrary behavior of many Dutch employers and superintendents in the past. And, even in independent Indonesia, some Dutch employers and managers, at least in the first years, were still "colonial" in their attitude toward the workers. It was quite natural that this resentment among the workers found expression in the policies and actions of the trade unions. Furthermore, the unions were of the opinion that, quite apart from the disillusionment about the continuation of Dutch ownership and management of the large enterprises, the country's independence had not at all resulted in changing the conditions and relations of labor.

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The workers had had every reason to expect some fundamental and rapid changes in labor-management relationships as well as in respect to other conditions in industry. The Financial and Economic Agreement of the Round Table Conference itself had contained the following desiderata:

a. The corporations should open their door to the participation of Indonesian capital in their businesses. (8)

b. It should be the endeavor of the corporations to establish the institution of collective bargaining between management and workers in the entire field of labor-management relations. (9)

c. The corporations should promote the creation of a community of interest between management and workers. (10)

d. The corporations should take measures to improve the housing accomidation and the social security of the workers. (11)

e. The corporations should, as soon as possible, bring qualified Indonesians into the management (including into the boards of managing directors) and in the staff of the corporations; they should also cooperate in establishing training institutes, so that within a reasonable time the majority of leading staff personnel would consist of Indonesian citizens. (12)

Especially in the first years after the conclusion of the RTC Agreements, the expected changes were not forthcoming. Many Dutch employers failed to comply with the pledge made by their Government. It was only after several years of hesitation and after having been repeatedly reminded by the Indonesian authorities, (13) that a number of large corporations started to give attention to the problem. The oil-companies, some big banking businesses, a

(8) Resultaten van de Ronde Tafel Conferentie, Financieele en Economische Overeenkomst, Article 5, p. 30.

(9) Ibid., Article 12 (1)(a), p. 31.

(10) Ibid., Article 12 (1)(b), p. 31.

(11) Ibid., Article 12 (1)(c), p. 31.

(12) Ibid., Article 12 (1)(d), p. 31.

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large printing office, etc., established appropriate training institutes in a serious effort to prepare Indonesians for top positions. Some of these corporations also appointed qualified Indonesians in the management. The Shell/BPM, the Standard Vacuum Oil Company and the Caltex Pacific have for years had Indonesians in top positions and have training schemes in operation in order to meet the necessity of having more and more Indonesians in management.

But, in the meantime, a lot of harm had already been done to labor-management relations of numerous Dutch enterprises. Moreover, many of these companies continued to fail to take any steps to improve their policies.

It was therefore understandable that many trade unionists gradually arrived at the conviction that the only remedy for abuses was a radical change of the economic structure itself, with, as conditio sine qua non, the liquidation of the RTC Agreements, because it was these Agreements with the Dutch Government, they believed, which formed the basis of the supremacy of Dutch capital in Indonesia.

It was in this connection that many trade unions developed an opinion and laid down a policy of their own with respect to the Indonesian-Netherlands relationship. independent from, or in addition to the influence of political parties. This independent opinion of the trade unions was well illustrated by the SARBUPRI, or at least by a top functionary of that big union of plantation workers, in 1950. At that time, just a few months after the transfer of sovereignty, many people in Indonesia, including some leaders of the SARBUPRI, apparently, still hoped that the conditions in the Dutch-operated enterprises would soon change for the better. Therefore they were ready to acquiesce in the situation created by the RTC, at least for the time being. Although the Communist Party and some other political parties had already launched their attack upon the RTC Agreements at that time, the SARBUPRI, in spite of the fact that it was already a faithful affiliate of the SOBSI, seemed to have another opinion or to follow other tactics. In his opening address at the Second Congress

(13) In the years 1951-1953, the Minister of Labor used to invite the managements of corporations to question them about the implementation of the above-mentioned RTC provisions. The result was that the managements presented workable plans to the Minister for carrying out those provisions.

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of the union on May 20, 1950, Mr. Agem Erningpradja, the then President of the union, while referring to the RTC Agreements, told a large audience that:

> "The plantation workers now regard the RTC Agreements as a reality .... For that reason the SARBUPRI regards the existence of foreign capital in Indonesia as a reality which is the consequence of the RTC Agreements. For the moment, the question of foreign capital and foreign-owned enterprises does not constitute a problem for the SARBUPRI. The plantation workers do not refuse to work on these foreign-owned plantations; they only expect that the managements should adjust themselves to the changes which have taken place. To be precise, they should respect the Constitution of the Republic." (14)

That was the SARBUPRI of Mr. Agem Erningpradja in 1950.

At present, the SARBUPRI is as irreconcilable as the SOBSI in its judgment of the RTC Agreements. (15) The Constitution of the union, (16) in its preamble, condemns the RTC Agreements and demands the radical implementation of their abrogation. Mr. Agem Erningpradja himself is now no longer president of the SARBUPRI. In 1953 he left the union, and now he is President of the KBKI. But this federation, too, including its President, Mr. Erningpradja, is inexorable with regard to the liquidation of the RTC Agreements.

The passing of resolutions, the issuing of statements and the conducting of agitation against the RTC Agreements were not confined to the business of the federations or central committees of the large unions. Regional organizations and even local unions, from time to time, gave evidence of their resentment against the results of the Round Table Conference. For example, on January 21, 1951, the local oilworkers union of Djambi, Central Sumatra, gathered in a conference, adopted a resolution, demanding

(14) Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, June 1, 1950, p. 31.

(15) In February 1956, the Indonesian Government denounced the Netherlands-Indonesian Union and the other RTC Agreements unilaterally.

(16) Adopted by the Fourth Congress of the SARBUPRI in October, 1956.

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the immediate abrogation of the RTC Agreements, (17) In the same month, but now one thousand miles further eastwards, namely in Djember, East Java, the local union of market employees and meat-cutters passed a similar resolution. (18) Later that same year, the mine workers expressed the same opinion. (19) Thus, all unions, whether national, regional or local, almost without exception, one after another, passed resolutions and issued statements, denouncing the Netherlands-Indonesian Union and condemning all the other RTC Agreements, especially those in the financial and economic field.

On certain occasions, anti-Dutch feelings would run high. This was, for instance, the case when during negotiations between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, (20) the latter gave evidence of a lack of goodwill, real or alleged, or persisted in showing an adamant attitude towards certain wishes of the Indonesians. Then, the voices of the trade unions would take a sharper tone. The periodic flare-up of sentiments, stirred by the continued occupation of West Irian by the Dutch, aggravated the situation. An excellent opportunity for large-scale agitation against the RTC Agreements was annually offered by the commemoration of the Proclamation of Independence on the 17th of August, and by the celebration of May Day. On both occasions, in all cities thousands of workers gathered in huge mass rallies listening to fiery speeches of labor and Government leaders; the workers marched through the streets carrying gigantic posters and life-sized effigies. The slogans used were mainly directed against the RTC Agreements, against the Dutch occupation of West Irian and other matters of domestic and international importance. In big cities like Djakarta, Bandung and Surabaya, the numbers of the workers gathered reached many hundreds of thousands. These demonstrations were concluded with the passage of resolutions which would not only make headlines in newspapers, but also were presented to the Government and to Parliament. The presentation often was done by special delegations of workers.

(17) Tindjauan Masalah Perburuhan, January 1951, p. 32.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid., April, May and June 1951, p. 50.

(20) During the years between 1950 and 1955, the Republic almost every year opened talks with the Dutch, proposing changes in the Dutch-Indonesian relations and urging the return of West Irian (West New Guinea), but without success.

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The activities with regard to the issue of West Irian were conducted in the same way. Furthermore, the unions sent their representatives to central and regional committees which were set up to coordinate and effectuate the struggle for the liberation of West Irian. In these committees the workers' delegates cooperated with the representatives of political parties, of the Government and of the Army, to draft plans and determine strategy and tactics. At the end of 1957, the workers' action for the liberation of West Irian took the form of a general strike in all Dutch-operated enterprises. Due to the mounting sentiments this action led to high-handed take-overs of Dutch enterprises by the workers. The result was that the Government, in an effort to forestall further violence from the side of the infuriated workers, assumed control over these Dutch properties.

Political Activities with Regard to the Reconstruction of the Country

The four decades-old struggle for independence was not only aimed at the overthrow of the Dutch Colonial Regime in Indonesia, but also had as its objective the construction of a national state, different from colonial Netherlands-India in every respect. When the workers, led by their unions, joined this struggle and sent workers' batallions to the front during the warfare with the Dutch, they had an idea of what they were fighting for, namely a national state free from all colonial remnants, built on the foundation of democracy which would guarantee workers' rights for the purpose of creating conditions for an economic development which would secure the workers better working and living conditions.

With the exception of the Moslem unions, which want a state based on Islamic principles, all the other unions stand for a state built on socialist lines, although there is a variety of ideas as to how far Indonesia should become a socialist state. The non-SOBSI and non-SOBRI unions also reject the concept of a totalitarian state system. But all this belongs to the realm of ultimate goals. For the moment the unions concentrate their attention on the liquidation of all remnants of the old regime in the fields of legislation, administration and in the daily practices of Government authorities, especially in the regions. Old colonial laws which denied the freedom of the press, free speech and other fundamental democratic rights, were already abolished several years ago. The unions also resent the authoritarian behavior of civil servants and police

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officers which is reminiscent of the old colonial days when the country was run by civil servants who headed administrative areas, large and small. Now the unions, and most of the political parties, demand the abolition of the civil servant system. Instead, they want a democratic system based on decentralization and local autonomy. A democratic unitary Republic with far-reaching autonomy for the provinces, cities and villages is what the unions stand for.

With regard to the economic development of the country, the unions want a planned-economy and the implementation of Article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic which declares that:

1. The national economy shall be organized on a cooperative basis.

2. Branches of production of importance to the State and which vitally affect the life of the people, shall be controlled by the State.

3. Land and water, and the natural riches contained therein, shall be controlled by the State and exploited for the greatest benefit of the people.

Most unions (SOBSI with substantial conditions) recognize the necessity of foreign capital to assist the economic drive, although they understand that the lion's share in the supply of capital must come from the people itself.

The SOBSI again leads the way in union activities with regard to the economic development of the country. The National Conference of the SOBSI, held in September 1957, was mainly devoted to this problem. (21)

In the field of economic development, the views and wishes of the unions resemble those of the political parties with which they maintain relations, with the addition that the unions put the emphasis on the position and rights of the workers in the development process.

(21) Bendera Buruh, September 30, 1957, p. 1.

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Activities in Connection with Foreign Policy and with World Affairs

The socialist influences within many Indonesian unions have made Indonesian workers interested in international politics and in world affairs in general.

In the first place the unions want assurances from the Government that the foreign policy of the country will be based on the interests of the Indonesian people, which interests can only be served by the preservation of world peace and by friendly relations between Indonesia and the rest of the world. The Republic should therefore maintain a foreign policy of strict non-alignment with any of the blocs which are now opposing each other. The Indonesian trade union movement can agree with the formulation of an "active and independent foreign policy aimed at the lessening of international tensions and the preservation of world peace." What this really means, however, is not the same for the SOBSI as it is for the KBSI, for the KBKI, for the SBII, etc. The SOBSI is hostile towards the foreign policy of the United States and its Allies, while many other unions want friendly relations both with the East and with the West.

In the interest of world peace, all unions denounce military pacts and the armament race. For the preservation of mankind, they also condemn the use of all kinds of atom and hydrogen bombs and demand an immediate ban on nuclear tests.

For the sake of completeness, it is worth mentioning that the SOBSI participates in international peace congresses. The federation is also a sponsor of councils or committees for the promotion of world peace.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The indoctrination of the Indonesian trade union movement by political ideologies has been thorough and complete.

The birth and growth of the movement during the last fifty years, the way in which this indoctrination took place, and the development of the movement since the establishment of the Republic, have made the political character of the Indonesian trade union movement inevitable. This situation is also bound to continue with no possibility of a modification in the foreseeable future.

These political ideas and ideals have been the driving power of the movement. They have been the source of inspiration and of strength which have made possible the achievements in the fight for national independence and in the struggle for the emancipation of the Indonesian working class.

At the same time, the political character of the unions has taken on such proportions and has brought about such dissension and confusion that it gives cause for real concern.

Something has to be done in order to check this dangerous course. It is the trade union movement itself which is at stake.

However, it would be fallacious to assume that the remedy can be found in the replacement of the political trade union movement by a non-political one, say, by a movement such as prevails in the United States. Such an endeavor would be doomed to failure, for the simple reason that Indonesia lacks the conditions for a trade union movement of such a businesslike type. The prerequisite for such a movement, namely, the belief in or the acceptance of the prevailing economic order is not present among the Indonesian trade unionists. The Indonesian unions also lack the necessary personnel and material for a genuine "economic" development of the movement. Moreover, the forces which sustain the political character of the movement are strong and increasing in strength and in number.

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It seems to this author that the road towards the creation of a better Indonesian trade union movement must start with the acceptance of its political character as a fait accompli. Within this given situation certain changes or improvements are not impossible. It is certainly feasible to undertake a campaign to convince many trade unionists and workers in general that political ideas and aims are all right, but that it is folly to make of the unions mere subsidiaries or substructures of political parties, in the sense that each political party has its own trade union movement, as is the situation now.

One could accept the existence of a "plural" trade union movement based on the main political ideologies, namely, communism, socialism, nationalism, and Islamism. But the situation as it now exists, with two communist, two socialist, two nationalist, and four Moslem trade union movements, is certainly absurd. And, if the communists must have a trade union movement which accepts the Communist Party as its vanguard, we can do nothing about it. But the socialist trade union movement need not necessarily be a subsidiary of the Socialist Party; the nationalist federation does not need to take its orders from the Nationalist Party, and the Moslems should be satisfied with only one union with no organizational links with any specific Moslem political party.

To bring about a conviction and attitude of this kind among Indonesian trade unionists, certain conditions will have to be created in advance. First, the training of a large number of trade unionists must be undertaken, in order to have a strong nucleus in the trade union movement which does not look to political parties for their chief guidance and support, but is able to develop strength from the ranks of the membership itself. Secondly, it is about time that the political parties and political leaders try to understand the real position and purpose of a trade union movement. They have to understand that, while unions may attach high value to political ideals, the political parties should not involve the unions in their day-to-day political problems. They must be convinced that trade unions can contribute to the realization of political goals and yet remain free from ties to political parties. Finally, it is clear that any ultimate solution will be possible only after the solution of the political difficulties of the country itself. These difficulties have been very great indeed, mounting in the open rebellion in February 1958 in Central Sumatra and in Northern Celebes. But now, in the middle of 1958, there

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are signs that the situation is improving and that stabilization is in the offing. Moreover, the present Administration of Premier Djuanda is determined to carry out the Five Year Plan of Economic Development which intends to increase the productivity of the country and to raise the national income.

It is gratifying to know that the Plan also includes a chapter on labor relations. The chapter deals with the problem of how to secure a smoother production process by sound labor-management relations. Whether these objectives will be realized is of course also, and primarily, dependent upon the attitude of the trade unions themselves. And a favorable attitude of the trade union movement can in the long run be developed only if the movement is able to learn from the lessons of the past and to revise its relations with political parties.

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