NGO AS OUTSIDE INTELLECTUAL

A HISTORY OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS' ROLE IN THE INDONESIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

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CERTIFICATION

I, Michele T. Ford, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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5 May 2002

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAFLI	Asian-American Free Labor Institute
ABRI	*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia,* Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia
ACILS	American Center for International Labor Solidarity
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations
ANRI	*Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia,* Indonesian National Archives
APINDO	*Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia,* Indonesian Employers Association
Arek	*Yayasan Arek Surabaya,* Foundation for Labour Advocacy, Research and Education
ASIET	Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor
BBI	*Barisan Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Labour Front
BBW	*Barisan Buruh Wanita,* Women's Labour Front
Bhakti Pertiwi	*Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi*, Foundation for Service to the Nation
BKBI	*Badan Koordinasi Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Labour Coordinating Body
BKS-BUMIL	*Badan Kerjasama–Buruh Militer,* Labour-Military Cooperative Body
BOWNI	*Bergerlijke Openbare Werken in Nederlandsche Indie*, Union of Public Workers Supervisors
BPBSI	*Badan Permusyawaratan Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, All-Indonesia Labour Negotiation Body
BPP	*Bond van Pandhuis Personeel*, Pawnshop Workers' Union
BPSS	*Badan Pusat Serikat-Serikat Sekerja,* Central Labour Union Body
CIMW	Centre for Indonesian Migrant Workers
CV	*Comite van de Vakcentrale,* Committee of Labour Unions
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
Depnaker	*Departemen Ketenagakerjaan,* Department of Manpower
Depnakertrans	*Departemen Ketenagakerjaan dan Transmigrasi,* Department of Manpower and Transmigration
DSBI	*Dewan Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia*, Indonesian Union Council
ELSAM	*Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat,* Institute for Policy and Advocacy
FAKB	*Forum Aspirasi Kaum Buruh,* Forum for Workers' Aspirations
FAYTKI	*Forum Alumni Yayasan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia,* Alumni Forum of the Indonesian Manpower Foundation
FBLKB	*Forum Buruh dan LSM untuk Keadilan Buruh*, NGO and Workers' Forum for Workers' Justice
FBSI	*Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Labour Federation
FES	*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,* Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FEW	*Federatie van Europeesche Werknemers,* Federation of European Workers
FNPBI	*Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia,* National Front for Indonesian Workers' Struggle

FNV	*Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging,* Dutch Trade Union Federation
FOKUBA	*Federasi Organisasi Pekerja Keuangan dan Perbankan Indonesia,* Federation of Indonesian Bank and Finance Workers' Organisations
Forsol Buruh	*Forum Solidaritas Untuk Buruh,* Solidarity Forum for Workers
FSBDSI	*Federasi Serikat Buruh Demokrasi Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Federation of Democratic Workers' Unions
FSP-BUMN	*Federasi Serikat Pekerja BUMN*, Federation of State Enterprise Workers' Unions
FSPSI	*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia,* Federation of All-Indonesia Workers' Unions
FSPSI *Reformasi*	*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia Reformasi,* Reformed Federation of All-Indonesia Workers' Unions
FSU	*Forum Solidaritas Unionis,* Unionists' Solidarity Forum
G30S/PKI	*Gerakan 30 September/Partai Komunis Indonesia,* 30 September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party
GAPI	*Gabungan Politik Indonesia*, Indonesian Political Association
GASBI	*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia,* Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions
GASBIINDO	*Gabungan Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia,* Indonesian Association of Muslim Unions
GASPEKRI	*Gabungan Serikat Pekerdja Keristen Indonesia,* Association of Christian Labour Unions
Gaspermindo	*Gabungan Serikat Pekerja Merdeka Indonesia,* Amalgamated Indonesian Free Trade Unions
GASPI	*Gabungan Serikat-Serikat Sekerdja Partikelir Indonesia*, Association of Indonesian Private Sector Unions
GASBRI	*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Revolusioner Indonesia,* Federation of Indonesian Revolutionary Labour Unions
GERBUMI	*Gerakan Buruh Muslimin Indonesia,* Indonesian Muslim Labour Movement
GOBSII	*Gabungan Organisasi Buruh Serikat Islam Indonesia,* Association of Muslim Workers' Unions
Golkar	*Golongan Karya,* Functional Groups
GRR	*Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat,* People's Revolutionary Movement
GSBI	*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Labour Union Association
GSBI	*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Independen*, Association of Independent Labour Unions
GSBV	*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Vertikal,* Vertical Federation of Unions
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
GSPI	*Gabungan Serikat-Serikat Sekerdja Partikelir Indonesia*, Association of Indonesian Private Sector Unions
HIVOS	Humanistic Institution for Co-operation with Developing Countries
Humanika	*Kelompok Kerja Humanika,* Humanika Working Group
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICMI	*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia,* Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals

ICOSS	*Ikatan Central Organisasi Serikat Sekerja,* Central Association of Labour Unions
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IKM	*Ikatan Karyawan Muhammadiyah,* Muhammadiyah Employees' Association
INFID	International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
INGI	International NGO Group on Indonesia
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILRERF	International Labour Rights Education and Research Fund
IPB	*Institut Pertanian Bogor,* Bogor Agricultural Institute
IPJ	*Institut Perburuhan Jakarta,* Jakarta Labour Institute
ISDP	*Indische Sociaal-Democratische Partij,* Indies Social Democratic Party
ISDV	*Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging,* Indies Social Democratic Association
ISJ	*Institut Sosial Jakarta,* Jakarta Social Institute
ITB	*Institut Tekonologi Bandung,* Bandung Technology Institute
IZ	*Inlandsche Zettersbond,* Native Printers' Union
HISSBI	*Himpunan Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia,* Association of Indonesian Labour Unions
Jamsostek	*Jaminan Sosial Asuransi Tenaga Kerja,* Employee Social Security and Insurance Guarantee
JILAF	Japanese International Labour Foundation
KAMI	*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia,* United Indonesian Student Action
KAPB	*Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh,* Committee Against the Oppression of Workers
KASM	*Komite Aksi Satu Mei,* Committee for Action on 1 May
KBB	*Kelompok Buruh Bandung,* Bandung Workers' Group
KBIM	*Kongres Buruh Islam Merdeka,* Congress of Free Muslim Workers
KBKI	*Kesatuan Buruh Kerakyatan Indonesia,* Indonesian People's Labour Union
KBM	*Kesatuan Buruh Marhaen,* Marhaenist Workers' Union
KBSI	*Kongres Buruh Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Workers' Congress
KEKARBU	*Kesatuan Karyawan Buruh,* Union of *Karyawan* Workers
Kespekri	*Kesatuan Pekerja Kristen Republik Indonesia,* Union of Christian Workers of the Republic of Indonesia
KOBAR	*Komite Buruh untuk Aksi Reformasi,* The Workers' Committee for Reform Action
KOBI	*Koordinasi Buruh Indonesia,* Coordination of Indonesian Labour
Kongkarbu SOKSI	*Konsentrasi Golongan Karyawan Buruh SOKSI,* Concentration of SOKSI Workers' Groups
KORPRI	*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia,* The Civil Servants' Corps of the Republic of Indonesia
KPHP	*Komisi Pembaharuan Hukum Perburuhan,* Commission for the Renewal of Labour Law
KPKB	*Kelompok Perempuan untuk Keadilan Buruh,* Women's Group for Workers' Justice

KPPB	*Kerukunan Pegawai Post Bumiputra,* Native Postal Workers' Union
KPS	*Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera,* Lamp of Prosperity Group
KSBI	*Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Confederation of Trade Unions
KSSBI	*Konfederasi Serikat-Serikat Buruh Islam,* Confederation of Muslim Unions
KSTS	*Komite Solidaritas Titi Sugiati,* Solidarity Committee for Titi Sugiati
KSUM	*Komite Solidaritas Untuk Marsinah,* Solidarity Committee for Marsinah
KUBU Pancasila	*Kesatuan Organisasi Buruh Pancasila,* Federation of Pancasila Workers' Organisations
LAAI	*Lembaga Advokasi Anak Indonesia,* Indonesian Institute of Advocacy for Children
Lapera	*Yayasan Lapera Indonesia,* Lapera Foundation
LBH APIK	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan,* Legal Aid Bureau of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice
LBH Bandung	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung,* Bandung Legal Aid Institute
LBHN	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Nusantara,* Archipelago Legal Aid Foundation
LBH Jakarta	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta,* Jakarta Legal Aid Institute
LBH Surabaya	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surabaya,* Surabaya Legal Aid Institute
LBI	*Lasjkar Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Labour Army
LDD	*Lembaga Daya Dharma Keuskupan Agung Jakarta,* Outreach Institute of the Jakarta Archdiocese
LIPS	*Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane,* Sedane Institute for Labour Information
LPHAM	*Lembaga Pembela Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia,* Institute for Defence of Human Rights
LPSM	*Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat,* Organisation for the Development of Community Self-Reliance
LSM	*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat,* Community Self-Help Organisation
LSP	*Lembaga Studi Pembangunan,* Institute for Development Studies
Malari	*Malapetaka 15 Januari,* 15 January Calamity
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Association
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NIOG	*Nederlandsch-Indisch Onderwijzers Genootschap,* Association of Dutch Teachers
NKK/BKK	*Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan,* Campus Life Normalisation /Coordinating Body for Student Affairs
NOVIB	*Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand,* Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation
NVV	*Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen,* Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions
OPPI	*Organisasi Persatuan Pekerdja Indonesia,* United Indonesian Workers' Organisation
ORB	*Opium Regie Bond,* Opium Workers' Union
Ornop	*Organisasi non-pemerintah,* non-governmental organisation

P5	*Panitia Penasehat Pembantu Pegawai Partikelir*, Advisory Committee for the Aid of Private-Sector Workers
PARI	*Partai Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Republican Party
PBHI	*Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia*, Indonesian Legal Aid Association
PBI	*Partai Buruh Indonesia*, Indonesian Labour Party
PBJ	*Pelayanan Buruh Jakarta*, Jakarta Workers' Service
PBKA	*Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api*, Railway Workers' Union
PBN	*Partai Buruh Nasional*, National Labour Party
PBOH	*Perserikatan Beheerders en Onderbeheerders di Hindia*, Union of Indies Overseers
PBP	*Perhimpunan Bumiputra Pabean*, Custom Officers' Union
PBST	*Persatuan Buruh Spoor dan Tram*, United Tram and Rail Workers' Union
PDI	*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian Democratic Party
PFB	*Personeel Fabrieksbond*, Sugar Factory Workers' Union
PGI	*Persatuan Gereja Indonesia*, Indonesian Communion of Churches
PGAS	*Persatuan Guru Ambachtsschool*, Ambachtsschool Teachers' Association
PGHB	*Perserikat Guru-Guru Hindia Belanda*, Netherlands Indies Teachers' Union
PGRI	*Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Teachers' Association
PKI	*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, Indonesian Communist Party
PMK	*Pelayanan Masyarakat Kota Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, Urban Community Mission of the Batak Protestant Christian Assembly
PNI	*Partai Nasionalis Indonesia*, Indonesian Nationalist Party
POB	*Persatuan Organisasi Buruh*, Union of Workers' Organisations
Pondokan	*Yayasan Pondok Rakyat Kreatif*, Creative People's House Foundation
PPBI	*Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*, Indonesian Centre for Labour Struggle
PPKB	*Persatuan Pergerakan Kaum Buruh*, Workers' Movement Union
PPMI	*Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslimin Indonesia*, Brotherhood of Muslim Workers
PPN	*Partai Pekerja Nasional*, National Workers' Party
PPP	*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United Development Party
PPP	*Persatuan Pegawai Perkebunan*, Plantation Workers' Association
PPPB	*Perserikatan Pegawai Pegadaian Bumiputera*, Native Pawnshop Workers' Union
PRD	*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*, Democratic People's Party
Profintern	Red International of Labour Unions
PSBI	*Pusat Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia*, Indonesian Labour Union Centre
PSI	*Partai Sosialis Indonesia*, Indonesian Socialist Party
PSOBSI	*Pusat Sementara Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, Temporary All-Indonesia Organisation of Labour Unions
PSP	*Partai Solidaritas Pekerja*, Workers' Solidarity Party

PSPSI	*Partai Solidaritas Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, All-Indonesia Workers' Solidarity Party
PSSI	*Persatuan Serikat Sekerja Indonesia,* Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions
PVH	*Persatuan Vakbond Hindia,* Federation of Indies Unions
PVPN	*Persatuan Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri,* Federation of Civil Servants' Unions
RC	*Radicale Concentratie,* Radical Concentration
Rengo	Japanese Trade Union Confederation
RUUK	*Rancangan Undang-Undang Ketenagakerjaan,* Draft Law on Manpower
RV	*Revolutionaire Vakcentrale,* Revolutionary Federation
SARBUMUSI	*Sarekat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia,* Indonesian Muslim Workers' Union
SBG	*Serikat Buruh Gula,* Sugar Workers' Union
SBII	*Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia,* Indonesian Islamic Labour Union
SBJ	*Serikat Buruh Jabotabek,* Greater Jakarta Labour Union
SBK	*Serikat Buruh Kerakyatan*, The People's Labour Union
SBM-SK	*Serikat Buruh Merdeka–Setia Kawan,* Solidarity Free Trade Union
SBR	*Serikat Buruh Regional,* Regional Labour Union
SBRI	*Serikat Buruh Rokok Indonesia,* Indonesian Tobacco and Cigarette Workers' Union
SBSI	*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, Indonesian Prosperous Trade Union
SBT	*Typografenbond/Serikat Buruh Tjitak*, Printers' Union
SDAP	*Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij,* Social-Democratic Workers' Party
SEKBER BURUH	*Sekretariat Bersama Perjuangan Buruh Pelaksana Trikora,* Joint Secretariat of the Workers Struggle for the Return of West Irian
SGBI	*Sindikasi Gerakan Buruh Indonesia,* Indonesian Labour Movement Syndicate
Sisbikum	*Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum,* Channel for Social Information and Legal Guidance
SKBI	*Serikat Kaum Buruh Indonesia,* Union of Indonesian Workers
SMID	*Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi,* Indonesian Students in Solidarity for Democracy
SOB Pantjasila	*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Pantjasila,* Federation of Pancasila Workers' Organisations
SOBRI	*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Republik Indonesia,* Central Organisation of Indonesian Workers
SOBSI	*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Organisation of Labour Unions
SOKSI	*Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia*, Central Organisation of Indonesian Socialist Workers
Solidaritas Perempuan	*Solidaritas Perempuan untuk Hak Asasi Manusia,* Women's Association for Human Rights
SPP	*Serikat Pegawai Percetakan,* Printing Workers' Union
SPPI	*Serikat Pegawai Pelikan Indonesia,* Indies Oil Workers' Association

SPPL	*Serikat Pegawai Pelabuhan dan Lautan,* Port and Marine Workers Union
SPSI	*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Workers' Union
SPTP	*Serikat Pekerja Tingkat Perusahaan,* Enterprise Union
SSBOND	*Staatspoorbond* (SS Bond, Railway Workers' Union)
TMII	*Taman Mini Indonesia Indah,* Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park
VIPBOW	*Vereeniging van Indiesch Personeel Burglijke Openbare Werken,* Union of Native Public Works Employees
VSTP	*Vereeniging van Spoor-en Tram Personeel,* Railway and Tram Workers' Union
VVL	*Verbond van Landsdienaren,* Federation of Government Employees
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WTO	World Trade Organization
YAKOM	*Yayasan Komunikasi,* Communication Foundation
YAKOMA	*Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat,* Social Communication Foundation
Yasanti	*Yayasan Annisa Swasti,* Independent Women's Foundation
YBK	*Yayasan Bina Karya,* Work Guidance Foundation
YBM	*Yayasan Buruh Membangun,* Foundation for Labour Movement
YFAS	*Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera,* Justice and Welfare Forum
YKTI	*Yayasan Tenaga Kerja,* Indonesian Manpower Foundation
YLBHI	*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia,* Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation
YMB	*Yayasan Maju Bersama,* Foundation for Mutual Progress
YPM	*Yayasan Perempuan Mardika,* Free Women Foundation

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines NGOs' position in the Indonesian labour movement from an historical perspective, crossing the disciplines of labour history and industrial relations. It argues that while NGOs acted as classical labour intellectuals in late New Order Indonesia (1989-1998), recognition of that role was circumscribed by prevailing definitions of the labour movement. The study makes a case for redrawing the traditional boundaries of that movement to incorporate other types of organisations concerned with labour. Although it focuses on NGOs that dealt with industrial labour in the specific context of Indonesia in the final decade of the twentieth century, its findings suggest that a similar argument could made about other non-traditional labour movement organisations that deal other groups of workers, such as people employed in the informal sector or overseas migrant labour.

The structure and methodology of the study are informed by Foucault's notion of a 'history of the present' and Hyman's call to interrogate the 'criteria of significance' on which analyses of industrial relations are based. The thesis examines how definitions of 'organised labour' and 'the labour movement' were historically constructed to exclude intellectuals and non-union organisations. It does so in order to explain why labour NGOs were considered 'outsiders' in the present. The thesis compares accounts of labour history written under the New Order (1967-1998) with those written during the post-Independence period (1945-1965), demonstrating that New Order labour history was a victor's history, written to emphasise the working-class composition and the apolitical nature of 'true' labour unions. It then examines two phases in development of labour NGOs: the eight years between 1991, when labour NGOs launched their first major campaign, and 1998, when President Suharto fell from power; and the three years immediately following Suharto's resignation. The developments in the early post-Suharto period (1998-2001) brought tensions between NGOs' participation in the labour movement and position as non-worker outsiders into sharp relief, demanding we question whether the union-centred definitions of the labour movement reflect the contemporary realities of organised labour in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PRELIMINARY NOTES

Treatment of Interview Data

Interview data was collected during three periods of fieldwork between 1999 and 2001. Semi-structured interviews were recorded in Indonesian then transcribed. Interviews with NGO activists lasted between one and two hours. Interviews with workers generally took between fifteen minutes and half an hour. Most workers interviewed had some previous or ongoing involvement with a labour NGO; workers' level of contact with the NGO varied from a single training workshop to fulltime volunteer involvement. A small number of workers who had no contact with labour NGOs were interviewed during factory visits. Full and frank interviews were granted on the condition of anonymity. A list of the organisations with which NGO activists interviewed were associated is included in the bibliography. However, references to interview data are coded in order to protect respondents' anonymity. In cases where the identity of a respondent is revealed, specific permission was sought.

Primary Sources

Archival materials were sourced primarily from the Indonesian National Archives (ANRI), the private archives of Koeswari, the private collection of Dr Jan Elliott, and the Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project microfiches held in the University of Sydney Library. Other historical sources were gathered from the National Library of Indonesia, the National Library of Australia and the Australian National University. During fieldwork, a large number of NGO publications, pamphlets and other records were collected. Although these materials are only included in the bibliography if they are referred to in the thesis, they were an invaluable tool in the cross checking of interview data. Some sections of the thesis rely heavily on newspaper clippings. Most of these clippings were sourced from the labour newspaper clipping service, *Problema*. *Problema* was funded by the *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung* and compiled by *Yayasan Buruh Membangun*, one of the labour NGOs interviewed for this study, from 1991 to 2000. *Problema,* which was designed for

distribution to worker activists, NGOs and other interested parties, was published monthly in an A4 booklet which by the mid-1990s contained 60 pages per month. Not every labour-related article published in the papers surveyed was included because of space limitations, and some papers were relied on more heavily than others. Nevertheless, articles were included on the wide range of labour-related subjects. It should be noted that it proved impossible to obtain a small number of issues, despite assistance from YBM and FES. Furthermore, as *Problema* was temporarily banned in early 1995, some months were not covered by the service in that year. Quotations from clippings are used in this thesis to illustrate common features of the newspaper coverage of the nature of trade unionism and the role of NGOs. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive summary of that coverage.

Translations

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Indonesian material are my own. Quotations from interviews were translated as literally as possible, except in the case of some institutional names for which an English-language equivalent exists. Significant terms are reproduced in the body of the translation for readers of Indonesian.

Spelling and Referencing of Indonesian Names

Modern Indonesian spelling is used in the body of the text. Where reference is made to historical sources, the spelling in the original is maintained. Where names have been spelt in more than one way in different sources, the modern Indonesian version is used except in the case of Sukarno and Soekarno, where the former is used to refer to the first president of Indonesia and the latter to the trade unionist. Indonesian names are constructed and used in a variety of ways. The English-language convention of citing an author's final name has been adopted in this thesis because many Indonesian scholars and activists publish in English as well as Indonesian. For consistency's sake, that convention was extended to other Indonesian names.

Published Material

A considerable amount of the material in this thesis was included in articles written and published during my doctoral candidacy. My analysis of Indonesian Industrial Relations, which grew out of my Honours thesis, was published as "Testing the Limits of Corporatism: Reflections on Industrial Relations Institutions and Practice in Suharto's Indonesia." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 41, No. 3 (1999): 371-192. The sections of that article included in the Introduction and in Chapter One were developed during my PhD candidacy. Drafts of parts of the Introduction were published in "Challenging the Criteria of Significance: Lessons from Contemporary Indonesian Labour History." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 47, No. 1 (2001): 100-113 and "Manfaat Pendekatan Sejarah Dalam Studi Hubungan Industrial Dan Gerakan Buruh Kontemporer." *Jurnal Analisis Sosial* 14 (2002): 135-145. The substance of the first part of Chapter One was addressed in a paper published in the refereed proceedings of the twentieth AIRAANZ Annual Conference in Melbourne in February 2003. Parts of Chapter Two were developed in "Responses to Changing Labour Relations: The Case of Women's NGOs in Indonesia." In *Globalisation and Women's Labour in Asia*, edited by D. Gills and N. Piper. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Finally, drafts of parts of Chapter Eight were published in "Research Note: Indonesian Trade Union Developments since the Fall of Suharto." *Labour and Management in Development* 1, No. 3 (2000): 1-10 and "Continuity and Change in Indonesian Labour Relations in the Habibie Interregnum." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 28, No. 2 (2000): 59-88.

INTRODUCTION

Labour NGO as Outside Intellectual

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are organisations more readily associated with the distribution of development aid, human rights and concerns such as the environment, identity and feminism than with factory workers. Yet in Indonesia these non-worker, non-union organisations endeavoured to represent factory workers' concerns using techniques acquired through international NGO networks and funds from overseas donors. Some concentrated on grassroots organising and worker education; others provided legal aid, or publicised labour issues domestically and abroad. In the eyes of many—including most labour NGO activists—these NGOs came to be the 'voice' of labour at a time when workers' own voices could not be heard.

This study examines NGOs' role in the Indonesian labour movement. At a theoretical level, it is concerned with the construction of ideas about labour representation, and the effects those ideas have on the practice of organised labour. These concerns are explored by examining two related empirical issues. The first is NGOs' relationship with industrial workers, labour unions and the state between 1991 and 2001. The second is the state's construction of labour history, which defined those relationships. The argument presented in this dissertation is three-fold. First, that Indonesia's labour NGOs were considered 'outside intellectuals' because they did not fit prevailing definitions of what is, and is not, a legitimate part of the organised labour movement. Second, that narrow union-based conceptions of the labour movement were historically determined in Indonesia by international paradigms of labour representation and the national politics of organised labour.[1] Third, that the ascendancy of these definitions affected both labour NGOs' ability to contribute to the labour movement, and the ability of scholars to assess that

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[1] In this thesis, 'union', 'labour union' and 'trade union' are used interchangeably as generic terms encompassing 'trade union', 'industrial union', 'enterprise union' and any other form of labour union.

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contribution. The study makes no attempt to privilege labour NGOs (or any other non-union organisational form) over unions. Rather, it sets forth a case for redrawing the traditional boundaries of the concept 'labour movement' to incorporate other types of workers and other types of organisations concerned with labour. By demonstrating that labour NGOs played an important role in the reconstruction of Indonesian trade union movement, it paves the way for labour NGOs' less union-like functions to be recognised as contributing to the labour movement in its broadest sense.

Indonesia has a long and rich history of organised labour. Efforts to mobilise workers have been documented since the late nineteenth century, and labour organisations played an important role in the nationalist movement in the late colonial period (to 1945) and under Indonesia's first President, Sukarno (1945-1967). Organised labour entered a new phase when Suharto's New Order seized power in 1966-67 after an attempted coup and the ensuing massacre of Indonesians associated with the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) and other leftist groups.[2] Building on the concepts of functional groups formulated during the Guided Democracy period (1959-1965), the New Order encouraged unionists who had survived the purges to establish the *Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (FBSI, All-Indonesia Labour Federation), a single peak body comprised of 21 industrial sector unions. State control of organised labour reached new heights after 1985, when *Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (SPSI, All-Indonesia Workers' Union) replaced FBSI. The first labour NGOs emerged between 1978 and 1985 in response to the increasing impotence of organised labour. By 1991, they had become the major proponent of independent workers' organisations.

Despite this long history, there are relatively few scholarly accounts of organised labour in Indonesia. This dissertation is the first full-length study of Indonesian labour NGOs, and the first systematic examination of New Order labour historiography. It is one of only a small number of studies which examine the relationship between labour NGOs and labour unions. Its conclusions may be

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[2]   Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-66: Studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990). See also Robert Elson, *Suharto: A Political Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The Guided Democracy period (1959-1965) was preceded by two periods in Independent Indonesia: the Republic (1945-1949), before the Dutch were defeated, then the 'liberal' period of 1950-1959.

relevant for students of organised labour in other developing countries, because Indonesia's labour NGOs emerged as part of a worldwide expansion in non-traditional labour activism.[3] Indonesia's labour NGOs did not always perform trade union-like functions; they organised groups traditionally considered 'unorganisable' by unions (such as migrant workers) and attempted to influence labour policy through advocacy, networking and research. However, like developing-country trade unions before them, they were influenced by internationally-accepted notions of how industrial labour is organised and by whom—notions that contradicted the practices of labour organising in late twentieth century Indonesia.

Hyman's concept of a 'criteria of significance' offers a useful way to explore why non-traditional labour movement organisations have been marginalised or ignored in analyses of organised labour in developing countries:

> Any account of the 'facts' of industrial relations rests on principles of inclusion and exclusion linked to (explicit or implicit) criteria of significance. Our language, classifying unique phenomena within general categories, embodies definitions of relevant similarity or difference.[4]

Hyman asked us to interrogate the criteria of significance upon which the discipline of industrial relations is built. In this study, his insight is applied to two different but related objects: the institution of organised labour as it has been constructed in Indonesia; and scholarly assumptions about that institution, and about organisations deemed to lie outside its boundaries. 'Institution' as it is used here does not refer to a union, or any other specific type of organisation. Rather it is used (after Foucault) to refer to a contemporary practice: in this case, what is described by scholars, unionists and the state as 'organised labour'.[5]

Although Hyman and Foucault came from disparate traditions, they proffered the same, central challenge: that scholars must look beyond the given to the possible

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[3]   The term 'developing countries' is problematic because—like 'industrialising countries'—it assumes a progression from 'underdeveloped'/'agrarian' to 'developed'/'industrialised'. It is used here because of its wide currency in the labour/industrial relations literature.

[4]   Richard Hyman, "Theory and Industrial Relations," *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 28, No. 2 (1994): 167.

[5]   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaelogy of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 250-253.

in order to understand social structures and knowledge. As Marsden argued, Foucault's attempt to 'demystify the category of the "real" by showing how objects of knowledge are constituted', where those objects are 'regulated forms of social relationships and, as such, also forms of experience' is of direct consequence for the study of industrial relations.[6] When scholars impose a structure of analysis on the institution of 'organised labour', they define the union as the 'object of knowledge'.[7] This object, by definition, excludes labour NGOs and other non-traditional forms of labour organisation. Labour NGOs' contribution to the labour movement cannot be accurately assessed unless that object is redefined.

Whilst Hyman located his critique in the present, Foucault demanded we look to the past. He advocated the writing of a 'history of the present', a history that seeks to understand a contemporary practice or 'institution' by exposing the processes through which it came into being.[8] Foucault's history is neither a study of history for its own sake, nor a means of identifying a trajectory to a different future. It is the history of a problem—a 'diagnosis' of the present, rather than an explanation of how that present emerged from the past. It is descriptive, not interpretative: an examination of the relationship between the 'sayable' and the 'visible' based on the premise that the way we write about the past shapes how we think about the present.[9] Foucault's history is a discontinuous history that seeks out and examines 'ruptures,

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[6]　Richard Marsden, "Marx, Realism and Foucault: An Enquiry into the Problem of Industrial Relations Theory." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 1993), 172-195, esp.181-182. See also Mario Moussa and Ron Scapp, "The Practical Theorizing of Michel Foucault: Politics and Counter-Discourse," *Cultural Critique* Spring (1996).

[7]　Organised labour itself is a problematic construction; however, engagement with that institution as a whole is beyond the scope of this study. For a discussion of the issues, see Marcel van der Linden and Jan Lucassen, *Prolegomena for a Global Labour History* (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 1999).

[8]　Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 367-373; Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1973); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Enquiry* 8 (1982). See also Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 7-22, 28-42; Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 37-61; Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods* (Sage: London, 1999); Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. G. Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gary Gutting, "Michel Foucault: A User's Manual," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. G. Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Christopher Kent, "Victorian Social History: Post-Thompson, Post-Foucault, Postmodern," *Victorian Studies* 40, No. 1 (1996); Jennifer Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, No. 2 (1999).

[9]　Kendall and Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, 4-5.

breaks, gaps, displacements, interruptions, thresholds and shifts'.[10] Yet as Bell has noted, these breaks are never complete because 'within the discontinuity there is "overlapping, interaction, and echoes" of what came before'.[11]

In this study, Foucault's methods are applied to one aspect of the institution of organised labour—the principles of inclusion and exclusion used to situate labour NGOs outside the category, 'labour movement organisation'. It is not structured as an orthodox 'history of the present'; it does not search for unrecognised interruptions in the history of labour in Indonesia. Rather, it challenges the New Order's emphasis on the schism between New Order unionism and what 'came before' by focusing on New Order labour historiography and on the contemporary 'problem' of 'labour NGOs'. The former involves the identification of a cluster of ideas about labour representation and an explication of how those ideas evolved. The latter shows how those ideas affected the way labour NGOs' contribution to the Indonesian labour movement was perceived by the state, labour NGO activists and workers.

No attempt is made here to replicate the wide-ranging accounts of the political economy of labour written by Hadiz and Kammen, or the detailed and systematic labour histories of Ingleson and Elliott.[12] Rather the study builds on the insights provided by these and other scholars to examine the labour NGO—an institutional 'actor' whose contribution to the organised labour movement has yet to be fully analysed. Finally, it should be noted that the study's empirical focus on statements about organised labour in no way seeks to deny the material circumstances in which those statements were made. Indeed, the cumulative effect of those statements is analysed precisely because they shed light on the substance and interpretation of labour relations in late twentieth century Indonesia.

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[10] Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 11.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Vedi Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); John Ingleson, *In Search of Justice: Workers and Unions in Colonial Java, 1908-1926* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986); Jan Elliott, "Bersatoe Kita Berdiri Bertjerai Kita Djatoeh [United We Stand Divided We Fall]: Workers and Unions in Indonesia: Jakarta 1945-1965." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of New South Wales, 1997); Douglas Kammen, "A Time to Strike: Industrial Strikes and Changing Class Relations in New Order Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cornell University, 1997).

Analysing the Role of Indonesian Labour NGOs

On Saturday 5 February 2000, a mass meeting was held in an industrial suburb of Greater Jakarta.[13] Over 400 women and a handful of men were crammed into a rented building. They were workers from an export garment factory producing leisurewear for a well-known multinational corporation, who had gathered after finishing their shift. The workers sat patiently in the stifling humidity, waiting for the small group standing to one side of the hall to address them.

Part of that small group had arrived earlier by car from a more salubrious suburb. They were better dressed than the shop stewards with whom they spoke. After a short time, they stepped back and the shop stewards (mostly men) began to address the assembled workers. They reminded the workers of the events leading up to the meeting, explaining that their company had been sold, and the new owners had asked workers to sign change-of-status forms before the old company had formally ceased to operate. In some sections of the factory, workers were forced to sign the forms immediately. In others, workers were permitted to take them home and read them before signing. By signing the forms, workers recognised the new owners as their employers and accepted certain changes in their terms and conditions.

Workers had been unhappy about the disparities in their treatment and about the proposed changes in their working conditions. A strike was held and union representatives met with management and officials from the Department of Manpower.[14] They made four demands: that workers must remain employees of the old company until it was officially closed, that they not be forced to sign the forms and not be punished for going on strike, and that negotiations continued. Management had given the workers until Monday 7 February to present a formal statement of their demands. Meanwhile, the company had continued to implement changes to the company structure, and workers' representatives had been visited in their homes by thugs sent by the company to 'encourage' them not to make trouble.

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[13] I attended this meeting during my second major period of fieldwork.
[14] Department of Manpower is the official Indonesian translation of *Departemen Ketenagakerjaan* (Depnaker), later *Departemen Ketenagakerjaan dan Transmigrasi* (Depnakertrans, Department of Manpower and Transmigration).

A low, angry mutter spread through the building. The organisers called the meeting to order and explained their proposed formulation of the demands to be presented to Management. After considerable negotiation, the meeting voted to accept the revised text. In a second vote, the workers agreed to stage another strike if the new company owners did not accept those demands by close of business the following Monday. The visitors were then asked to address the meeting. Although they had worked with the stewards days before the meeting to decide on the wording of the demands, they limited their speeches to words of encouragement to the strikers and their leaders. They congratulated the workers on the advances they had made since establishing a plant union, and spoke about how much easier it was for workers to organise since President Suharto had fallen from power in 1998. The meeting closed with a rousing rendition of a ballad about workers' struggles for their rights. The workers streamed out of the meeting hall. A small group remained behind with the meeting organisers and the visitors to plan their negotiation strategies.

At 5:00 pm on Monday 7 February 2000, the stewards sought out the labour activists who had attended the meeting two days before. The negotiations had failed, and the workers had gone on strike. One of the activists, a lawyer, sat down with the group and asked what had happened. Together they analysed why the unionists' negotiation attempts had failed. Management had tricked them into wasting time on small issues, and had confused them by accepting their demand that workers continue to be employed by the old company. The lawyer explained that they could avoid being tricked if one worker acted as an observer, then described strategies that could be used to redirect the negotiations if Management strayed from the issues at hand. She suggested that the unionists keep notes when meeting with Management, and ask company representatives to sign those notes so they could not later deny what they had said. The group then performed role-plays of different negotiation scenarios. Three days later, the unionists again met with the lawyer for advice. The strike was not yet over. They worked through the events of the previous three days and again revised their negotiation strategy.

These events were by no means extraordinary. Plant-level union organisers around the world consult labour activists from outside the factory for advice about strategy and tactics. The difference lay in the status and affiliations of those labour

activists. In most countries, shop stewards consult members of the trade or industry union to which they belong. In the 1980s and 1990s in Indonesia, they consulted labour NGO activists. Labour NGOs' role as the principal advocate for workers' rights during this period seemed to allow NGO activists, and the workers with whom they came in contact, to step beyond the constraints of traditional unionism. However, their position was inherently ambiguous. Although labour NGOs' support for labour was widely acknowledged in Indonesia, they were not recognised as a legitimate part of the labour movement. Rather, they were characterised as institutional 'outside intellectuals' that were, at best, a partial and temporary substitute for 'true' unions organised by workers, for workers. Labour NGO activists' implicit acceptance of the status of the union as the sole legitimate organisational vehicle of labour concerns, and of their own position as outsiders, was demonstrated when legislative and policy restraints on labour organising were significantly loosened after the end of the New Order in May 1998.[15] Although most did not abandon their interest in labour issues, they responded to the opening of new opportunities for independent unionism by pulling back from their dominant position in the labour movement. As independent unions multiplied in the early post-Suharto period, a minority of labour NGOs sought to establish an alternative role, either as individuals or as institutions, in the labour movement. However, the majority declared that NGOs must eventually stop performing the 'union functions' they had undertaken for more than a decade.

The role and position of labour NGOs cannot be described without reference to the system of industrial relations in which they emerged. New Order Indonesia (1967-1998) was an authoritarian, corporatist state that claimed to be based on the philosophy of *Pancasila*, a broad statement of ideals its proponents argued was indigenous to the Indonesian archipelago.[16] In New Order rhetoric, unions and the other institutions of industrial relations were not merely a means through which to

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[15] B.J. Habibie was President of Indonesia from May 1998 to October 1999, when Abdurrachman Wahid became President as a result of negotiations after the June 1999 General Election. Wahid was replaced by Megawati Sukarnoputri at the end of July 2001. The contemporary section of this study incorporates a discussion of labour during the Habibie and Wahid presidencies.

[16] The principles of *Pancasila*, loosely translated, are belief in Almighty God; respect for humanity; Indonesian unity; democracy guided by the principle of deliberation to reach a consensus; and the realisation of social justice. As their names suggest, both *Pancasila* Democracy and *Pancasila* Industrial Relations were theoretically based on the *Pancasila* philosophy.

moderate the relationship between labour and capital. They were the products of a specific, *Pancasila*-informed approach to the relations of production, a 'logical development' within the framework of the wider *Pancasila* 'Democracy'.[17] The New Order regime argued that interest groups were inseparable parts of an organic whole, whose interests were indivisible from those of the state. Government-defined interest group boundaries were promoted through the *Golongan Karya*, or functional groups, system.[18] In this system, each 'functional group' (such as women, workers or professionals) was represented by a single, state-sanctioned body, which, in theory, provided a dedicated channel through which that interest group's aspirations could be promoted. However, in practice this system suppressed rather than channelled interest group concerns—including the concerns of industrial labour.[19]

The New Order's narrow approach to industrial relations excluded workers from their nominal representative body and prevented them from organising meaningful alternatives within the *Pancasila* Industrial Relations system. Organised opposition was, by necessity, located outside officially recognised structures. The process of creating alternative organisational vehicles for workers' discontent gained momentum after the introduction of the single-union policy in 1985. Despite growing worker unrest in the early 1990s, institutional controls on labour representation and the direct repression of worker activists succeeded in preserving a significant gap between movement and organisation.[20] It was in this context that labour NGOs

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[17] Cosmas Batubara, *Manpower Problems and Policy in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Manpower, 1991), 77. See also Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional, *Analisa dan Evaluasi Hukum Tidak Tertulis Tentang Hukum Kebiasaan di Bidang Hukum Perburuhan Sejak Tahun 1945* (Jakarta: Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional, Departemen Kehakiman, 1994), 11-12. For a detailed analysis of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, see Michele Ford, "Testing the Limits of Corporatism: Reflections on Industrial Relations Institutions and Practice in Suharto's Indonesia," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 41, No. 3 (1999); Michele Ford, "Pancasila Industrial Relations: The Philosophy, Institutions and Practice of Labour Relations under Indonesia's New Order." (B Asian Studies Honours Thesis, Australian National University, 1995).

[18] See David Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia: An Alternative to the Party System* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985); David Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Monash University, 1996). Organicism suggests that that society is like a single organism in which each 'functional group' contributes to the wellbeing of the whole. There is no room for conflict in this social model.

[19] See for example Andrew MacIntyre, *Organising Interests: Corporatism in Indonesian Politics* (Perth: Asia Research Centre, 1994); Mohtar Mas'oed, "The Indonesian Economy and Political Structure During the Early Years of the New Order, 1966-1971." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ohio State University, 1983).

[20] Much has been written about the waves of strikes that characterised the 1990s in Indonesia. For a detailed overview, see Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 124-173. See also Sri Kusyuniati, "Strikes

emerged as a major sponsor of organised opposition to the New Order's industrial relations system.[21]

Equally, the rise of labour NGOs cannot be divorced from an upsurge in NGO activity in Indonesia.[22] A number of older, service delivery oriented NGOs had operated in Indonesia for some decades. However, a new wave of more politically focused NGOs emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. These new NGOs acted as a mechanism through which affluent, educated, middle-class Indonesians could become involved in political and social activism.[23] At first, these NGOs couched their aims and activities in the language of development, as demanded by the political and legal contexts of the time. However, following the economic liberalisation of the mid to late 1980s, the end of the Cold War, and the ensuing period of *keterbukaan* (political 'openness') in Indonesia, NGOs changed their approach. Less oppressive conditions at home and strengthening connections between international aid and trade and human rights allowed NGO activists to be more direct about their agendas and more openly confrontational.[24]

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in 1990-1996: An Evaluation of the Dynamics of the Indonesian Labour Movement." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Swinburne University of Technology, 1998).

[21] As will be described in later chapters, radical student groups also played an important role in the reconstruction of the organised labour movement in Indonesia.

[22] For overviews of the growth of NGOs in Indonesia, see Philip Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995); Rustam Ibrahim, "Perkembangan LSM dan Pembangunan di Indonesia: Suatu Pengantar," in *Pengembangan Swadaya Nasional: Tinjauan ke Arah Persepsi yang Utuh* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1992); M.M. Billah and Abdul Hakim Nusantara, "Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat di Indonesia: Perkembangan dan Prospeknya," *Prisma* 17, No.4 (1988); M.M. Billah, Mufid Busyairi, and Helmi Aly, "Laporan Kunjungan Dialog tentang Visi, Masalah dan Paradigma Ornop di Indonesia serta Upaya untuk Mengatasinya," (Jakarta: Pokker CPSM, 1993); Rasmi and Ali Mustafa, "Laporan Hasil Survai Pemetaan Masalah LPSM-LPSM Indonesia," (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985); Mansour Fakih, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Social Transformation: A Participatory Inquiry in Indonesia." (Unpublished EdD Thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1995), 103-123; James Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below: The Changing Political Parameters of State-NGO Relations in Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cornell University, 1998), 136-171.

[23] Edward Aspinall, "Students and the Military: Regime Friction and Civilian Dissent in the Late Suharto Period," *Indonesia* 59 (1995): 30-33; Mohtar Mas'oed, "Restrukturisasi Masyarakat oleh Pemerintah Orde Baru di Indonesia," *Prisma* 18, No.7 (1989); Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." 139.

[24] For accounts of the links between developments in the military and *keterbukaan* see Max Lane, *'Openness', Political Discontent and Succession in Indonesia: Political Developments in Indonesia, 1989-91* (Brisbane: Griffith University, 1991), 28-50 and Aspinall, "Students and the Military," 25. For a description of international pressures at the time see David Bourchier, "Totalitarianism and the 'National Personality': Recent Controversy about the Philosophical Basis of the Indonesian State," in *Imagining Indonesia: Cultural Politics and Political Culture*, ed. Jim Schiller and Barbara Martin-Schiller (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies,

Changes internationally and in Indonesia provided NGOs with an opportunity to move beyond the provision of basic services, but the speed with which they multiplied was also an indication of continuing repression.[25] As Riker and others have noted, the constraints on unions, student groups and political parties meant that NGOs were one of few possible independent organisational forms available to social activists in New Order Indonesia.[26] The fact that the regime attempted to control NGO activity without banning a number of very critical NGOs indicated that it recognised the links between international human rights organisations, domestic NGOs and Indonesia's diplomatic and trade relations.[27] As Edi Sudradjat (then Minister for Defence and Security) complained to a student group in 1994, 'NGOs package domestic issues for international consumption…They can influence international relations because they are extremely active in internationalising issues and shaping public opinion'.[28] Meanwhile, according to Hartono (then Head of the Armed Forces' Socio-Political Division), NGOs 'sought to increase their influence on a number of levels of society with the aim of undermining the authority of the government and ABRI [*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia,* Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia]…by using universal themes such as democratisation,

1997), 174. and Arief Budiman, "From Lower to Middle Class: Political Activities Before and After 1988," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), 234.

[25] Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." 53-55.

[26] Ibid. Riker argued that the relationship between NGOs and the New Order regime was more conflictual than government-NGO relations in other South and Southeast Asian countries. See also Mas'oed, "Restrukturisasi Masyarakat oleh Pemerintah Orde Baru di Indonesia." For an overview of NGOs in Asia see James Riker, "Reflections on Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development," in *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer, James Riker, and Antonio Quizon (London: Macmillan, 1995); Shinichi Shigetomi, ed., *The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002); "GO-NGO Relations in 6 Asian Countries," *Lokniti* 7, No. 2 (1991). For an account of the trajectory of NGO development in Thailand, see Gawin Chutima, "Thai NGOs and Civil Society," in *Civil Society in the Asia-Pacific Region*, ed. Isagani Serrano (Washington: Civicus, 1994).

[27] Kusyuniati cited a report that the Department of Internal Affairs closed between 10 and 30 NGOs per year in the mid 1990s because of their involvement in illegal activities. Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 309. However, while the labour NGO activists I interviewed described incidents of government harassment, and even incarceration, they did not mention any cases in which labour NGOs had been ordered to close permanently.

[28] Edi Sudradjat quoted in "Menhankam Mensinyalir Ada LSM Mengemas Isu untuk Menekan Negara," *Kompas*, 30 September 1994.

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openness and human rights'.[29] Labour NGOs were afforded organisational space by bans on independent unionism: they could access that space because international pressure protected them from the full force of government repression. Meanwhile, discursive space was made available by the framing of labour rights as human rights in the contemporary international discourse of 'universal themes' referred to by Hartono.[30]

The final factor to consider in the analysis of these labour NGOs is the position of intellectuals in Indonesian society. In Indonesia, as elsewhere, 'intellectual' is a modern concept that 'caught on…because it crystallized an inchoate comprehension of a new phenomenon', and which has served as one of a series of 'map-words' outlining the new dimensions of the social world.[31] The term 'intelligentsia' emerged in mid-nineteenth century Russia, where it referred to systemic opposition by the educated strata, while 'intellectual' was first widely used as a noun in France during the Dreyfus affair of 1896–1898.[32] For liberal theorists of intellectualism, in the tradition of writers such as Julien Benda, intellectuals are heralded for their ability to distance themselves from the fray, to possess and guard independent judgment, and to be untainted by practical objectives or self-interest.[33] For others, the intellectual is 'a modern Moses' with a 'sense of mission…intrinsic to [his/her] consciousness'.[34]

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[29] Hartono quoted in "Kassospol ABRI: Waspadai LSM yang Ingin Rongrong Pemerintah dan ABRI," *Kompas*, 7 November 1994.

[30] See for example Amnesty International, *Indonesia, Labour Activists Under Fire* (New York: Amnesty International USA, 1994); Asia Watch, "Workers Rights: Getting the Worst of the Deal," *Inside Indonesia*, December 1987.

[31] Daniel Bell, *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys 1960-1980* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: ABT Books, 1980), 121.

[32] For an historical overview of the study of intellectuals see Ron Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics: Intellectuals in Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); Jeremy Jennings and Tony Kemp-Welch, "The Century of the Intellectual: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie," in *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie*, ed. J. Jennings and A. Kemp-Welch (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Seymour Lipset and Asoke Basu, "The Roles of the Intellectual and Political Roles," in *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals: Theory, Method and Case Study*, ed. Aleksander Gella (London: SAGE, 1976).

[33] Julien Benda, *The Betrayal of The Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

[34] Feuer noted the prominence of this understanding of the intellectual in the United States of America in the early 1900s. Lewis Feuer, "What is an Intellectual?," in *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals: Theory, Method and Case Study*, ed. Aleksander Gella (London: Sage, 1976), 50.

Budiman has argued that traditional Javanese concepts of power were most compatible with Benda's notion of an absence of personal interest in politics.[35] However, Dutch-educated intellectuals came to be strongly associated with the nationalist movement and other social causes in the early twentieth century in Indonesia.[36] Feith noted the development of two discrete groups of intellectuals after independence in 1945.[37] The first consisted of those 'working on the edges of the political arena…who addressed themselves mainly to narrow audiences of highly educated people in the cities', while the second consisted of intellectuals attached to the political parties.[38] Intellectuals were officially once more defined as being impartial and detached in New Order Indonesia. However, the tradition of the activist-intellectual continued amongst some academics and university graduates.

Indonesian concepts of the intellectual were linked to ideas about leadership and education (particularly Western-style education) during the late colonial period and after Independence.[39] Indeed, a Western education was a 'primary criterion defining membership in the elite' throughout the twentieth century.[40] Selosoemardjan

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[35] Arief Budiman, "Student as Intelligentsia: The Indonesian Experience," in *The Role of the Intelligentsia in Contemporary Asian Societies*, ed. S.N. Ray and Graciela de la Lama (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 1981), 221-223.

[36] For a general introduction to the New Order which extends to 1998, see Michael Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto: The Rise and Fall of the New Order*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

[37] According to Feith, 'ideational work…played a disproportionately great role' in Indonesia in comparison to other independence movements in Asia and Africa. Herbert Feith, "Introduction," in *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, ed. H. Feith and L. Castles (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), 2. For Sukarno's comments on the role of the intellectual in the nationalist movement and his criticism of intellectualism and 'textbook-thinking [English in the original]', see *Pidato-Pidato: Presiden Soekarno; Menteri Pertama Djuanda; Menteri Distribusi Dr J. Leimena; Menteri Produksi Brigadir Djenderal Suparjogi Didepan Para Mahasiswa Tanggal 27 Djanuari 1960 di Istana Negara* (Jakarta: Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia, 1960), 12-14; Sukarno, *To My People* (Yogyakarta: Guntur, 1948).

[38] Feith, "Introduction," 4-7.

[39] In many texts, authors used the term *terpeladjar* (the educated) as the Indonesian translation of intellectual. See for example Proleter Indonesia, *Kesanalah! Kaoem Sosialis Revolusioner* (Proleter Indonesia, 1946); Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia* (Djakarta: Badan Penerbitan Dewan Nasional SOBSI, 1958), 59. See also Frederick's notes on the use of *kaum terpelajar* and the importance of Western education. William Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988), 36.

[40] R. William Liddle, *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 71. See also John Legge, *Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Melbourne: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 115-120. For an attempt to redefine the Indonesian intellectual to include 'persons who are primarily engaged in the acquisition, observation and examination of ideas and…in the creation of new ideas to further the development of the culture' who are not Western-oriented (for example, Muslim scholars), see Harsja Bachtiar, "The Role of Intellectuals in Indonesia" (paper presented

described Indonesians' historically synonymous use of 'graduate' and 'intellectual' as follows:

> Large sectors of the population…believe that a university diploma is a guarantee of supremely trained intellect, and therefore supersedes all other faculties in society. In fact, it can even be said without exaggeration that a university degree in modern Indonesian social life functions in the same way as the now desocialized aristocratic titles before the 1945 revolution.[41]

The synonymous use of 'educated person' and 'intellectual' was reflected in official discourse. In a speech given by Mohammad Hatta in 1966 to a group of new graduates, for example, he explicitly identified the intelligentsia as the graduates of universities and institutes of higher learning.[42] Exhorting his audience to fulfil their 'special duties' as members of the intelligentsia, Hatta noted that intellectual leadership has also long been accorded a special place in Indonesian history, in the nationalist movement, through the *Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge) of 1928, and in the 1945 Revolution.[43] Hatta hoped those present would continue that tradition by devoting their full energy to national development.[44] For, Hatta argued, 'As long as

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at the Workshop on Trends in Indonesia II, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1981), 77-78.

[41]   Selosoemardjan noted also that public perceptions of the graduate as intellectual declined with the rapid increase in student populations and the shortage of employment opportunities in the mid 1970s. For this discussion and a periodised history of intellectuals' social role from the colonial period to the early New Order, see Selosoemardjan, "The Changing Role of Intellectuals in Indonesian National Development (A Socio Historical Interpretation)," in *The Role of the Intelligentsia in Contemporary Asian Societies*, ed. S.N. Ray and G. de la Lama (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 1981), 140-152. For an outline of the activities of intellectuals in general during the New Order period, see Angela Romano and Bambang Sulasmono, "Dinamika Aktivitas Kaum Intelektual di Indonesia," *Kritis* 10, No. 1 (1996): 12-17.

[42]   See Mohammad Hatta, *Tanggung Djawab Moril Kaum Inteligensia* (Penerbit Angkasa Bandung: 1966), 10. Mohammad Hatta, a moderate Muslim socialist, was Indonesia's first Vice President. More specific definitions of the intelligentsia were also common. In 1963, for example, the intelligentsia was defined in a dictionary of socialism as the 'educated members of the middle class', who were, in the Marxist literature, 'non-proletarians who also accept the position of the proletariat in the class struggle'. S. Surjo Untoro, *Ensiklopedia Sosialisme* (Surabaja: Ksatrya, 1963), 40.

[43]   *Sumpah Pemuda* was adopted at the Second National Youth Congress in Batavia. Under the pledge, the nationalist movement formally adopted the aim of having one people, one language and one nation. For an analysis of the significance of *Sumpah Pemuda,* see Keith Foulcher, "Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood," *Asian Studies Review* 24, No. 3 (2000).

[44]   Hatta, *Tanggung Djawab Moril Kaum Inteligensia*, 29-30.

the masses are still enveloped in darkness, it is the educated who must open their eyes to their rights as part of a free nation'.[45]

Students' nationalist credentials and status as a 'moral force' were reinforced in 1965–1966 when the student movement supported the establishment of the New Order.[46] However, unreserved student support for the New Order was shortlived. By the early 1970s, there were widespread student protests about New Order policy and the *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* (TMII, Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park).[47] Students again protested in January 1974 on the occasion of a visit by the Japanese Prime Minister, demanding the lowering of prices and an end to corruption. A number of student leaders were jailed after the riots of 15 January, which became known as *Malari* (*Malapetaka 15 Januari*, the 15 January Calamity).[48] Student protests peaked again in the months leading up to the 1977 elections and the convening of the People's Consultative Assembly in 1978.[49] Campus activism was then effectively marginalised from mainstream political life after the military occupied universities and independent student councils were abolished under the NKK/BKK program (*Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan,* Campus Life Normalisation/Coordinating Body for Student Affairs).[50] In response, some student activists began to form study groups or join

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[45] Ibid., 29.

[46] *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia* (KAMI, United Indonesian Student Action), a non-communist students' organisation, committed itself to the overthrow of the 'Old Order', orchestrating daily demonstrations on the streets of the capital. See Stephen A. Douglas, *Political Socialization and Student Activism in Indonesia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Budiman, "Student as Intelligentsia," 228-229.

[47] Edward Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule: The Case of Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Australian National University, 2000), 28. TMII was a controversial project supported by President Suharto's wife. For an extended discussion of TMII and the New Order's attempts to re-create an essentialised Javanese court culture in Indonesia, see John Pemberton, *On the Subject of 'Java'* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[48] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 28; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 290-291.

[49] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 28; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 291-293. Although student activism was actively marginalised after 1978, students maintained a special moral authority, as demonstrated by the glorification of their role in the overthrow of Suharto in 1998, when they were heralded as the primary force in his displacement.

[50] For an account of the student protests which led to this crackdown, see Budiman, "Student as Intelligentsia." See also Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 28, 161.

NGOs.[51] Many students who later became NGO activists had their first experience of organised dissent in the *Kedung Ombo* case in 1991, when a World Bank dam project became a focus for middle-class activism.[52]

It is not surprising, then, that some commentators have linked Indonesian NGOs with the traditions of *Boedi Oetomo* and *Sarekat Islam*—the organisations identified in New Order Indonesia as the intellectual pioneers of nationalism in the late colonial period.[53] NGO activists, too, recognised that their middle-class background and level of education made them part of the elite in the eyes of those with whom they worked.[54] Indonesia's NGOs were spread across a wide ideological spectrum, but most had concerns about the effects of development on the poorer members of society—as did many other middle-class activists in the late 1980s and 1990s. As Heryanto, amongst others, has observed:

> 'Empowering the powerless' [became] a common aim of many NGOs, lawyers, human rights activists, journalists, and socially committed artists. Peasant resistance to the Kedong Ombo dam project, protest at the death of Marsinah, and worker protest in Medan are only a few examples of such alliances that have gained impressive success and international fame...[55]

Hewison and Rodan have argued, with reference to Southeast Asia generally, that NGOs provided 'space for ideological debate'—a task traditionally performed by the

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[51] For a description of students' increasing involvement in NGOs, see Aspinall, "Students and the Military"; Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 30-33; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 286-296. Student protest re-emerged in the late 1980s. See Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 164-195.

[52] See Stanley, *Seputar Kedung Ombo* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat, 1994); Diah Purnomowati, "Dari Kedungombo Sampai Bituni," *Tempo*, 4 May 1991.

[53] *Boedi Oetomo* (Noble Endeavour) was a conservative association founded in 1908 to promote the study of Javanese culture. *Sarekat Islam* (earlier *Sarekat Dagang Islam*) was founded in 1909 as an association of Muslim batik traders. In 1912, it changed its name and adopted a broader program. Commentators who have made this comparison include Kastorius Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia: A Study of the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Development Process* (Saarbrucken: Bielefield University, 1994), 81; Muhammad Hikam, "Non-Governmental Organizations and the Empowerment of Civil Society," in *Indonesia: The Challenge of Change*, ed. R Baker, et al. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 218; Ibrahim, "Perkembangan LSM dan Pembangunan di Indonesia," 142; Billah and Nusantara, "Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat di Indonesia," 16-17; Rasmi and Mustafa, "Laporan Hasil Survai Pemetaan Masalah LPSM-LPSM Indonesia," 19. See also M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Dokter Soetomo: Pelopor LPSM?," *Prisma* 17, No.7 (1988).

[54] Kartjono, "Demokratisasi di Tingkat 'Grassroots'," *Prisma* 17, No.6 (1988):30.

[55] Ariel Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development'," *Indonesia* 46 (1988): 263-264. See also Aspinall, "Students and the Military," 33.

Left.[56] However, as Heryanto also remarked, cross-class alliances remained decidedly *ad hoc* in the late New Order period, not only because of state oppression and limited resources, but also because of class-related differences in lifestyles and values.[57] In fact, as Uhlin noted (citing an interview with a labour NGO activist), class divisions in Indonesia 'are so profound that people from the working and middle classes do not speak the same language'.[58]

An investigation of labour NGOs' position in the labour movement therefore requires an exploration of the relationship between labour intellectuals and workers. Writing in an Australian context, Irving and Scalmer defined labour intellectuals as actors within labour institutions who 'produce knowledge and manipulate symbols' for a 'labour public'. They distinguished labour intellectuals from other members of the labour movement by the nature of their work, and from other intellectuals by the (Habermasian) sphere in which they operate.[59] This definition is useful in describing labour NGOs' efforts to change workers' perceptions of their material conditions and their relationship with the state and capital in Indonesia. Eyerman's work on intellectuals is also relevant here, because he distinguished between the classical intellectual—found in both liberal and Marxist traditions—and a modern mode of intellectualism characteristic of 'more differentiated and literate, social context[s]'.[60] He argued that in societies where there is a relatively small gap between educated people and the masses, intellectuals provide a subtle illumination of social processes rather than propagating a new world view. These contemporary movement intellectuals are:

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[56] Kevin Hewison and Garry Rodan, "The Ebb and Flow of Civil Society and the Decline of the Left in Southeast Asia," in *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, ed. G. Rodan (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 63.

[57] Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development'," 263-264. See also Lane, *'Openness', Political Discontent and Succession in Indonesia: Political Developments in Indonesia, 1989-91*, 23. Marsinah, a labour activist, was killed after becoming involved in a strike in East Java in 1993. Her case is described in more detail in Chapter Two.

[58] Anders Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization': The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 117. See Chapters Six and Seven for evidence from fieldwork that supports this observation.

[59] Terry Irving and Sean Scalmer, "Australian Labour Intellectuals: An Introduction," *Labour History* 77 (1999): 2, 7.

[60] Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics*, 47, 198.

neither the déclassé visionaries claiming insight into the path of history who joined the newly forming working-class movements of the nineteenth century, nor are they their classically educated liberal counterparts armed with moral example and a notion of the progressive public, although traces of both can still be found. Today's movement intellectuals…[are] 'organic' intellectuals in the Gramscian sense, who, for the moment at least, appear to have rejected the privilege of being part of a new class formation…[61]

In contrast, the classical intellectuals of less developed societies (such as turn-of-the-century Russia) do 'not simply giv[e] voice, [they] giv[e] language, providing the very means through which insight is possible'.[62] In the early 1990s, Billah and his colleagues argued that Indonesian NGOs acted as organic intellectuals (after Gramsci).[63] Yet while NGO activists adopted the international language of partnership, in practice they remained as sharply defined against the 'masses' as the intelligentsia of nineteenth century Russia.[64] The classical mode of the intellectual as 'educator of the uneducated' thus continued to have the strongest resonance amongst the Indonesian NGO movement in general, and amongst labour NGOs in particular.

These three themes converged to define the position of labour NGOs in New Order Indonesia. The New Order state considered NGOs' involvement in labour to be acceptable when their activities remained within state-prescribed boundaries of NGO activity. However, their attempts to move beyond those boundaries brought them into conflict with the historically-defined 'institution' of organised labour, in

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[61] Ron Eyerman, "Intellectuals and Progress: The Origins, Decline, and Revival of a Critical Group," in *Rethinking Progress: Movements, Forces, and Ideas at the End of the 20th Century*, ed. Jeffrey Alexander and Piotr Sztompka (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 102. Gramsci proposed that any intellectual who promoted the interests of a movement or class was organic to it rather than an outside force. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 5-23. For other discussions of the Gramscian intellectual see Harvey Kaye, *The Education of Desire: Marxists and the Writing of History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 9-30; Anne Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1987). For a hostile reading of Marxian theories of the intellectual, including Gramsci's, see Neil Harding, "Intellectuals and Socialism: Making and Breaking the Proletariat," in *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie*, ed. J. Jennings and T. Kemp-Welch (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

[62] Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics*, 47.

[63] Billah, Busyairi, and Aly, "Laporan Kunjungan Dialog tentang Visi, Masalah dan Paradigma Ornop di Indonesia serta Upaya untuk Mengatasinya." See also Fakih, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Social Transformation." 29-47, 220-222. M.M. Billah is a high-profile NGO activist who submitted a Masters' thesis on the state's hegemonic control of labour. See M.M. Billah, "Strategi Pengendalian Negara Atas Buruh (Studi Awal Masalah Perburuhan di Indonesia Pasca 1965 Dari Perspektif Althusserian dan Gramscian)." (Unpublished Magister Ilmu Sosial Thesis, University of Indonesia, 1995).

[64] See Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

which there was no place for non-worker intellectuals. The expansion of opportunities in the early post-Suharto period brought this conflict into sharp relief. A close analysis suggests that although they disagreed on the role of labour NGOs, the New Order government and labour NGO activists shared a common conception of the 'institution' of organised labour. The New Order government promoted a system of industrial relations it claimed was based on the indigenous principles of *Pancasila.* Conversely, labour NGO activists claimed to be committed to universal principles of labour rights as human rights, as promoted by the international NGO community. However, this study demonstrates that both approaches were implicitly based on the model of unionism promoted by conservative international labour bodies—a model that offers no place for institutional non-worker intellectuals in the labour movement. As Joyce noted, citing Jameson, 'the dialogue of class struggle is (normally) one in which two opposing discourses fight it out within the general unity of a shared code'.[65] Likewise, debates about labour NGOs' legitimacy have taken place within a shared code about the role of intellectuals in the labour movement and the economic nature of unionism.

A History of the Present

New Order labour discourse incorporated two major constructs about intellectuals and unions which defined the position of labour NGOs: 'the economic union run by and for workers for their own welfare and the national interest' and 'the non-worker "outsider" who seeks to use labour for his/her own purposes'. Both were explicitly justified in terms of the 'lessons of history'.

As Legge has observed, reflecting on Indonesian historiography more generally, continuities and discontinuities are constructed by the observer and may serve different purposes.[66] Official interpretations of labour history in New Order

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[65] Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 96.

[66] John Legge, "The Contingent and the Unforeseen," in *Indonesia Today: The Challenges of History*, ed. G. Lloyd and S. Smith (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), 22. For an account of military historiography, see Katharine McGregor, "Claiming History: Military Representation of the Indonesian Past in Museums, Monuments and Other Sources of Official History from Late Guided Democracy to the New Order." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2002).

Indonesia emphasised the discontinuity between the labour movements of the 'Old' and 'New' Orders. Whilst New Order unions were characterised by their socio-economic focus and 'responsible' attitude, 'Old Order' unionism was deemed to have been 'subverted' from its economic and nationalist purposes by political parties, particularly the PKI, which 'betrayed' Indonesia and Indonesian workers. As Hadiz noted:

> In official interpretations of the pre-New Order labour movement, the 1950s and early 1960s are invariably depicted as a period during which anarchy prevailed, or during which senseless confrontation ensued between workers and employers. Though the 'liberal' and 'Guided Democracy' periods of Indonesian politics are often conflated in these interpretations, their aim, of course, is to suggest an unflattering contrast with the 'harmony' between capital, labour and the state which, it is said, predominates in the New Order.
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> A major target of criticism by this official orthodoxy is the fragmentation of the trade-union movement of the pre-New Order period as the result of the different political affiliations of the scores of unions then in existence… [Soekarno] for example, argues that the current institutional framework of organised labour represents a successful severing of 'ties' to particular 'politics and ideologies', which allows the trade-union movement to get down to the business of improving the economic welfare of its constituency.[67]

Hadiz argued that this 'official orthodoxy' failed to consider the context in which unions operated in order to 'repudiate the significance, in principle, of politically oriented workers' movements', whilst those proposing alternative labour histories have adopted the same narrative in order to emphasise the domestication of labour under the New Order.[68] Yet whilst he highlighted the need to question New Order

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[67] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 38. Note that Soekarno, a bureaucrat from the Department of Agriculture who became an FBSI official, is not to be confused with the first President of Indonesia. Like Trimurti and Semaun, his name was spelt in two different ways in the literature. In the 1977 and 1979 manuscripts, it was spelt 'Sukarno', according to the new system of Indonesian spelling. In the later English-language volume, it was spelt 'Soekarno'. I have used the older spelling to distinguish him from President Sukarno.

[68] Ibid. See Razif, *Sejarah Pemikiran Serikat Buruh Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, 1998); Dita Sari, "Buruh Indonesia Selalu Terus Melawan," *Prisma* 27, No.7 (1995); KOBAR, "Sejarah Pergerakan Kaum Buruh Indonesia." These 'alternative' labour histories highlighted the class aspects of national struggle rather than the nationalist role of unions in the first two decades after Independence, but remained silent on the strength and variety of unionism of the Old Order. In an interesting twist on the New Order's emphasis on the dangers of unions' connections with political parties, Razif pointed to the communist-aligned *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia's* (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Organisation of Trade Unions) declaration of non-alignment as the exception to a general pattern of union weakness resulting from their subordination to political parties. However, SOBSI, like the other unions

labour historiography, Hadiz ignored that same historiography in his discussion of labour NGOs. Rather than looking to labour history, he analysed labour NGOs' contribution to the labour movement in the context of the New Order's exclusionary system of authoritarian state corporatism alone. Based on such an analysis, it is clear—as Hadiz has indeed argued—that labour NGOs emerged as a reaction to the repression of independent unions and the suppression of political activism.[69] However, a close examination of the structures of New Order unionism, and the language in which those unions are described, indicates that many of the features of the New Order's labour doctrine, and consequently its response to labour NGOs, were inconsistent with the structures of exclusionary corporatism.

It is argued in this study that New Order concepts of the labour movement were as much shaped by international models of unionism as by *Pancasila* or the structural imperatives of its corporatist system.[70] More specifically, they were shaped by a century of debates about the merits of political unionism, the terms of which were based on the Lenin's and the revisionists' concepts about the relationship between labour intellectuals and workers' organisations imported by Dutch socialists at the beginning of the twentieth century.[71] Official prescriptions of what a union could be drew upon the legacies of the revisionists' belief that unions should concentrate on

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Razif named, had strong links to a political party. Conversely, many unions were officially unaligned in this period. In contrast, an anonymous history distributed by *Komite Buruh untuk Aksi Reformasi* (KOBAR, The Workers' Committee for Reform Action) celebrated the strength of the 'revolutionary forces' in the mid 1950s, but implied that SOBSI was the only labour union active in the period. For an NGO labour history which almost exactly reproduced the New Order's own labour histories, see Arist Merdeka Sirait, "Kronologi Sejarah Kelas Buruh dan Gerakan Perjuangan Serikat Buruh di Indonesia," (1999). For a scholarly account emphasising the socio-economic functions of unions in the 1950s and 1960s, see Elliott, "Bersatoe Kita Berdiri Bertjerai Kita Djatoeh [United We Stand Divided We Fall]."

[69] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*. See Chapter One for an overview of Hadiz's work on labour NGOs.

[70] Hadiz made a brief reference to the similarities between *Pancasila* Industrial Relations and 'Western-style trade unionism' when reporting on the split in *Serikat Buruh Merdeka-Setiakawan* (SBM-SK, Solidarity Free Trade Union), one of three alternative unions which emerged in the 1990s. 'Reflecting a concern for the independence of trade unions from the dictates of political forces (which ironically is found in both HIP [*Pancasila* Industrial Relations] and to a lesser extent in Western social-democratic trade unionism), Aritonang is adamant that a trade union must not serve as an instrument of political groups.' However, Hadiz does not explore the implications of that observation. Ibid., 147.

[71] The term 'revisionism' has never been precisely defined. It refers, in varying degrees, to writers who question various Marxist tenets from within Marxism. For biographical information on Bernstein and a description of revisionism see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*, trans. P.S. Falla, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 98-114.

workers' own concerns rather than being a tool of the revolutionary party. Meanwhile, the neo-revisionist theory of Selig Perlman demonstrates how the New Order's reversal of the Leninist position could be extended beyond the limits of traditional revisionism to reject not only the Leninist intellectual—the bourgeois transmitter of the science of socialism to the proletariat through the medium of the Party—but also non-revolutionary 'intellectuals', including human rights activists and labour NGOs. [72]

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is a cross-disciplinary study, which engages with both industrial relations and labour history. Its early chapters trace the history of New Order ideas about labour representation. As suggested previously, this part of the study does not incorporate a social labour history of a particular period of the kind written by Ingleson and Elliott, or the political labour history of Hadiz. [73] Nor does it resemble the century-long local labour history of Stoler. [74] Instead, it examines a single thread in Indonesian labour history in order to explore how the Indonesian 'institution' of 'organised labour' came to be constituted in such a way that it excluded the labour intellectual.

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[72] Although I do not accept Perlman's conclusions about the undesirability of intellectuals' involvement in labour movement organisations, his typology offers a useful way to describe different types of labour intellectuals.

[73] Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*; John Ingleson, "Urban Wage Labour in Colonial Java: The Growth of a Skilled Labour Force," in *Wage Labour and Social Change: The Proletariat in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. M. Pinches and S. Lakha, *Monash Paper on Southeast Asia No.16* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1987); John Ingleson, "Bound Hand and Foot: Railway Workers and the 1923 Strike in Java," *Indonesia* 31 (1981); John Ingleson, "Worker Consciousness and Labour Unions in Colonial Java," *Pacific Affairs* 54, No. 3 (1981); John Ingleson, "Life and Work in Colonial Cities: Harbour Workers in Java in the 1910s and 1020s," *Modern Asian Studies* 17, No. 3 (1983); John Ingleson, "Urban Java During the Depression," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19, No. 2 (1988); John Ingleson, "Labour Unions and the Provision of Social Security in Colonial Java," *Asian Studies Review* 24, No. 4 (2000); John Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 47, No. 1 (2001). Also Elliott, "Bersatoe Kita Berdiri Bertjerai Kita Djatoeh [United We Stand Divided We Fall]"; Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*.

[74] Stoler's 1995 preface gives a detailed account of the broad range of influences on her work, including both E.P. Thompson and Foucault. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), vii-xxxiv.

Having established the discursive context in which labour NGOs emerged, the study returns to the labour NGOs themselves. The remaining chapters contain an ethnographic exploration of labour NGOs' relationships with workers, unions and the state.[75] Data used in these chapters were drawn from a large number of semi-structured interviews and my reflections as an observer-participant in NGO-run worker and activist training sessions, strike meetings and factory visits during three discrete periods of fieldwork conducted in Java over three years.[76] These chapters show that labour NGOs acted as classical labour intellectuals, but described themselves as outsiders, using the revisionist ideas shared by the state.

Chapters One and Two provide the base on which the dissertation's argument is built. Chapter One reviews the literature on developing-country labour movements and labour NGOs. It suggests that union-based definitions of the organised labour movement have limited scholars' ability to account for NGO labour activism, and argues that the criteria of significance used to judge labour movement organisations must first be reassessed if NGOs' contribution to the labour movement is to be evaluated accurately. Chapter Two begins by distinguishing the activities of labour NGOs from the other middle-class attempts to modify the New Order's control of labour representation, noting that labour NGOs were qualitatively different from both student groups and alternative unions. It then describes NGOs' contribution to the

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[75] Ethnography is 'the focused attention to detail and process by assimilating the point of view of participants'. See Michael Burawoy, "Manufacturing the Global," *Ethnography* 2, No. 2 (2001): 148. Again, I am influenced here by Marsden's realist reading of Foucault in my choice of methodology in the second part of the study. As Marsden argued, rather than denying agency, Foucault encouraged an ethnographic exploration of the particular 'point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives'. Foucault quoted in Marsden, "Marx, Realism and Foucault: An Enquiry into the Problem of Industrial Relations Theory." 274. For a concise overview of ethnographic methodology, see David Walsh, "Doing Ethnography," in *Researching Society and Culture*, ed. Clive Seale (London: Sage Publications, 1998). For a useful reflection on the positionality of the Western, female researcher in ethnographic fieldwork, see Laura Adams, "The Mascot Researcher: Identity, Power, and Knowledge in Fieldwork," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28, No. 4 (1999).

[76] Initially, fieldwork in Sumatra was also planned. However, political conditions at the time the visits were scheduled made them impossible. I did meet representatives of one Medan-based labour NGO in Jakarta, with whom I continued contact using email. Interview data was supplemented by a systematic study of newspaper reports written between 1991-1998. Note that because my candidacy began three months after the fall of Suharto, my informants' opinions about conditions in the late New Order were almost certainly tempered by the events that followed. Where possible, I have consulted written documents produced by labour NGOs before 1998 and secondary sources in an attempt to mediate resulting bias in my interviews and observational data.

reconstruction of the labour movement in general terms, before providing a brief outline of the form and activities of the 25 labour NGOs surveyed for this study. The chapter identifies the role of grassroots and policy labour NGOs, and argues that the latter have been excluded from existing analyses because they do not perform 'trade union like' tasks.

Chapters Three and Four document the processes through which the institution of 'organised labour' was created in Indonesia. Chapter Three establishes the context in which Indonesian concepts of organised labour evolved. It begins by describing the Leninist and revisionist theories of the relationship between workers and intellectuals and the neo-revisionist work of Selig Perlman. Then, drawing on primary and secondary sources, it notes the extent to which Leninist and revisionist thought influenced Indonesian concepts of the union and the labour intellectual in the late colonial period (1905–1942) and the first two decades of Independence (1945-1965). Chapter Four begins by showing how *Pancasila* Industrial Relations promoted the neo-revisionist concept of 'pure and simple' unionism by combining a corporatist framework with revisionist rhetoric about unions by, for and of workers. Having established the context in which labour history was written in the New Order, a series of historical texts are then examined in detail. These texts are compared with corresponding accounts written before 1965 in order to demonstrate the continuities and the disjunctures between the historiography of the two periods. The chapter argues that New Order labour historiography, which was designed to justify the position of unions in *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, produced a 'victor's history' written in revisionist terms.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven return to the contemporary problem at the study's core: how the government, NGO activists themselves and workers perceived labour NGOs in New Order Indonesia. Chapter Five argues that the government did not accept labour NGOs as part of the labour movement because they lay outside the limits of New Order's definition of that movement. The chapter demonstrates that New Order definitions of unionism were shaped as much by neo-revisionist responses to Leninism as either *Pancasila* or corporatism, and shows how these definitions were used to set labour NGOs, student groups and alternative unions apart, as outside intellectuals who had no rightful place in the organised labour

movement. Chapter Six begins by showing that labour NGOs acted as classical, non-revolutionary labour intellectuals, whose place in the labour movement was defined by their class position and their status as 'outsiders'. It then explains the differences between radical student groups and NGOs in terms of Perlman's typology of labour intellectuals. It argues that while NGO activists and radical students alike acted as classical rather than organic intellectuals, student groups were driven by their revolutionary ambitions, but NGOs worked as ethical or efficiency intellectuals, promoting gradual social change. Chapter Seven explores NGO activists' and workers' perceptions of labour NGOs' purpose and position in the labour movement between 1991 and 1998 using data from interviews with representatives of those NGOs and with workers who have participated in NGO-run programs. The chapter emphasises the contradictions between labour NGO activists' position as non-worker outsiders and workers' demands that they be fully involved in the labour movement. It argues that worker activists' criticisms of labour NGOs indicate that while labour NGO activists were committed to revisionist principles, workers themselves were not. This demonstrates that the exclusion of non-worker intellectuals from the labour movement was artificial.

Finally, Chapter Eight examines the impact of changes in labour NGOs' role, and perceptions of that role, after the fall of Suharto. It traces the structural changes in labour relations during the Habibie and Wahid presidencies and describes the reactions of labour NGO and worker activists to those changes. The chapter argues that those reactions demonstrate the extent to which NGO activists were influenced by scholarly and institutional understandings of what constitutes the organised labour movement. This analysis adds weight to the claims made in this study that NGOs' role in the labour movement was determined as much by their commitment to international models of trade unionism as by their identity as NGOs or the New Order's exclusionary corporatist system of labour representation. This chapter, and indeed the study, concludes by suggesting an alternative path: that labour NGOs be recognised as labour movement organisations in their own right. It is argued that it is necessary to move beyond the model of NGOs as substitute unions if their contribution to the labour movement is to be fully recognised and understood.

CHAPTER 1

The Criteria of Significance

There was a global surge in non-traditional forms of labour activism in the last three decades of the twentieth century; as a result, the representation of labour's interests is no longer exclusively conducted by trade union organisations. International labour activism was traditionally the province of transnational labour bodies, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU); national union bodies, such as the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo); and trade union solidarity organisations, such as the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), the solidarity organisation of the Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).[1] In the final decades of the twentieth century, the anti-sweatshop movement and international NGOs that focus on labour or human rights promoted codes of conduct and other means to improve the rights of workers in developing countries, including Indonesia.[2] Within developing countries, a domestic form of labour NGO (sometimes called 'indigenous' NGOs) emerged. Although these small, locally staffed organisations vary significantly in form and function between and within countries, they share a commitment to the rights of workers and a heavy reliance on international NGO networks for funding and campaign support.

NGOs' contribution to the organised labour movement has not gone unnoticed. Labour NGOs and other non-traditional forms of labour organisation have been the

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[1] The ICFTU is an international organisation of social-democratic unions established in 1949. Its predecessors were the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU, 1912-1944) and the left-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU, 1945-1949). See Anthony Carew, "A False Dawn: The World Federation of Trade Unions (1945-1949)," in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Bern: Peter Lang/International Institute of Social History Amsterdam, 2000); Geert van Goethem, "Conflicting Interests: The International Federation of Trade Unions (1919-1945)," in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Bern: Peter Lang/International Institute of Social History Amsterdam, 2000). On international trade unionism generally, see Bart De Wilde, ed., *International Conference: The Past and Future of International Trade Unionism* (Ghent: International Association of Labour History Institutions/Amsab-Institute of Social History, 2000). ACILS was formerly known as the Asian-American Free Labor Institute, or AAFLI.

[2] Examples of these initiatives include Homenet, the Clean Clothes campaign and Nike Watch.

subject of empirical work in some national settings, including Guatemala, Mexico, Korea and the Philippines.[3] A considerable literature has also developed on the relationship between unions and labour NGOs.[4] In the Indonesian literature, a number of studies have dealt with labour NGOs either as substitute trade unions or a sub-category of human rights NGOs, although there remains little consensus about the significance, nature and purpose of NGOs' concern for labour. No attempt has been made to consider labour NGOs' role as labour movement organisations.

This chapter examines the criteria of significance that determined the scope of these literatures. It is divided into three parts. In the first, the labour NGO is defined. In the second, the international literature is reviewed in order to demonstrate that unions remain the primary object of study for scholars of developing-country labour movements. The third part of the chapter examines the literature on Indonesian labour NGOs. It argues that labour NGOs' contribution to the Indonesian labour movement cannot be accurately assessed unless labour NGOs are recognised as labour movement organisations in their own right.

The Labour NGO: A Definition

It should not be surprising to learn that labour NGOs have yet to be defined, as the term 'NGO' itself has no universally accepted meaning.[5] In its broadest sense, the

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[3] For details of labour NGOs in selected other countries, see AMRC, *Minju No-Jo, South Korea's New Trade Unions: The Struggle for Free Trade Unions* (Hong Kong: AMRC, 1987); M.L. Cook, "Regional Integration and Transnational Labor Strategies under NAFTA," in *Regional Integration and Industrial Relations in North America*, ed. M.L. Cook and H.C. Katz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Steven McKay, "The Squeaky Wheel's Dilemma: New Forms of Labor Organizing in the Philippines" (paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, DC, 4-7 April 2002); Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, "Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Organizing: The Guatemalan Maquiladora Industry and the Phillips Van Heusen Workers' Movement," *Latin American Perspectives* 26, No. 2 (1999); Heather Williams, "Mobile Capital and Transborder Labor Rights Mobilization," *Politics & Society* 27, No. 1 (1999).

[4] See for example Dan Gallin, *Trade Unions and NGOs: A Necessary Partnership for Social Development* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2000).

[5] David Korten, "Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centred Development," *World Development* 15, Supplement (1987); Anna Vakil, "Confronting the Classification Problem: Toward a Taxonomy of NGOs," *World Development* 25, No. 12 (1997); Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." See also Sheelagh Stewart, "Happy Ever After in the Marketplace: Non-Government Organisations and Uncivil Society," *Review of African Political Economy* 71 (1997); Jude Fernando, "A Political Economy of Non-Governmental Organizations in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1998), 9-15. See Chapter Two for further discussion of NGOs.

category 'NGO' includes a range of private, voluntary organisations (including mass associations such as trade unions) whose roots extend back into the nineteenth century. Generally, however, NGOs are understood to be part of a narrower, post-World War II phenomenon, first closely linked to the collection and distribution of development aid, then later to the promotion of human rights in developing countries.[6] More recently, some scholars have described some types of NGOs as the institutional vehicle of new social movement concerns outside the post-industrial contexts in which new social movement theory developed.[7]

Clarke, drawing on a survey of the literature on NGOs in Southeast Asia, defined NGOs as '*private, non-profit, professional organisations with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals*' (emphasis in the original). In this category, he included 'philanthropic foundations, church development agencies, academic think-tanks, human rights organisations and other organisations focusing on issues such as gender, health, agricultural development, social welfare, the environment and indigenous people'. In addition to 'private hospitals and schools, religious groups, sports clubs and…quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations', people's organisations (non-profit membership based associations, including trade unions) were excluded from Clarke's definition.[8] Writing in an

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[6] Korten's concept of 'generations' has been influential. See Korten, "Third Generation NGO Strategies"; David Korten, "LSM Generasi Keempat: Fasilitator Gerakan Kemasyarakatan," *Prisma* 17, No.4 (1988).

[7] See for example Ponna Wignaraja, "Rethinking Development and Democracy," in *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People*, ed. Ponna Wignaraja (London: Zed Books, 1993); T. Morris-Suzuki, "For and Against NGOs: The Politics of the Lived World," *New Left Review 2*, No. March/April (2000). While the 'old social movement' concerns of labour, land and nation are easily identifiable and widely theorised in the developing countries, the relationship between the manifestations of 'new social movement' concerns in developing countries and the body of theory which has developed around those concerns in the West is less clear. New Social Movement theory, which developed in Europe in the 1970s, was based on the premise that social movements in post-material societies were no longer centred around the material concerns of class, but on identity politics and alternative universalities such as gender, human rights and the environment. This body of theory was firmly located in the 'post-industrial' West and made no attempt to understand the developments in social movements in developing countries. By investing the moment for change in movements of identity and ecology, theorists of both the postmodernist and Frankfurt schools ignored the interactions between so-called new and old social movements in the developing world. See for example Louis Maheu, "Introduction," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, ed. L. Maheu (London: Sage, 1995); Alberto Melucci, "The New Social Movements Revisited: Reflections on a Sociological Misunderstanding," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, ed. Louis Maheu (London: Sage, 1995).

[8] Gerard Clarke, *The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 2-3.

Indonesian context, Riker noted the impreciseness of the term NGO, citing its status as a 'residual category' as an important factor in its indeterminacy. Like Clarke, he differentiated between NGOs, which he characterised as 'issue-oriented groups' (including groups focused on community development, consumer rights, the environment, women and human rights), and other parts of the voluntary sector, namely mass-membership 'functional groups' (including trade unions, sports clubs and cooperatives) and 'cultural and religious groups'.[9] Similar points of delineation applied for Aspinall, also writing about Indonesia. Aspinall noted that the category 'NGO' encompasses neither political parties nor mass organisations, and that whilst NGOs are located in the civic domain, and do not themselves seek formal political power, they are distinguished from other 'civil society' associations because they are task-oriented, have limited support bases, and have directors, staff and volunteers rather than members.[10]

NGOs can be international (usually headquartered in an industrialised country) or indigenous (operated in a developing country by citizens of that country).[11] Labour NGOs are part of global networks which in many ways parallel international trade union networks; these networks are a source of both financial and non-financial support for indigenous NGOs in developing countries.[12] As Fowler's schema of NGO funding showed, international NGO funding networks are extremely complex (Figure 1.1).[13] Many indigenous NGOs received financial assistance directly from the government aid organisations of industrialised countries and from international NGOs. Others were funded indirectly through larger indigenous NGOs, which themselves received direct funding from overseas sources. The importance of funding from the governments of industrialised countries to NGOs based in both

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[9] Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." 23-25.

[10] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 129-130.

[11] See for example Louis Kriesberg, "Social Movements and Global Transformation," in *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*, ed. Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997). Indigenous NGOs are better known in much of the NGO literature as 'Southern' NGOs.

[12] See Kendall Stiles, "A Rational Choice Model of Grassroots Empowerment," in *Global Institutions and Local Empowerment: Competing Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Kendall Stiles (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 2000); Peter Evans, "Fighting Marginalization with Transnational Networks: Counter-Hegemonic Globalisation," *Contemporary Sociology* 29, No. 1 (2000); Craig Paul Warkentin, "Framing a Global Civil Society: NGOs and the Politics of Transnational Activity." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1998).

[13] Alan Fowler, "Distant Obligations: Speculation on NGO Funding and the Global Market," *Review of African Political Economy* 55 (1992): 11.

industrialised and developing countries has been widely canvassed in the international NGO literature.[14]
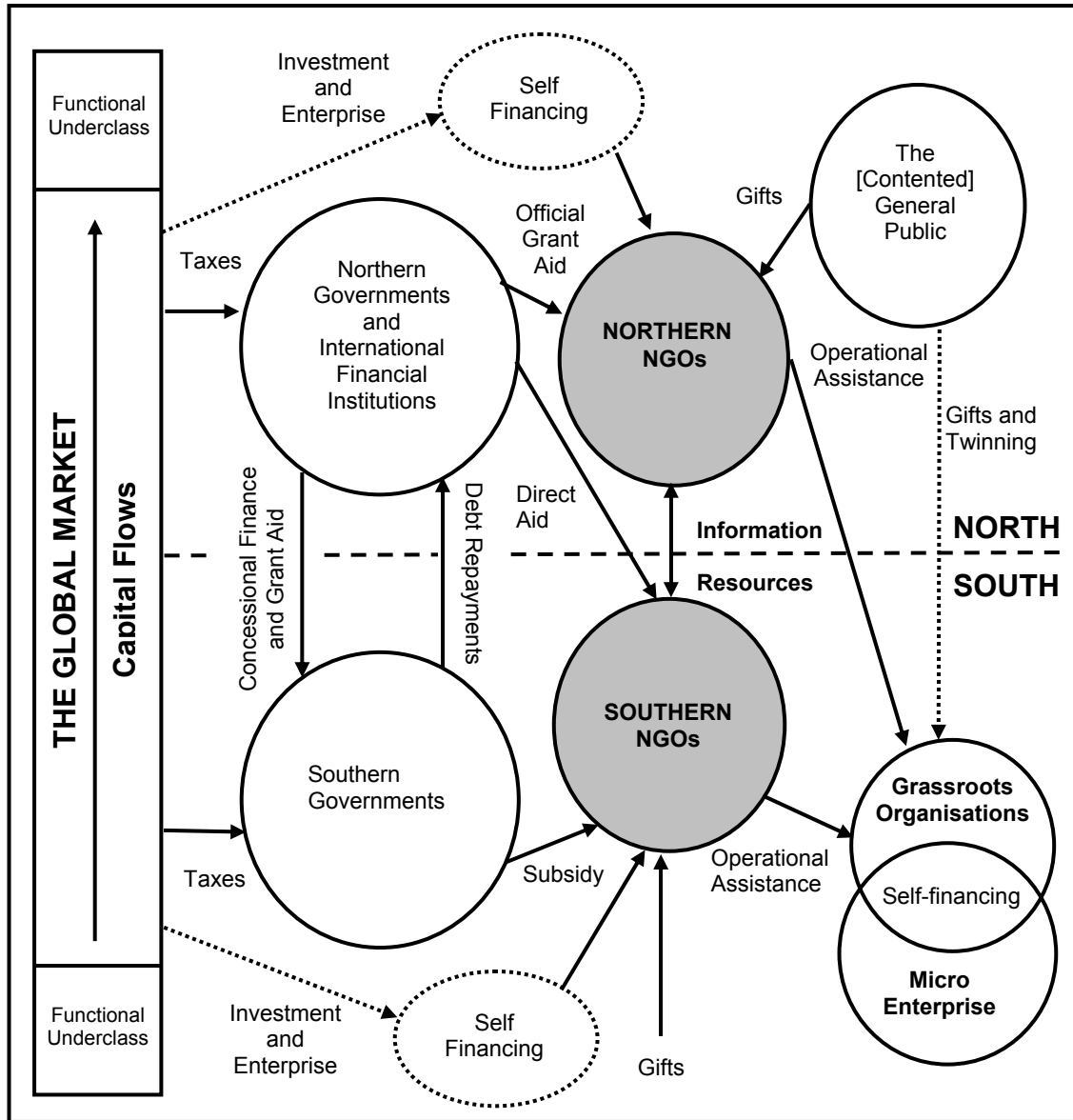
Figure 1.1 Fowler's Schema of NGO Funding Networks

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[14]   See for example Michael Edwards and David Hume, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organisations," *World Development* 24, No. 6 (1996); Fowler, "Distant Obligations"; Kamal Malhotra, "NGOs Without Aid: Beyond the Global Soup Kitchen," *Third World Quarterly* 21, No. 4 (2000); Henrik Marcussen, "NGOs, the State and Civil Society," *Review of African Political Economy* 69 (1996); Mike Powell and David Sneddon, "NGOs & the Development Industry," *Review of African Political Economy* 71 (1997).

There has been considerable criticism of the impact of international financial assistance on the objectives, activities and operation of NGOs in developing countries because the international donors who provided the bulk of indigenous NGOs' funding favoured particular frameworks of thought and action. Korten, for example, argued that permanent dependence on overseas funding has resulted in the rise of bogus NGOs, the cooptation of legitimate NGOs, a pattern of short-term, project-based commitments for long-term needs, the legitimation of donor policies and projects, the bureaucratisation of NGOs, and the imposition of barriers to self reliance and empowerment of people's organisations.[15] These concerns have been widely echoed in Indonesia.[16]

NGOs have fulfilled a range of functions related to labour in a range of very different national contexts. Many of these functions lay outside the traditional ambit of unionism. NGOs addressed work as part of workers' overall life experience, which enabled them to organise groups considered 'unorganisable' by unions—including overseas labour migrants, domestic and child labour, people employed in the informal sector and outworkers. However, in New Order Indonesia, most NGOs concerned with work in its broadest sense were not recognised as 'labour NGOs' (*LSM perburuhan/ornop perburuhan*).[17] The term *LSM perburuhan*—reflecting the narrow meaning of the word *buruh*—was reserved for the relatively small group of labour NGOs that sought to organise industrial workers.[18] Other labour NGOs, which supported industrial workers through legal aid, research or policy advocacy, were included in a broader group of NGOs, which were recognised as *LSM yang konsern terhadap buruh* (NGOs concerned about industrial workers). It is argued in this study that all NGOs which deal primarily or substantially with workers of any kind, no

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[15] David Korten and Antonio Quizon, "Government, NGO and International Agency Cooperation: Whose Agenda?," in *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer, James Riker, and Antonio Quizon (London: Macmillan, 1995).

[16] See for example Sebastian Saragih, *Membedah Perut LSM* (Jakarta: Puspa Suara, 1993).

[17] *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (LSM, Community Self-Help Organisation) was promoted by the government as the indigenous alternative to *organisasi pemerintah (ornop,* non-governmental organisation). The history of these terms is described in more detail in Chapter Five.

[18] *Buruh* means worker or labourer. It generally refers to blue-collar workers. NGOs that dealt with groups of workers not employed in the industrial sector used the appropriately qualified version of *buruh*, for example *buruh migran* (migrant labour), *buruh anak* (child labour), *buruh gendong* (porters) to describe those groups. However, these NGOs were not considered *LSM perburuhan*. See Chapter Five for a discussion of *buruh* and alternative terms available in Indonesia.

matter what their function, should be considered labour NGOs. The definition of what is—and is not—a labour NGO should not be determined by how union-like an NGO is.

The general features of NGOs described here suggest that labour NGOs can be delimited in an organisational sense from trade unions. Whereas trade unions are large membership-based organisations, labour NGOs are relatively small, task-oriented organisations that neither have, nor seek, mass-membership. Although the low wages of workers in developing countries have historically meant that financial assistance from abroad has been important for trade unions, their primary funding base—in theory, at least—remains their members' contributions. In contrast, labour NGOs are principally dependent on external funding, income generated by their organisation, or a combination of both. Labour NGOs are often considered part of a subset of non-governmental organisations generally described as human rights-based NGOs. Yet while the category 'labour NGO' does include organisations with broader political and human rights concerns, it neither encompasses all such NGOs, nor is limited to a subset of them. Labour NGOs are, by definition, differentiated from other quite similar types of NGOs by their focus on labour—whether they undertake some of the tasks traditionally associated with trade unionism, perform other tasks to promote the interests of factory workers, or deal with another group of workers altogether.

In short, labour NGOs are organisations involved in the labour movement whose organisational identities and operational imperatives are not wholly focused on their role within that movement. Rather than concentrating on labour rights as a discrete category of collective rights (as has traditionally been the case with unions), labour NGOs have generally addressed them as part of workers' individual rights, as defined in the internationally dominant, liberal discourse of human rights.[19] Characteristically, labour NGOs have a limited number of middle-class activists or staff, rather than a mass membership of workers; they may be associated with, but

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[19]   See Anthony Woodiwiss, *Globalisation, Human Rights and Labour Law in Pacific Asia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 47-53; Ronaldo Munck, "Labour Dilemmas and Labour Futures," in *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalization: Alternative Union Models in the New World Order*, ed. Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999); Braham Dabscheck, "Human Rights and Industrial Relations," *Labour & Industry* 7, No. 3 (1997).

are not subsumed within, grassroots workers' groups; and they are generally reliant on income streams other than membership dues. Most labour NGOs have strong links to other NGOs through their domestic and/or international networks. Labour NGOs can be international or indigenous, but in this study, unless otherwise specified, the term 'labour NGOs' is used to refer to indigenous labour NGOs operating in Indonesia during the New Order and early post-New Order periods. Although many labour NGOs deal with groups that earn their living in the informal sector, overseas, or in traditionally non-unionised parts of the formal sector, the primary empirical focus of this study is on the group of NGOs that deal with industrial labour. However, its focus is not confined to those NGOs that had an organising function; rather, it examines all the types of NGOs that organised, supported, or lobbied on behalf of factory workers in Indonesia.

Finding a Place for Labour NGOs Internationally

Until the 1990s, industrial relations scholars and other students of labour institutions generally failed to respond to the involvement of non-union actors domestically, or the growing non-union globalisation of labour issues through international labour rights campaigns and NGO networks. Since that time, some scholars have attempted to incorporate those developments in their analyses. However, accounts of non-traditional labour organisations continued to be influenced by the same criteria of significance as the conventional literature—a criteria of significance that excludes all but unions from serious consideration as part of the organised labour movement.

Parallels between Contemporary Studies and Labour History

The strong emphasis on unions in the developing-country literature was founded in the colonial experience and the history of the study of labour. Post-structuralist perspectives have been influential in some sections of the contemporary literature on industrialised and developing countries, and indeed, on the writing of labour history.[20] However, the primary divide remains firmly between contemporary

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[20] The post-structuralist perspective has been adopted by human resource management and industrial relations academics working in a 'post-structuralist school' of the labour process and

institutional studies and studies of labour. Studies of contemporary labour in industrialised countries can be split into two main categories: institutional studies of the labour movement and studies of workers' interactions with the labour process and/or their communities.[21] In the developing-country literature, the division is best located between institutional studies and studies of proletarianisation.[22]

The historical corollary to this divide is the gap between 'old' and 'new' labour history.[23] An explication of the compartmentalisation of labour history therefore illuminates the characteristics of the contemporary literature, as well as being directly relevant to the historical concerns of this thesis.[24] As McKibbin noted, the traditional, institutional approach to labour history:

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resistance. See for example Barbara Townley, *Reframing Human Resource Management: Power, Ethics and the Subject at Work* (London: Sage, 1994); Barbara Townley, "Foucault, Power/Knowledge and its Relevance for Human Resource Management," *Academy of Management Review* 18, No. 3 (1993); Marsden, "Marx, Realism and Foucault." Although studies of proletarianisation began in anthropology and sociology, some authors have also adopted a post-structuralist approach. For an overview of postmodern perspectives in Latin America, see Ronaldo Munck, "Postmodernism, Politics, and Paradigms in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 27, No. 4 (2000). For an example from Southeast Asia, see Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987). For evidence of the influence of the 'linguistic turn' on the writing of labour history, see Gareth Stedman Jones, *Studies in English Working Class History 1932-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Belchem and Neville Kirk, "Introduction," in *Languages of Labour*, ed. J. Belchem and N. Kirk (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Joan Scott, "'L'Ouvriere! Mot Impie, Sordide...': Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840-1860," in *The Historical Meanings of Work*, ed. P. Joyce (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987); Laura Frader, "Dissent Over Discourse: Labor History, Gender, and the Linguistic Turn," *History and Theory* 34, No. 3 (1995).

[21] As used here, 'studies of the labour process' include work undertaken from a Marxist perspective (following Braverman) and from the perspective of human resources management or organisational behaviour (noted above). See Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Paul Edwards, *Conflict at Work: A Materialist Analysis of Workplace Relations* (London: Blackwell, 1986); Paul Thompson, *The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1989).

[22] For an account of the shift from the 'traditional concerns' of labour studies to the 'broader processes of proletarianisation', see Roger Southall, "Introduction," in *Labour and Unions in Asia and Africa: Contemporary Issues*, ed. Roger Southall (London: Macmillan, 1988).

[23] The split in labour studies echoes the broader split between the social sciences and history, which has been the subject of debate in recent decades. See for example Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Gareth Stedman Jones, "From Historical Sociology to Theoretical History," *British Journal of Sociology* 27, No. 3 (1976).

[24] These parallels were reflected in scholars of contemporary labour's use of history. When industrial relations specialists and other scholars of developing country labour movements called explicitly on history, they sought out 'old' labour histories, which provided building blocks for systemic analyses and a means to compare the industrial relations systems in different national settings. Likewise, the 'new' labour history addressed many of the concerns of the contemporary literature on the labour process, workers' communities and proletarianisation.

tended to be about trade unions (or occupations that could be unionised) and industrial relations, which often meant industrial conflict, and political parties either founded by trade unions or in some senses dependent upon them or upon the industrial working class that belonged to them.[25]

As Gollan observed (reflecting on the writing of labour history in Australia), in this 'old', institutional labour history paradigm, 'the working class was seen by labour historians in much the same way as it had been seen by traditional economic historians, simply as workers'.[26] On one hand, such studies have, in the words of Mohapatra, 'neglected the way in which the workplace was imbricated in other sites of workers' lives and how issues of work spilled over into families, neighbourhoods and cities and vice versa'.[27] On the other, this approach often obscured processes in the workplace itself.

The shortcomings of institutional labour history prompted some labour historians to exchange the study of unions for the study of the social and cultural aspects of workers' experiences.[28] This 'new' labour history had its genesis in the work of English social historians such as E.P. Thompson.[29] Its strengths lay in the fact that it was 'a variety of history that, precisely because it was not primarily institutional history, could include the history of women, immigrants, and children

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[25] Ross McKibbin, "Is it Still Possible to Write Labour History?," in *Challenges to Labour History*, ed. Terry Irving (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994), 34.

[26] Robin Gollan, "Writing Labour History," in *Australian Labour History Reconsidered*, ed. D. Palmer, R. Shanahan, and M. Shanahan (Unley: Australian Humanities Press, 1999), 230.

[27] Prabhu Mohapatra, "Asian Labour: Culture, Consciousness and Representations," in *Asian Labour: A Debate on Culture, Consciousness and Representation (Papers based on the Manila Workshop, 23-25 October 1997)*, ed. Prabhu Mohapatra, Andrew Wells, and Samita Sen (Amsterdam: IIAS, 1997), 11.

[28] Charles Bergquist, "Labor History and Its Challenges: Confessions of a Latin Americanist," *American Historical Review* 98, No. 3 (1993): 758.

[29] Edward Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1980). For a detailed account of Thompson and his colleagues, see Kaye, *The Education of Desire*. Although no authors writing on contemporary Indonesian labour in the late twentieth century have identified themselves explicitly with the new labour historians, the work of E.P. Thompson is invoked by many. See for example Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia;* Vedi Hadiz, "Workers and Working Class Politics in the 1990s," in *Indonesia Assessment 1993: Labour: Sharing the Benefits of Growth?*, ed. Chris Manning and Joan Hardjono (Canberra: Research School for Pacific and Asian Studies, 1993); Nori Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists." (Unpublished Masters in Women's Studies Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1996); Bama Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1998); Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996."

alongside the history of adult working men'.[30] However, in focusing on the myriad of other institutions of which workers are part, many proponents of new labour history altogether abandoned the analytical study of unions.[31]

The contemporary equivalent of the new labour history is found in the proletarianisation literature. The study of proletarianisation in developing countries has provided a fruitful avenue for the recognition of the specificities of labour in developing-country contexts. As Hull observed, classic definitions of the working class grew out of the European experience of the Industrial Revolution, the political organisation of workers and nationalist revolutions to achieve working class control of government in the twentieth century—experiences that were only 'roughly applicable to contemporary realities' in countries like Indonesia.[32] Similarly, Chandavarkar maintained that in India there was:

> no steady evolution of 'peasants into proletarians', no inexorable process of de-skilling and no clear demarcation between factory labour and the casual poor. Industrial and political action on a massive scale often preceded trade union organization and did not necessarily sustain itself in rising class consciousness. The connections between industrial and non-industrial labour, migrant workers and their rural base, workplace and neighbourhood, gender and skill, caste and the division of labour, trade unions and informal associations suggested that the formation of the working class needed to be examined in its relationship with a wide range of social and political processes.[33]

Likewise, Pinches (writing about labour in the Philippines) demanded a critical re-examination of the 'conceptual distinctions frequently made in reference to the

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[30] Frader, "Dissent Over Discourse," 215. For an overview of the British Marxist historians and new labour history, see Harvey Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: Polity Press, 1984).

[31] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "'The Making of the Working Class': E.P. Thompson and Indian History," *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997). Some scholars have called for a synthesis between the 'new' and the 'old'. Advocating a 'history of industrial relations', Zeitlin accused historians who study labour without reference to formal institutions of ignoring their institutions' influence on social relations. Jonathan Zeitlin, "From Labour History to the History of Industrial Relations," *Economic History Review* 40, No. 2 (1987). Kimeldorf urged labour historians to apply the insights of new labour history to the study of labour institutions rather than simply ignoring their existence. H. Kimeldorf, "Bring Unions Back In (Or Why We Need a New Old Labor History)," *Labor History* 32, No. 1 (1991). Southall made a similar point in the developing country context. See Southall, "Introduction."

[32] Terrence Hull, "Workers in the Shadows: A Statistical Wayang," in *Indonesia's Emerging Proletariat: Workers and their Struggles*, ed. David Bourchier, (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), 2.

[33] Chandavarkar, "'The Making of the Working Class'," 292.

labour force in third world cities between the working class and the urban poor', pointing to the ambiguities in waged labour and in self-employment in such settings as evidence for his claims.[34]

Insights such as these should have been important for the study of labour institutions in developing countries, because they suggested—albeit often obliquely—a blurring of boundaries between European-style unions and other, less easily identified forms of labour movement organisation. However, the majority of scholars writing in English about labour in post-colonial states have remained firmly entrenched either in the institutional or proletarianisation paradigm of labour studies. Proponents of the former tended to focus exclusively on unions, the globally accepted vehicle of organised labour. For proponents of the latter, the institutions of organised labour generally served only as a backdrop (if at all) to the substance of workers' lives. The strong separation between these paradigms limited the ability of students of organised labour to deal adequately with the complex realities of organised labour movements in developing countries, including Indonesia.

The Institutional Developing-Country Labour Literature

In *Labouring Men,* Eric Hobsbawm observed that 'historically speaking, the process of building new institutions, new ideas, new theories and new tactics rarely starts as a deliberate job of social engineering'.[35] This observation does not hold true for the institutions of former colonial territories, where social engineering played a very large role in the formation of the structures of state and industrial relations. The structures of developing-country labour movements were heavily influenced by industrial relations models formulated in Europe and North America. Moreover, analyses of those movements were shaped by those same models. As Hess observed, many authors of early developing-country labour literature were North Americans or Europeans who 'cast themselves in the role of advisors to the governments and

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[34] Michael Pinches, "'All That We Have is Our Muscle and Sweat', The Rise of Wage Labour in a Manila Squatter Community," in *Wage Labour and Social Change: The Proletariat in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. M. Pinches and S. Lakha (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1987), 103, 117-118.

[35] E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1964), 371.

industrial relations practitioners in…newly independent nations'.[36] Since then, there has been an ongoing preoccupation with Western models and precedents amongst labour relations practitioners: a preoccupation encouraged by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and union organisations such as the ICFTU and ACILS.[37] Meanwhile, many students of developing-country labour movements continued to focus almost exclusively on levels of union coverage, union activities and state responses to unions, or on the relationship between politics, industrialisation and industrial relations. In doing so, they have left little room for the examination of aspects of developing-country labour movements that did not fit into the category 'union'.[38]

This is not to suggest that the organised labour literature ignored the differences between Western and developing-country unionism. In fact, the difficulty in directly transferring Western labour movement theories was noted not long after

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[36]   Michael Hess, "Understanding Indonesian Industrial Relations in the 1990s," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 39, No. 1 (1997): 225.

[37]   For accounts of contemporary labour transnationalism, see Robert Taylor, *Trade Unions and Transnational Industrial Relations* (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1999); Teri Caraway, "The Impact of Regime Change on Transnational Labor Activism: Insights from Indonesia" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 29 August-1 September 2002).

[38]   See for example F. Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle: Labor Subordination in the New Asian Industrialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Jomo and Patricia Todd, *Trade Unions and the State in Peninsular Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994); Marvin J. Levine, *Worker Rights and Labor Standards in Asia's Four New Tigers: A Comparative Perspective* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1997); George E. Ogle, *South Korea: Dissent Within the Economic Miracle* (London: Zed Books, 1990); Rajah Rasiah and Chau Tian Chang, "Strength of Trade Unions in Southeast Asia," in *Workers on the Brink: Unions, Exclusion and Crisis in Southeast Asia*, ed. Rajah Rasiah and Norbert von Hofmann (Singapore: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1998); Stephen Frenkel, ed., *Organised Labour in the Asia Pacific Region: A Comparative Study of Trade Unionism in Nine Countries* (Ithaca: International Labour Relations Press, 1993); Gerry Rodgers, ed., *Workers, Institutions and Economic Growth in Asia* (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1994); Roger Southall, ed., *Labour and Unions in Asia and Africa* (Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1988); Tayo Fashoyin and Segun Matanmi, "Democracy, Labour and Development: Transforming Industrial Relations in Africa," *Industrial Relations Journal* 27, No. 1 (1996); Stephen Frenkel and David Peetz, "Globalization and Industrial Relations in East Asia: A Three-Country Comparison," *Industrial Relations* 37, No. 3 (1998); Kevin Hewison and Andrew Brown, "Labour and Unions in Industrialising Thailand," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 24, No. 4 (1994); Sarosh Kuruvilla, "Kuruvilla - The Political Economy of Industrialisation and Industrial Relations: A Rejoinder," *Industrial Relations Journal* 29, No. 1 (1998); Sarosh Kuruvilla and Christopher Erickson, "Change and Transformation in Asian Industrial Relations," *Industrial Relations* 41, No. 2 (2002); E.T. Ramos, "Industrial Relations Strategies of Trade Unions in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis," *Ekonomi Keuangan Indonesia* 29, No. 4 (1981); S.A. Siddique, "Industrial Relations in a Third World Setting: A Possible Model," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 31, No. 3 (1989); J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Labor Movements in Transitions to Democracy: A Framework For Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 21, No. 4 (1989).

the idea of the 'developing country' was invented, when Kerr and Siegel observed in 1955 that European and North American labour theories were not designed to consider the labour movements of non-capitalist, pre-industrialised societies or variants of capitalism beyond that found in the liberal West.[39]

Theories of developing-country unionism proliferated following the subsequent development of the convergence model in *Industralism and Industrial Man*.[40] A discussion of the convergence model, which posited that modernising elites in developing countries seek to emulate industrial relations systems of the developed capitalist West, begins most overviews of the developing-country industrial relations literature. Beyond that, however, there is no dominant typological pattern in such surveys. In a survey of approaches to the study of unions and development published in 1970, Bates described and critiqued the convergence model and two other major interpretations of the role of trade unions in developing countries, namely political unionism and trade unionism as a tool of development.[41] Almost two decades after Bates' article was published, Siddique divided explanations of third world industrial relations systems into two groups: those that identify the role of the state as the primary determinant of industrial relations, and those based on cultural factors.[42] In the mid 1990s, Basu Sharma identified seven paradigms of industrial relations in developing countries, namely political unionism, labour market approaches, partial convergence theories, labour aristocracy theories, corporatist analyses, analyses based on the new international division of labour and political economy approaches.[43] Aggregate models, which combined ideas drawn from a number of theories, were also common.[44]

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[39] Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Structuring of the Labor Force in Industrial Society: New Dimensions and New Questions," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 8, No. 2 (1955); Mark Perlman, "Labor Movement Theories: Past, Present, and Future," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 13, No. 3 (1960): 343-344. For an overview of the history of 'development', see Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London and New York: Zed Books, 1997).

[40] C. Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[41] Robert Bates, "Approaches to the Study of Unions and Development," *Industrial Relations* 9 (1970): 365.

[42] Siddique, "Industrial Relations in a Third World Setting," 385-386.

[43] Basu Sharma, *Industrial Relations in ASEAN: A Comparative Study* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 1996), 6.

[44] For example, Frenkel used two hypotheses drawn from Kerr *et al* in addition to others taken from the work of scholars including Essenberg, Dore, and Deyo. See Stephen Frenkel, "Theoretical Frameworks and the Empirical Contexts of Trade Unionism," in *Organised Labor in the Asia-*

Siddique's division of theories into those based on the role of the state and those based on culture is useful because it identified the primary point of difference between two major groups of developing-country industrial relations theories. The first group, which was predicated on a structural understanding of industrial relations, focused on the timing of industrialisation, industrialisation strategies and state structures.[45] Many structuralist theories sought to explain why developing-country industrial relations systems have diverged rather than converged with those of Europe and North America. However, they were all based to a greater or lesser extent on the assumption that underpins the convergence model—that Western-style unions are the standard against which all other types of labour organisation should be measured.[46]

Political unionism and corporatism, the models most popular in accounts of Indonesia's organised labour movement, are both structuralist models.[47] In the 1950s and 1960s, scholars of Indonesia labour used variants of political unionism to explain the connections between unions and the Indonesian nationalist movement.[48] Internationally, the concept of political unionism was very influential in the early decades after World War II. Its proponents argued that the activities of unions in developing countries were more likely to be political than economic, because of unions' involvement in nationalist movements and their lack of industrial bargaining

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Pacific Region: A Comparative Study of Trade Unionism in Nine Countries, ed. Stephen Frenkel (Ithaca: International Labour Relations Press, 1993).

[45] Structuralist models popular in the Latin American literature were later adapted by students of Asian industrialisation, most notably Deyo. See Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle;* Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1973).

[46] Despite Deyo's disclaimer that researchers may simply miss the diversity of labour's response to industrialisation because of the 'traditional scholarly emphasis on labour movements, unions, strikes, and collective action', Deyo continued to draw on experiences of workers in the early European industrialisers as his ultimate point of comparison. Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle*, 2, 161.

[47] Hess has written a brief cultural analysis of Indonesian industrial relations, whilst Chris Manning uses the labour market model. See Hess, "Understanding Indonesian Industrial Relations in the 1990s"; C. Manning, "Structural Change and Industrial Relations During the Soeharto Period - an Approaching Crisis," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 29, No. 2 (1993).

[48] See for example Iskandar Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1958); Everett Hawkins, "Indonesia," in *Labor in Developing Economies*, ed. Walter Galenson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963); Sayuti Hasibuan, "Political Unionism and Economic Development in Indonesia: Case Study, North Sumatra." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, 1968). Political models of developing country unionism have underpinned government and practitioner analyses of Indonesian unionism. See Chapter Four.

power.[49] In the late 1950s, Galenson suggested that a 'duality' of purpose is common in developing-country union movements because unions must balance members' interests and the requirements of nation building.[50] In a survey of unionism in former British colonies published in 1980, Alan Gladstone (representing the ILO) proposed a closely related model. He identified a transition from a honeymoon period shaped by the 'real or presumed role of trade unions in the independence movements and the identification of prominent trade union leaders with those movements' to a state-sponsored restructuring of unions into a 'tool of development'.[51] Gladstone's model is pertinent to Indonesia, where politically active unions were restructured by the New Order regime to serve the national interest, which was expressed in terms of development.

Most analysts of contemporary Indonesian labour relations have appealed to corporatist models of industrial relations formulated in the Latin American context.[52] Stepan's model of authoritarian corporatism, a revision of the Schmitter model of interest-group corporatism, has been very influential in corporatist analyses of New Order Indonesia.[53] Schmitter differentiated corporatist systems in which the government's control function is low (which he defined as 'societal') from 'state' (authoritarian) corporatist systems in which the control function is strongly

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[49]   Bates, "Approaches to the Study of Unions and Development," 366-367. Proponents of this model often invoked the labour market was as an explanatory factor, arguing that developing country unions were economically weak because their members could not develop a strategic bargaining position in the context of high unemployment.

[50]   W. Galenson, ed., *Labour and Economic Development* (New York: Wiley, 1958).

[51]   Alan Gladstone, "Trade Unions, Growth and Development," *Labour and Society* 5, No. 1 (1980). See also Bert Essenberg, "The Interaction of Industrial Relations and Political Process in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature," *Law and Society* 6, No. 1 (1981).

[52]   Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia;* Rob Lambert, "Authoritarian State Unionism in New Order Indonesia," in *State and Labour in New Order Indonesia*, ed. Rob Lambert (Nedlands: Asia Research Centre/University of Western Australia Press, 1997); Andrew MacIntyre, "Power, Prosperity and Patrimonialism: Business and Government in Indonesia," in *Business and Government in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Andrew MacIntyre (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Ford, "Testing the Limits of Corporatism"; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996."

[53]   As described by Schmitter, a corporatist system is one in which there is a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories. See P. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?," *The Review of Politics* 36 (1974). Theorists of the corporatist paradigm differ on whether corporatism should be characterised as a political system, an economic system, a system of interest representation or a means of policy formation. See Braham Dabscheck, *Australian Industrial Relations in the 1980s* (Melbourne: Oxford, 1989), 18. The interest representation model has been widely favoured in analyses of Indonesian corporatism because the 'functional group' system encompassed a broad range of political interests rather than the economic actors alone.

emphasised in the systems' structures and/or practice.[54] In his study of Peru, Stepan argued that Schmitter's dichotomy did not sufficiently account for variations amongst the regimes that fell within the state corporatist category, proposing that 'exclusionary' and 'inclusionary' types existed within state corporatism.[55] Stepan defined 'exclusionary' systems as those in which the state dominated society through control and repression, relying heavily on 'coercive policies to deactivate and then restructure salient working-class groups'. 'Inclusionary' authoritarian corporatist systems, on the other hand, were those in which states sought to coopt interest groups—particularly labour—by allowing them some (controlled) input through approved interest associations.[56] While acknowledging that 'any broad cultural explanation' for corporatism was flawed, Stepan maintained that the organic state was a 'normative model' of state-society relations, which tended to encourage inclusionary corporatist forms of interest representation, whilst exclusionary corporatism was a 'distortion' of that relationship.[57] Furthermore, he suggested that a single regime may not only make use of both inclusionary and exclusionary policies simultaneously, but it could 'shift from a pattern of inclusionary policies to one of exclusionary policies over a period of time'.[58] The link Stepan made between organicist ideology and corporatist structure is productive in the Indonesian context, as is his proposal that a shift in ideology can signal an evolutionary process within a corporatist system rather than a discrete shift from one type of corporatism to another.[59]

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[54] Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?," 103-104.

[55] The nuances of Stepan's framework were largely neglected in the studies of New Order corporatism that used his typology, although Bourchier has recognised the usefulness of Stepan's perspective on organicism, noting that it represented 'a significant advance' on both structuralist and culturalist approaches to corporatism. See Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." Further discussion of New Order corporatism is included in Chapters Four and Five.

[56] A. Stepan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 74.

[57] Ibid., 46-47, 54, 81.

[58] Ibid., 78. For a fuller explication of my evaluation of the value of Stepan's model with regard to Indonesian industrial relations, see Ford, "Testing the Limits of Corporatism."

[59] By viewing ideology as a policy tool rather than the unchanging source of policy, Ramage's warning not to trivialise Pancasila can be heeded without overemphasising its power or permanency. See Douglas Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse in Suharto's Late New Order," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. D. Bourchier and J. Legge (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994).

The second group of theories that Siddique identified were predicated on cultural interpretations of industrial relations institutions.[60] They focused on the importance of examining the role local practice plays in industrial relations. As Mohapatra has noted, 'culture' was generally seen as a hindrance to the emergence of an industrial working class (and effective industrial relations systems) in the school of labour studies that emerged from the work of Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Meyers in *Industrialism and Industrial Man*.[61] Cultural models of industrial relations have therefore presented the most direct challenge to the assumptions of convergence theory.[62] Yet while scholars such as Hess mobilised cultural explanations in order to challenge the Eurocentrism of the 'normative picture' presented in much of the developing-country literature, they, too, continued to see the union as the exclusive organisational vehicle of working-class concerns.[63] Ultimately, then, the category of 'union' remained intact in the study of developing-country labour movements well into the 1990s, as demonstrated by the work of scholars such as Thomas, who in 1995 was deeply pessimistic about third world unions' ability to meet the challenges they faced, but explored neither union cooperation with other types of organisations nor the possibility of looking beyond the union for other forms of labour movement organisation.[64]

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[60] See for example Ronald Dore, *British Factory, Japanese Factory: The Origins of National Diversity in Industrial Relations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973).

[61] Mohapatra, "Asian Labour: Culture, Consciousness and Representations," 2.

[62] For a critique of cultural models of industrial relations, see P. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Simon Fry, "The Cultural Factor - Who Needs It? Explaining the Peculiarities of East Asian Employment Relations" (paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual AIRAANZ Conference, Wollongong, February 2001).

[63] Michael Hess, "How the Foreign Devils Got it Wrong: Understanding Industrial Relations in Less-Developed Countries," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 28, No. 2 (1986); Michael Hess, "Unions and Economic Development: A Papua New Guinea Case Study." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, UNSW, 1986). For Hess' cultural analysis of Indonesian industrial relations see Hess, "Understanding Indonesian Industrial Relations in the 1990s."

[64] Henk Thomas, "The Erosion of Trade Unions," in *Globalisation and Third World Trade Unions: The Challenge of Rapid Economic Growth*, ed. Henk Thomas (London: Zed Books, 1995). In a more recent paper, Thomas has acknowledged the importance coalitions between trade unions and NGOs in Latin and Central America and Pakistan, and argued for the need to build links with NGOs. See Henk Thomas, *Trade Unions and Development, Discussion Paper No. DP/100/1999* (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1999).

Accounts of Non-Traditional Actors

There were three main strands in the literature on NGOs' involvement in labour issues. The first examined cooperative efforts between NGOs and other social movements in pursuit of common goals. The second focused on NGOs' attempts to organise sectors of the workforce traditionally beyond the reach of unions. The third, which grew out of the experiences of authoritarian contexts such as New Order Indonesia, described NGOs either as 'substitute' trade unions, which played a temporary role until unionisation was possible, or as trade union 'midwives', which facilitated workers' self-organisation.

Two powerful catalysts encouraged a growing recognition of cooperation between unions and other types of organisations in the late 1990s. The first of these was the formation of trade blocs that included both industrialised and developing countries, particularly the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). Carr, for example, noted the 'widely differing opportunities for intervention by the state, labour unions and NGOs' brought by globalisation and the new, 'complex web of cross-border coalitions embracing labour organisations and activists' in the NAFTA states.[65] The second catalyst was the rise of the anti-globalisation movement. The 1999 demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle in the United States of America encouraged some authors to look differently at union cooperation with other types of social movement organisations. Levi and Olson, for example, used a discussion of the Seattle protests to call for greater efforts to overcome the 'problems of constructing common interests and translating them into a common program within unions; across unions locally, nationally, and internationally; and with non-union allies'.[66]

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[65] Barry Carr, "Globalization from Below: Labour Internationalism under NAFTA," *International Social Science Journal* 51, No. 1 (1999): 50. See also Armbruster-Sandoval, "Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Organizing"; Terry Boswell and Dimitris Stevis, "Globalization and International Labor Organizing: A World-System Perspective," *Work and Occupations* 24, No. 3 (1997); Evans, "Fighting Marginalization with Transnational Networks"; Williams, "Mobile Capital and Transborder Labor Rights Mobilization."

[66] Further changes in this direction were necessary, they argued, so that unions could regain their broad-based membership. Unlike most proponents of the 'new' globalisation of labour representation, they made explicit references to parallels between new cooperative initiatives and historical efforts to surpass 'trade union consciousness' (citing Lenin's concerns with trade union economism and the problems with narrow politicisation based on sectoral issues). See Margaret Levi and David Olson, "The Battles in Seattle," *Politics & Society* 28, No. 3 (2000): 311-313,

The ILO and the World Bank also began to recognise labour's need to cooperate with groups 'who share the values and concerns of the labour movement'.[67] In a 2002 volume produced by the ILO's International Institute for Labour Research, four of eight case studies on developing countries commented on the degree to which unions and NGOs cooperated in the country concerned.[68] In his case study of Korea, Ho Keun Song reported that there was significant cooperation between unions and new social movements because of 'the expansion of common interests' as democratisation has proceeded. However, he was cautious about this development, arguing that solidarity was desirable, 'but common agendas such as peace, environmental protection and human rights may undermine the cause and purpose of a labour movement based on class'.[69] In South Africa, many NGOs were disbanded after the end of Apartheid, although the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) made attempts to renew links with NGOs and other community-based organisations in late 1999.[70] In contrast, Bhattacherjee reported that in India unions were resentful of NGOs that 'have successfully organized (not necessarily unionized) several informal sector occupations and sites in India during the last decade'.[71] Likewise, although the women's departments of some unions had established a relationship with women's organisations and women-centred NGOs in

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326. See also Ricardo Atunes, "The World of Work, the Restructuring of Production, and Challenges to Trade Unionism and Social Struggles in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 27, No. 6 (2000).

[67] A.V. Jose, "Organized Labour in the 21st Century - Some Lessons for Developing Countries," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002), 16. See also Gallin, *Trade Unions and NGOs*. In 1997, a World Bank report suggested that trade unions be required to look beyond the workplace, and establish networks with environmental, community and women's groups. See Taylor, *Trade Unions and Transnational Industrial Relations*, 13. About the same time, an ILO report was released which discussed the variety of ways in which unions have responded to the challenges of globalisation and declining membership. These included the development of new constituencies, involvement in transnational actions and alliances with NGOs. Richard Hyman, "National Industrial Relations Systems and Transnational Challenges: An Essay in Review," *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 5, No. 1 (1999): 98.

[68] Jose, "Organized Labour in the 21st Century - Some Lessons for Developing Countries."

[69] Ho Keun Song, "Labour Unions in the Republic of Korea: Challenge and Choice," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002), 232-233.

[70] Andries Bezuidenhout, "Towards Global Social Movement Unionism? Trade Union Responses to Globalization in South Africa," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002), 399.

[71] Debashish Bhattacherjee, "Organized Labour and Economic Liberalization in India: Past, Present and Future," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002), 339.

Niger, unions had 'made little effort' to establish connections with other social movement organisations. The links that did exist were characterised by 'distrust and suspicion'.[72]

The second stream in the literature suggested that unions should adopt techniques more often associated with NGOs. A number of scholars argued that 'social movement unionism' should become the new, global model of labour activism.[73] Theories of social movement unionism were developed in an attempt to move beyond the traditional theoretical dichotomy between political and economic unionism. They emerged in South Africa to account for unions' links to community and political activists, and their commitment to social transformation,[74] and were later adopted by students of Latin American and Philippines labour movements.[75] Although social movement unionism was traditionally associated with the union movements of developing countries, some attempts were made to chronicle labour's involvement in social movement issues in Europe and North America, when scholars

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[72] Souley Adji, "Globalization and Union Strategies in Niger," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002), 365, 369. Of the case studies on Japan, Sweden and the United States of America, which comprised the balance of the book, only the Japanese chapter mentioned NGOs. In that chapter, it was noted that the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), 'believes it is necessary to promote cooperation between trade unions, NGOs and international organisations' on issues such as poverty, education, and environmental issues. Domestically, Rengo has been particularly active on environmental questions, helping to establish the Japan Environmental Forum and has participated in disaster relief initiatives alongside NGOs, while internationally, Rengo, like many other unions and union confederations including the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the AFL-CIO, has structured its international solidarity arm (JILAF, the Japanese International Labour Foundation) as an NGO. JILAF, which has an annual budget of some US $4.2 million, brings union activists to Japan, runs local projects and provides equipment to support developing country union activities. See Sadahiko Inoe, "Japanese Trade Unions and their Future: Opportunities and Challenges in an Era of Globalization," in *Organized Labour in the 21st Century*, ed. A.V. Jose (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002).

[73] See Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World* (London and New York: Verso, 1997); Glen Adler and Eddie Webster, eds., *Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).

[74] Gay Seidman, *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' Movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.

[75] See Kim Scipes, *KMU: Building Genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines, 1980-1994* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1996); Eddie Webster, "The Rise of Social-Movement Unionism: The Two Faces of the Black Trade Union Movement in South Africa," in *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa*, ed. P. Frankel, N. Pines, and M. Swilling (London: Croom Helm, 1988); Adler and Webster, eds., *Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997*. For a critique of social movement unionism see Karl von Holdt, "Social Movement Unionism: The Case of South Africa" (paper presented at the International Sociological Association XV World Congress, Brisbane, 8-13 July 2002).

analysed unions' concern with issues as diverse as nuclear power and sexuality.[76] Munck (amongst others) took the social movement unionism approach further, arguing that labour theorists must learn from the theoretical principles of contingency favoured by 'the intellectuals of the new social movements'.[77] Munck noted that 'old' and 'new' social movements were 'two ideal-types, not always reflected in practice'—particularly in unions' attempts to move beyond traditional union concerns and constituencies.[78] However, although he asked if 'new wine' could really be poured into the 'old bottles' of unions, he did not contemplate the possibility that new bottles might be required.[79]

In short, although unions' involvement in other types of social movement causes has been more frequently noted, observers have remained largely silent on its corollary—the involvement of organisational forms associated with those other social movement causes in issues and practices traditionally associated with unions. A 2001 volume entitled *Organising Labour in Globalising Asia* ostensibly dealt with this question by examining 'labour activism through organisations not usually classified as "industrial"—especially non-governmental organisations'.[80] However, the editors limited the ways in which NGOs' involvement in labour could be conceptualised by arguing that 'the question to ask…is: What effects does NGO involvement in the labour arena have on workers' capacities to self-organise?'[81]

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[76] See for example Gerald Hunt, *Laboring for Rights: Unions and Sexual Diversity Across Nations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999); Detlef Jahn, *New Politics in Trade Unions: Applying Organization Theory to the Ecological Discourse on Nuclear Energy in Sweden and Germany* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993).

[77] Munck, "Labour Dilemmas and Labour Futures," 10, 15. See also Peter Waterman, "The New Social Unionism: A New Union Model for a New World Order," in *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalization: Alternative Union Models in the New World Order*, ed. Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999).

[78] Munck, "Labour Dilemmas and Labour Futures," 13.

[79] Ibid., 15-21.

[80] Jane Hutchison and Andrew Brown, "Organising Labour in Globalising Asia: An Introduction," in *Organising Labour in Globalising Asia*, ed. J. Hutchison and A. Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 2.

[81] Ibid. A second problem lay in the fact that some articles in the collection on countries where NGOs were involved in labour issues did not acknowledge that involvement. See for example, Rajah Rasiah's contribution to the volume, which focused on the Malaysian Proton car factory rather than on the export processing zones in which NGOs were involved in labour organising, or Hutchison's own contribution on the garment industry in the Philippines. Jane Hutchison, "Export Opportunities: Unions in the Philippine Garments Industry," in *Organising Labour in Globalising Asia*, ed. Jane Hutchison and Andrew Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Rajah Rasiah, "Labour and Work Organisation in Malaysia's Proton," in *Organising*

Hutchison and Brown's acknowledgment in NGOs' involvement with workers at a grassroots level was an important step forward in the theorisation of their role in the labour movement in countries such as Indonesia, but it did not sufficiently account for labour NGOs' contribution to national and transnational labour organising. By defining the labour movement only in terms of the potential for the development of workers' groups (and, ultimately, of unions), they discounted labour NGOs' significance in their own right and their potential for labour activism beyond the promotion of workers' self-organisation.

Although the study of NGOs' involvement in labour was significantly advanced by this literature, labour NGOs remained at the periphery of its analysis. If NGOs' role in the labour movement is to be fully understood, it is necessary to go beyond models of union-NGO cooperation, union adoption of NGO techniques, and NGO promotion of unionism to re-examine the criteria of significance against which labour movement organisations are judged. It is only when unions are considered one of many possible types of labour movement organisation that labour NGOs' contribution to that movement can be properly assessed.

The Literature on Indonesia

The literature about labour NGOs in Indonesia is small and varied. In addition to a range of descriptive accounts about labour NGOs written predominantly in Indonesian, a number of theses, dissertations and short academic articles (written in English and Indonesian) include references to labour NGOs. The limited timeframe in which this literature was produced, and upon which it focused, was directly related to the newness of the phenomenon of the Indonesian labour NGO. The majority of works in both categories were written in the 1990s and dealt with the experiences of labour NGOs under President Suharto. While NGO activists produced reports about the impact of Indonesia's economic and political crises on both workers and labour

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Labour in Globalising Asia, ed. Jane Hutchison and Andrew Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

NGOs soon after fall of Suharto, the early post-Suharto years have yet to be canvassed in more than a very few academic publications.[82]

With the exception of two Honours theses and an earlier Indonesian-language undergraduate thesis on the international connections of three labour NGOs in Yogyakarta, none of the literature focused exclusively on labour NGOs.[83] Rather, labour NGOs were either the subject of one or two chapters in a much larger work, or one of many 'actors' in the particular chain of events being analysed. Three distinct perspectives can nevertheless be identified. The first, favoured by scholars of development and democratisation, considered labour NGOs as a sub-set of a wider category of NGOs that focused on politics and human rights. The second, favoured by scholars of proletarianisation, concentrated on labour NGOs' ability to influence workers' understanding of their relationship with the state and capital. The third perspective, which can be characterised as an organised labour perspective, was concerned about the extent to which labour NGOs promoted the development of independent unions. Each of these perspectives offered valuable insights into the operation and significance of Indonesia's labour NGOs. However, none of them

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[82] See for example Vedi Hadiz, "New Organising Vehicles in Indonesia: Origins and Prospects," in *Organising Labour in Globalising Asia*, ed. Jane Hutchison and Andrew Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Edward Aspinall, "Democratisation, the Working Class and the Indonesian Transition," *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs* 33, No. 2 (1999); Michele Ford, "Continuity and Change in Indonesian Labour Relations in the Habibie Interregnum," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 28, No. 2 (2000); Michele Ford, "Challenging the Criteria of Significance," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 47, No. 1 (2001); Vedi Hadiz, "*Reformasi Total?* Labor After Suharto," *Indonesia* 66 (1998); Rob Lambert, "An Emerging Force? Independent Labour in Indonesia," *Labour, Capital and Society* 32, No. 1 (1999). For a popular English-language account of the role of labour NGOs and changes in trade unionism after the fall of Suharto based on fieldwork conducted in mid 1999, see Dan La Botz, *Made In Indonesia: Indonesian Workers Since the Fall of Suharto* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2001).

[83] Sarah Gardner, "Non-Governmental Organisations and Labour in Indonesia: An Analysis of the Late New Order Period and the Post-New Order Period." (BA Honours Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2001); Rositaningrum Rachmawati, "Dimensi Internasional LSM dan Pemberdayaan Buruh di Indonesia Tahun 1990-an: Tiga LSM Perburuhan di Yogyakarta." (Sarjana Sosial Thesis, Gadjah Mada University, 1996); Charlene Simpson, "Women's NGOs and Women Workers: A Case Study of Yasanti." (BA Honours Thesis, Flinders University, 1996). Gardner's Honours thesis compared Hadiz's and my own analyses of labour NGOs, proposing an analysis of labour NGOs' functions that distinguished between their organising, representing and supporting roles; Simpson's examined the Yogyakarta-based feminist labour NGO, Yasanti. Other Indonesian-language undergraduate theses may exist, but at this time it is impossible to conduct a systematic search of theses without visiting every university campus in Indonesia. I found one other short document about the role of NGOs in the labour movement. Titis Eddy Arini, "Gerakan Buruh dan Demokratisasi: Menelusuri Peran LSM," (Jakarta: CESDA-LP3ES, 1993).

examined the labour NGO as an entity with its own, unique characteristics. Scholars writing from the NGO perspective concentrated on labour NGOs' usefulness as examples within their wider typologies of NGOs. Those employing an organisational labour perspective judged the extent to which labour NGOs encouraged or obstructed the formation of independent unionism. Meanwhile, students of proletarianisation focused on labour NGOs' ability to facilitate the expression of a class consciousness developed in response to workers' experiences of industrialisation—if, indeed, they recognised them at all.

Labour NGOs as a Sub-Category of NGOs

Studies written in a development or democratisation framework considered labour NGOs as a sub-group of NGOs generally. This approach provided some useful insights into the organisational characteristics of labour NGOs not available to scholars who saw labour NGOs purely as potential allies and/or obstacles to the formation of workers' groups and independent unions. However, the very breadth which facilitated these insights meant that labour NGOs were examined as a small part of that wider phenomenon, rather than as a group of organisations with particular characteristics not found in NGOs that dealt with other concerns such as the environment or development work.

Eldridge, who produced some of the earliest academic work on Indonesian NGOs, was considered a pioneer in the field by writers using a development framework.[84] He argued that NGO cooperation on labour issues should be understood as part of 'a potential convergence on broader questions of human rights and democratisation', emphasising the link between 'popular struggles' around labour, land and the urban informal sector and the interests of the 'urban and intellectual elites' in expanding the freedom to organise and political reform.[85]

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[84] Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." See for example Philip Eldridge, *NGOs in Indonesia: Popular Movement or Arm of Government?* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1989); Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia;* Philip Eldridge, "NGOs and the State in Indonesia," in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990); Philip Eldridge, "The Political Role of Community Action Groups in India and Indonesia: In Search of a General Theory," *Alternatives* 10, Winter (1984).

[85] Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia*, 114, 213.

Eldridge situated labour and other rights-based NGOs in a typology, which consisted of four models (Figure 1.2).[86] According to Eldridge, most rights-based NGOs (including labour NGOs) combined approaches associated with the second and third NGO model, while some were best understood as 'new radicals'.[87] He questioned the NGO credentials of these 'new radicals' (which had been omitted in earlier versions of his typology) on the grounds that they acted more as political organisations than as 'true' NGOs.[88] Although such groups adopted strategies and organisational forms associated with the NGO movement, Eldridge argued that the emergence of these new radicals 'appear[ed] to represent more of a resurgence of mass-based political action' than a new form of NGO activity.[89] This is a pertinent distinction, because it drew attention to the difference between NGOs and mass movements—a difference that defined the gap between labour NGOs and other forms of organised labour activism.

Orientation	NGO Models			New Radicals 4
	1	2	3	
stance towards official development programs	cooperative; foster community participation	critical collaboration	avoid involvement	oppose
orientation versus state structures	accommodate	reform	maintain distance	oppose
concept of democracy	participatory, problem-solving	balance economic and political rights	grass-roots initiatives	direct decision making
popular mobilisation	small-group formation	economic progress and promote awareness	empower small groups	mass action and demonstrations

Figure 1.2 Eldridge's Typology of Indonesian NGOs

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[86] This figure is based on Eldridge's own diagram. See Ibid., 36.

[87] Ibid., 99.

[88] The criteria on which those categories were judged were also different. See Eldridge, *NGOs in Indonesia: Popular Movement or Arm of Government;* Eldridge, "NGOs and the State in Indonesia."

[89] Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia*, 36-40.

Riker, who also wrote about Indonesian NGOs from a development perspective, adapted Eldridge's typology to explain differences between NGOs. Whereas Eldridge's primary concern was to explore how NGOs contributed to democratisation, Riker used the concept of 'political space' to explain both NGOs' ability to function in an authoritarian political system and the extent to which they acted as a catalyst for institutional and political change.[90] Riker's framework lent itself to an analysis of labour NGOs, but his discussion of their involvement in labour was limited to a short section entitled 'Linkages to Labor Organizations'. In it, he briefly mentioned *Serikat Buruh Merdeka–Setia Kawan* (SBM-SK, Solidarity Free Trade Union) and *Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia* (SBSI, Indonesian Prosperous Trade Union),[91] noting that they had less access to political space than NGOs in the mid-1990s.[92] Both Riker and Eldridge underestimated the significance of labour NGOs in the overall scheme of NGO activity in Indonesia. As both completed their primary fieldwork by 1991, the timing of their research may have been partially responsible for their claims that SBM-SK and SBSI were the main products of NGO's involvement in labour issues.

Uhlin and Aspinall paid considerably more attention to labour NGOs than Riker or Eldridge.[93] Uhlin divided NGOs into 'old' and 'new', noting that the divisions between these categories were not clear-cut.[94] Uhlin defined old-style NGOs by their focus on 'advocacy work for the lower classes'. In contrast, he argued, the new generation of NGOs, inspired by notions of democracy and human rights, 'attack[ed] authoritarian structures' through 'demonstrations and other public protest activities'.[95] Uhlin imposed this general formulation on NGOs active in labour. He contended that whilst old-style labour NGOs tended to limit their involvement to advocacy work on behalf of marginalised groups, some new-

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[90] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule"; Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below."

[91] SBM-SK and SBSI were two of three alternative unions established in the 1990s. Both were established by NGO activists, unlike the third, *Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia* (PPBI, Indonesian Centre for Labour Struggle) which was established by a radical student group. These alternative unions are described in Chapter Two.

[92] Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below."

[93] Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization'*.

[94] Ibid., 87.

[95] Ibid., 97.

generation, pro-democracy and human rights NGOs—along with student activists—made 'some efforts…to form links with the lower classes'.[96] Uhlin's overall concern with the diffusion of foreign influence through oppositional organisations is useful, but problems arise from his attempt to fit labour NGOs into his typology.[97] For example, whilst he later acknowledged some labour NGOs' organising activities, he made no attempt to explain where non-student based grassroots labour NGOs, many of which formed links with workers, were accommodated in his typology.

Like Uhlin, Aspinall drew on the third wave democratisation literature in his thesis on Indonesia's experience of political opposition and the transition from authoritarian rule.[98] However, rather than concentrating on the diffusion of foreign influence, he took a more instrumental approach towards the influence of opposition forces in Indonesia. Aspinall proposed, after Linz, a typology based on opposition groups' internal strategies, aims and base, and their external relations with political power. In his case-study of NGOs, Aspinall identified two main categories which were similar to Uhlin's 'generations', but were not subject to the temporal constraints suggested by that term. The first of these (the majority) contained NGOs that were primarily concerned with community development. The remainder of NGOs were, after Frantz, a 'rights-oriented' form of 'institutionalised social movement'.[99] Aspinall cited industrial labour as a social sector in which NGOs' mobilisational approaches were 'practised particularly intensively' from the early 1990s, in contrast to earlier, welfare-based efforts.[100] A considerable section of his case study of student activism also dealt with labour organising. Here, he noted the overlap between student and NGO activism (the former often leading to the latter) and the important contribution middle class activists made by 'organising particular campaigns, and shaping and articulating the interests of subordinate classes in them', whilst simultaneously cautioning against exaggerating their role.[101]

[96] Ibid., 116.
[97] Understandably, in the context of his broad study, Aspinall based his analysis on a limited list of examples of labour NGOs—the choice of which may well have affected his conclusions.
[98] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule."
[99] Ibid., 130-131.
[100] Ibid., 139.
[101] Ibid., 189-194.

Aspinall considered the role of the working class in the fall of Suharto and the early post-Suharto period in an article published in 1999. He argued that although labour did not play a significant role in the actual overthrow of Suharto, labour activism in the 1990s paved the way for Indonesia's political transformation.[102] Aspinall suggested two features of that activism were of particular interest to scholars of democratisation: the possible alliance between elements of the working and middle classes, and the 'slow and often frustrating development of working class identity and organisational capacity' through the activities of informal workers' organisations.[103] Aspinall's work contained empirical insights about the nature of labour NGOs and the interaction between labour NGOs, student groups concerned with labour, and embryonic mass organisations associated with the student movement. For the purposes of this study, however, the utility of the democratisation framework Aspinall and Uhlin shared is ultimately limited because its primary concern was with the relationship between the middle class and the state, not with structures of organised labour.

The final significant study that incorporated labour NGOs in its wider analysis of NGOs was Sinaga's dissertation, entitled *NGOs in Indonesia: A Study of the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Development Process*.[104] Although this title suggested Sinaga would engage in the analytical framework favoured by Eldridge and Riker, his analysis incorporated a social movement perspective that borrowed heavily from new social movement theory.[105] Having noted a general, global shift in NGOs' focus from relief to empowerment, Sinaga identified three

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[102] Aspinall, "Democratisation, the Working Class and the Indonesian Transition," 1-2.

[103] Ibid.: 9.

[104] Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*. Labour NGOs were unexpectedly absent from Hikam's lengthy doctoral dissertation, which applied social movement theory to labour. Hikam, who has written many articles about NGOs, combined a state-centred analysis with an anthropologically inclined field study of working class politics in two locations. Yet whilst he explicitly used the frames of 'civil society' and 'grass-roots politics' to focus on workers and worker activism, he mentioned NGO activists only once in connection with labour. See Muhammad Hikam, "The State, Grass-Roots Politics and Civil Society: A Study of Social Movements Under Indonesia's New Order." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1995). See also Hikam, "Non-Governmental Organizations and the Empowerment of Civil Society"; Hikam, "The State, Grass-Roots Politics and Civil Society." 15. In one later article of which I am aware, Hikam briefly described workers' connections with NGOs and students. See Muhammad Hikam, "Pembangunan Ekonomi dan Masalah Perburuhan di Bawah Orde Baru," *Balairung* 1997.

[105] Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 8-26. Mansour Fakih also made the point that 'the role of Indonesian NGOs as organized components of a social movement has generally been overlooked'. See Fakih, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Social Transformation." 24.

types of 'empowerment NGOs' in Indonesia since the early 1980s: ecological, cultural ('female') and political (NGOs focused on human rights, labour rights and on specific instances of the negative impact of development).[106] He contended that these 'empowerment NGOs' were the developing-country equivalent of new social movements.[107]

In some ways echoing Aspinall's idea of NGOs as an institutionalised social movement, Sinaga described empowerment NGOs as a 'moral force' initiated by middle-class intellectuals, in the tradition of the Indonesian student movement; a vehicle used by 'highly politicised and militant groups in society like student activists [who] believe[d] that NGOs provide[d] a privileged space for action towards their vision of what society should be'.[108] Significantly, however, the majority of the twenty-five NGOs he examined had their roots in the mass organisations of the pre-New Order period—a fact which led him to observe that the activists concerned accommodated the ideals of the mass organisations from which they emerged within structures that did not 'unnecessarily [attract] government intervention'.[109] Sinaga's attempt to explain the emergence of empowerment NGOs in terms of new social movement theory, rather than his (minimal) treatment of labour NGOs *per se*, made a novel contribution to the Indonesian literature on labour NGOs.[110] The apparent tension between his assertion about NGOs' new social movement characteristics and his observations about NGOs' links to earlier mass organisations sheds light on the complicated reality of NGO activity in Indonesia and the theoretical bifurcation of social movements into the categories of 'old' and 'new'.[111] It suggests that there is a

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[106] Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 27-29.

[107] See also Kastorius Sinaga, "NGO Sebagai Sebuah Gerakan?" (paper presented at the Situasi Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia: Pokok-pokok Pemikiran Disampaikan para Fact-Finding Training, Bandung, 11-13 August 1994).

[108] Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 29, 67-77.

[109] Ibid., 78-79.

[110] Fakih adapts aspects of new social movement theory in his general discussion of NGOs in Indonesia. See Fakih, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Social Transformation."

[111] For perspectives on the new/old social movement debate, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985); Kate Nash, *Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics and Power* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 100-155; Alain Touraine, Michel Wieviorka, and Francois Dubet, *The Workers' Movement*, trans. Ian Patterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 209-224; Samir Amin, "Social Movements at the Periphery," in *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People*, ed. Ponna Wignaraja (London: Zed Books, 1993); Bronwen Dalton and James Cotton, "New Social Movements and the Changing Nature of Political Opposition in South Korea," in *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Garry

need to look beyond traditional categorisations to explain the role of NGOs in the reconstruction of the Indonesian labour movement.

Labour NGOs' Relationships with Workers and Unions

In his 1997 dissertation, Douglas Kammen criticised the 'few scholarly essays on Indonesian industrial labour' for relying on appeals to one of two factors—'the "spontaneous" emergence of "working class militancy and activism" [or]…the organisational efforts of labour activists working through non-governmental organisations and the independent trade unions'.[112] Kammen, himself, made only incidental reference to the contribution of labour NGOs to labour organising in his structuralist study of strikes in New Order Indonesia.[113] However, his observations on Indonesian labour literature are useful in the present context because he concisely identified the difference between the proletarianisation and organised labour approaches that characterised the remaining literature on labour NGOs.

What distinguished studies of proletarianisation from studies of organised labour was the different level of emphasis accorded to workers' experiences and to the organisational vehicles of labour. The organised labour movement was essentially peripheral to the primary concerns of the Indonesian proletarianisation literature. Students of proletarianisation largely ignored the institutionalised labour movement, or at best described it as a backdrop to the experiences of industrial workers. In contrast, by concentrating on unionism as *the* institution of the labour

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Rodan (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Klaus Eder, "Does Social Class Matter in the Study of Social Movements? A Theory of Middle-Class Radicalism," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, ed. Louis Maheu (London: Sage, 1995); Jan Pakulski, "Social Movements and Class: The Decline of the Marxist Paradigm," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, ed. Louis Maheu (London: Sage, 1995); David Plotke, "What's So New About New Social Movements?," in *Social Movements: Critiques, Concepts, Case-Studies*, ed. Stanford Lyman (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Alain Touraine, "Democracy: From a Politics of Citizenship to a Politics of Recognition," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, ed. Louis Maheu (London: Sage, 1995); Paul D'Anieri, Claire Ermst, and Elizabeth Kier, "New Social Movements in Historical Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 22, No. 4 (1990).

[112] Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 23-25.

[113] Ibid., 4-23, 174-214. Kammen's thesis was based on an analysis of the tension between economic policy and politics. He argued that while emergence of export-oriented industries in Indonesia 'was premised on and stimulated significant changes in industrial relations', the demands of export oriented production were compounded by the continuation of corporatist labour relations, contemporaneous levels of labour activism, and rentierism within the industrial relations system. Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 71-123.

movement, scholars writing from an organised labour perspective tended to discount alternative forms of labour movement organisation, including labour NGOs. Consequently, both groups were only interested in labour NGOs' contribution to other processes. The former was concerned with NGOs' contribution to the process of proletarianisation, whilst the latter was concerned with their assistance (or hindrance) in the development of independent unionism.

The Indonesian proletarianisation literature included a number of studies on work in the informal sector and on child labour.[114] However, it was dominated by discussions of the proletarianisation of female labour.[115] Some of these studies devoted little attention to organised labour generally, let alone to the activities of labour NGOs.[116] Mather, for example, made no reference to organised labour, while Wolf devoted less than three pages to labour relations in her widely acclaimed study, and did not mention labour NGOs.[117] Meanwhile, Peter Hancock, the author of a

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[114] On the informal sector, see for example Lea Jellinek, *The Wheel of Fortune: The History of a Poor Community in Jakarta* (Sydney: ASAA/Allen and Unwin, 1991); Hans-Dieter Evers, "Transformation of the Informal Sector: Social and Political Consequences," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994); S. V. Sethuraman, "The Informal Sector in Indonesia: Policies and Prospects," *International Labour Review* 124, No. 6 (1985). On child labour, see for example Sharon Bessell, *The Political Dynamics of Child Labour in Indonesia* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1995); S.R. Pardoen, *Children in Hazardous Works in the Informal Sector in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Atma Jaya Research Centre/ILO-IPEC, 1995); Ben White and Indrasari Tjandraningsih, *Child Workers in Indonesia* (Bandung: Akatiga, 1998).

[115] D. Wolf, *Factory Daughters: Gender, Household Dynamics, and Rural Industrialization in Java* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists"; Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia"; Teri Caraway, "Engendering Industrialization: The Feminization of Factory Labor in Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 2002); Peter James Hancock, "Industrial Development in Indonesia, Development for Whom? A Case Study of Women who Work in Factories in Rural West Java." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Edith Cowan University, 1998); Ratna Saptari, "Rural Women to the Factories: Continuity and Change in East Java's Kretek Cigarette Industry." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1995). One exception is Kathryn Robinson, *Stepchildren of Progress: The Political Economy of Development in an Indonesian Mining Town* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

[116] C. Mather, "'Rather than Make Trouble, It's Better Just to Leave': Behind the Lack of Industrial Strife in the Tangerang Region of West Java," in *Women, Work and Ideology in the Third World*, ed. H. Afshar (London: Tavistock, 1986); C. Mather, "Industrialization in the Tangerang Regency of West Java: Women Workers and the Islamic Patriarchy," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 15, No. 2 (1983); Hancock, "Industrial Development in Indonesia, Development for Whom?"; Saptari, "Rural Women to the Factories."

[117] Wolf, *Factory Daughters*, 40-42. The timing and location of Wolf's research could have affected her focus on this matter. A relatively small number of labour NGOs were active in Central Java before the fall of Suharto, and Wolf's research was completed before labour NGOs became prominent at the national level.

more recent study on women's proletarianisation, found no evidence of NGO activity in his fieldwork location.[118]

Where they did deal with labour NGOs, students of female proletarianisation viewed them primarily as part of the labour movement. Saptari briefly noted the organising efforts of 'alternative' unions and a number of women's NGOs, while two other female proletarianisation studies dealt with labour NGOs at considerable length.[119] The first, by American scholar and labour activist Bama Athreya, focused on labour NGOs' activities in a working-class suburb in North Jakarta.[120] The second, a Masters' thesis entitled 'The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists' by Nori Andriyani, a former feminist labour NGO activist, explored NGOs' involvement in class formation amongst female factory workers.[121] Athreya argued that although labour NGOs had limited physical reach, their 'symbolic wherewithal' significantly altered workers' 'situation' in the early 1990s— 'channel[ling] what would otherwise be chaotic and possibly violent outbursts into goal-oriented collective action' and 'interpreting top-level policy discourse to the grassroots'.[122] Andriyani concurred with Athreya's assessment of the value of NGOs' contribution. Having canvassed workers' opinions of NGOs and documented NGOs' involvement with the group of women workers on which her research was focused, she concluded that 'there is no doubt that the labour NGO has become a medium for the workers to develop their consciousness'.[123] These observations are relevant to the study at hand, because they addressed the relationship between labour

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[118] Personal Communication with Peter Hancock, 10 October 1998.

[119] YLBHI (The Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) and *Forsol Buruh* (an NGO network formed to protest military involvement in labour affairs) were also mentioned in connection to the Marsinah case (when a worker activist, Marsinah, was murdered in suspicious circumstances). See Saptari, "Rural Women to the Factories." 55-57.

[120] Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia."

[121] Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists."

[122] Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 20, 99. Aspinall, on the other hand, argued that students and other middle class activists were as much influenced by the popular upsurge of the early 1990s as they influenced it. Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule."

[123] Andriyani, a founding member of the left-feminist labour NGO, *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika* (YPM, Free Women's Foundation), also made some reasonably strong criticisms of labour NGOs in her thesis. See Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists." 79, 81, 114. She later became completely disillusioned with the indigenous NGO phenomenon. Personal Communication with Nori Andriyani, 29 March 1999. See also Nori Andriyani, "Myth of the Effective Little NGO," *Inside Indonesia* 1996.

NGOs and the workers they sought to 'empower'. Yet, although both were broadly accepting of the role of NGOs in the Indonesian labour movement in the 1990s (insofar as they benefited individual workers), the broader focus of their studies on the process of proletarianisation meant that neither Athreya nor Andriyani explicitly justified or questioned the involvement of NGOs in the labour movement.

Two major studies dealt with labour NGOs from an organised labour perspective. These were Kusyuniati's unpublished thesis, 'Strikes from 1990 to 1996: An Evaluation of the Dynamics of the Indonesian Labour Movement' and Hadiz's book, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia* (the published version of his dissertation).[124] Kusyuniati attempted to combine a study of proletarianisation with a study of organised labour, taking an approach that, in many respects, was much like Andriyani's.[125] Her primary analytical focus was on regional and personal differences in women workers' willingness to participate in the organised labour movement, and the personal processes through which they did or did not develop class-consciousness. However, much of her thesis dealt with organised labour, and it included a chapter on NGOs' and student groups' contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement.[126] In contrast, Hadiz discussed labour NGOs as part of his broad history of organised labour, which he developed with reference to the political economy of New Order Indonesia and workers' experiences of New Order corporatism. He sought to explain the involvement of NGOs in the labour movement in terms of state control and prospects for independent unionism, arguing that NGOs'

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[124]   Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia;* Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." Hadiz developed his ideas about labour NGOs in a number of articles written during his doctoral candidacy. See Hadiz, "Workers and Working Class Politics in the 1990s"; Vedi Hadiz, "Challenging State Corporatism on the Labour Front: Working Class Politics in the 1990s," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge, *Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No.31* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994); Vedi Hadiz, "The Political Significance of Recent Working Class Action in Indonesia," in *Indonesia's Emerging Proletariat: Workers and their Struggles*, ed. David Bourchier, *Annual Indonesia Lecture Series* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994).

[125]   Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." Unlike Hadiz, who also had a history of activism, Kusyuniati explicitly framed her study within her personal quest to academically ground and better understand the organisational activities and shortcomings of Indonesian labour NGO phenomenon, of which she was a part for more than a decade. In her Introduction she explained that her study was motivated by her curiosity about 'why some workers never become empowered in the face of the expenditure of so much time, energy and money'. Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 3.

[126]   Ibid., 281-334.

engagement with labour was 'the direct consequence of the restrictions imposed within the existing arrangement of state-capital-labour relations'.[127]

Kusyuniati had misgivings about the efficacy of NGOs' and student groups' involvement in the labour movement. Her main reservations were that labour NGOs and students were 'not very professional', '[could] not be expected to solve all the problems of the workers', and provided 'minimal' support for workers.[128] Kusyuniati blamed this lack of professionalism on the limited life span of many NGOs and student groups[129] and on the 'experiential gulf between students and…workers', which, she argued, stemmed from of the lack of opportunities for campus politics under the government's Campus Life Normalisation program of the late 1970s.[130] Yet despite these reservations, Kusyuniati did not assume that labour NGOs were a temporary anomaly in the organised labour movement. Rather, she argued that their 'inadequate involvement' contributed to the weakness of that movement.[131] In doing so she adopted what she called the 'Marxist' tenet that 'students and other intellectuals are expected to help workers understand their rights'.[132] Kusyuniati's explicit appeal to what were, in fact, Leninist understandings of the role of labour intellectuals (which she referred to as 'outside agents') is important in the context of this thesis. Her analysis reflected New Order discourses of NGO involvement in Indonesia generally, and in labour in particular. Indeed, it implicitly drew from these same understandings—the difference being that she accepted that 'outsiders' have a valid, ongoing role in the labour movement, while the state (and many NGO activists) did not. However, although Kusyuniati identified the central characteristics of the way in which labour NGOs' relationships with the organised labour movement were constructed, she did not explore the implications of her insight.

Hadiz's work on labour NGOs engaged more explicitly with labour movement theory. As he was principally concerned with the fortunes of unions, it is understandable that he limited his consideration of labour NGOs to their contribution

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127 Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 8.
128 Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 284, 346-347.
129 Ibid., 93, 350.
130 Ibid., 286, 346.
131 Ibid., 349-351.
132 Ibid., 281.

to that process.[133] However, his appeal European precedents in his analysis of labour NGOs is noteworthy, because it led to contradictions in his analysis.[134] On one hand, he acknowledged the value of labour NGOs' 'non-traditional' role within Indonesia's specific historical context. On the other, he equated labour NGOs with the nascent workers' organisations of industrialising Europe. In doing so, he ignored the organisational differences between a worker-based mutual society or guild and the predominantly middle-class (albeit worker-focused) labour NGOs of late New Order Indonesia.[135] As a result, while he offered a credible structural explanation for why NGOs came to undertake some of the functions traditionally ascribed to unions, he gave little consideration to the theoretical implications of their involvement in the labour movement.

Hadiz's refusal to examine labour NGOs as a valid organisational form in their own right was demonstrated in a later essay entitled, 'New Organising Vehicles in Indonesia'. In this essay, Hadiz again excluded the labour NGO from serious consideration by using 'new' narrowly to mean non-state controlled grassroots workers' organisations that have the *potential* to develop into independent unions, rather than broadly to include labour NGOs.[136] By once more using the union as the criterion of significance against which Indonesia's labour NGOs are judged, Hadiz

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[133] Hadiz noted that working-class movements can, and do, work with 'the new social movements of environmentalism, feminism, world peace and the like…because they are all, to a degree, directed at some critique of different aspects of a prevailing capitalist order'. Alluding to the international literature, he commented that 'There is evidence that there has been increasing interaction, in some of the advanced as well as less industrialised countries, between worker activists and activists of the various new social movements, in confronting these issues'. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 10-11.

[134] This was somewhat surprising in a study that emphasised the mediating effects of 'specific constellations of class and state power in different historical contexts' on the influence of international capitalism. Note also that Hadiz relied heavily on theories of corporatism. However, he did make a *caveat* about the transferability of Latin American and East Asian models. In particular, he questioned the links Deyo drew between the relative absence of strong working-class movements in East Asia and the limited political role that Asian working-class communities have played, highlighting the contradiction between Deyo's assumption that workers in the labour-intensive export-oriented industries are poor unionisers and the militancy of young, female workers in light manufacturing in Indonesia. See Hadiz, "New Organising Vehicles in Indonesia," 110-112. See also Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle*. In contrast, Lambert emphasised the similarities between labour regimes in Indonesia and 'other Asian nations' in his accounts of Indonesian industrial relations. See Lambert, "An Emerging Force?"

[135] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 134-156. In his conclusion, Hadiz restated his claim that NGOs were comparable to other non-trade union types of organisation, arguing that it is not unusual for such organisations to emerge in the early stages of industrialisation in repressive political environments. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 187.

[136] Hadiz, "New Organising Vehicles in Indonesia," 118-120.

defined labour NGOs only in terms of the aspects of their activities that affected workers' attempts to organise themselves into unions. In doing so, he failed to account for their overall contribution to the labour movement.[137]

The Limits of Current Analyses

This small academic literature offered a variety of perspectives on Indonesian labour NGOs. Yet while aspects of each perspective are useful, the most prominent feature of this literature was its uncertainty regarding the nature of labour NGOs. One example that illustrated the limits of the literature was its lack of consensus on whether or not the three alternative unions that emerged in the early 1990s should be differentiated from labour NGOs.[138] There was a sharp division between studies written from an NGO or proletarianisation perspective and studies concerned primarily with organised labour on this question. The former did not privilege the union in their analyses because they were not particularly concerned with the labour movement. Consequently, they had no difficulty recognising the important differences between unions and labour NGOs. In contrast, the latter conflated the alternative unions and labour NGOs because the alternative unions did not adequately meet internationally accepted definitions of a union. By judging labour NGOs on what is (and is not) an NGO or what is (and is not) a union, these studies drew quite different conclusions about the status of Indonesia's labour NGOs.

For authors writing from an NGO perspective, organisational form (most notably membership criteria) was the primary consideration in determining the relative similarities and differences between alternative unions and labour NGOs.

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[137] Hadiz confirmed this stance when interviewed, arguing that before the fall of Suharto, 'the question was whether [the labour NGO phenomenon] was to be the main vehicle of labour organising or whether it was just a tool towards something else. Most people would say—I mean the activists would say—that of course it's just a tool'. Interview with Vedi Hadiz on 15 March 2000.

[138] Recall that between 1990 and 1994, three attempts were made to establish independent unions. SBM-SK, the first, was established in 1990; SBSI, was established in 1992; and PPBI was established in 1994. PPBI was less often described in these accounts than SBM-SK or SBSI, either because it was formed after some authors completed their research, or because of its student origins and radical approach. See also David Bourchier, "Solidarity: The New Order's First Free Trade Union," in *Indonesia's Emerging Proletariat: Workers and Their Struggles*, ed. David Bourchier (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994); Rob Lambert, "Authoritarian State Unionism in New Order Indonesia" (paper presented at the Eleventh AIRAANZ Annual Conference, Sydney, February 1994); Manning, "Structural Change and Industrial Relations During the Soeharto Period - an Approaching Crisis."

Eldridge, Riker, Uhlin and Aspinall all contrasted the alternative unions—primarily SBM-SK and SBSI—with labour NGOs. Eldridge emphasised both labour NGOs' agency as initiators of organising efforts and the difference in form between the NGOs themselves and the workers' organisations they sponsored when describing labour NGOs' attempts to encourage the formation of independent unions.[139] Meanwhile, as noted earlier, Riker distinguished NGOs generally from mass-membership functional groups (including unions). When applying this categorisation to the labour context, he differentiated between alternative unions and labour NGOs without further justification.[140] Uhlin included both alternative unions and labour NGOs in the category 'labour groups', but noted that NGOs did 'not aim at establishing a mass-based movement or national labour union' and drew attention to the middle-class characteristics of labour NGOs and student activists, while downplaying the identical class background of the leaders of SBM-SK and SBSI.[141] Aspinall, too, differentiated between labour NGOs and what he called 'attempts to establish open labour unions beyond government control'. Like Eldridge, he emphasised the agency of labour NGOs and differences in form—noting that by the early 1990s, labour NGOs 'were giving birth to new kinds of mass organisation which partly superseded them'.[142] Sinaga did not address the question of the alternative unions, which suggests that he believed that organisations such as SBM-SK and SBSI were outside the scope of his study.[143]

Authors writing from a proletarianisation perspective also recognised the difference between labour NGOs and the alternative unions, although they did not seek to explain that difference in any systematic way. Athreya argued that labour NGOs 'tacitly understood that whereas their activities as advocates, educators and social programs providers would be permitted, they were expected to stop short of actually organizing workers', whilst the 'unofficial and unrecognized' unions of the period challenged the system by attempting to register.[144] Andriyani argued that

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[139] Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia*, 111-114.
[140] Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below." 313-314.
[141] Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization'*, 119.
[142] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 140-141.
[143] Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*. As noted earlier, Eldridge and Riker conducted their research in the early 1990s, whilst Sinaga's work was published in 1994.
[144] Many labour NGOs did, of course, organise workers. However, the workers' groups they sponsored did not seek recognition as trade unions in the New Order period. Inconsistencies in

'independent trade unions' were different from what she called 'other forms of labour organisations, such as the labour NGOs'.[145] Elaborating on her understanding of the difference between these categories, she argued that because NGOs were non-worker organisations and operated outside factories, 'labor NGOs ha[d] different functions than trade unions and [could] never replace trade unions'.[146]

In contrast, those writing from an organised labour perspective argued that the alternative unions were a sub-group of labour NGOs. The composition and function of an 'authentic' union were the primary criteria of significance for Hadiz and Kusyuniati, who both maintained that the boundary between the 'alternative' unions and labour NGOs was largely artificial. Kusyuniati described labour NGOs as 'outsiders', but accorded the alternative unions the same standing. This was so, she argued, because while SBSI and SMB-SK claimed to be unions, they were established by NGOs and political activists rather than by workers.[147] Likewise, Hadiz identified the alternative unions as a sub-group within the broader category of 'organisations within which middle-class activists and workers have collaborated'.[148] Hadiz argued that the alternative unions' lack of shop floor access and middle class hierarchies (which, in the case of SBM-SK and SBSI included activists formerly associated with labour NGOs) meant that the alternative unions were in fact no different from the labour NGOs themselves. Hadiz's work most clearly revealed the dilemmas that have characterised the position of Indonesia's labour NGOs. On one hand, the criterion against which he judged labour NGOs was their capacity to help

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Athreya's discussion of labour NGOs suggested she was not overly concerned with the categorisation of these organisations. For example, she listed a group of 'new NGOs' that included *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika,* Sisbikum, PPBI and *Partai Rakyat Demokratik* (PRD, Democratic People's Party), which she said identified as NGOs in order to avoid government disapproval—a claim that was clearly untrue in the case of PPBI and PRD. Later, however, she referred to PPBI in the same context as SBM-SK and SBSI, which she differentiated them from labour NGOs. Further on still, she agreed with Hadiz's claim that PPBI and PRD 'took a more openly confrontational stance than even SBM or SBSI'. Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 46-49.

[145]   Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists." 140.
[146]   Ibid., 21.
[147]   Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 283, 319-320. Kusyuniati distinguished between SBM-SK and SBSI, which she equated with NGOs, and PPBI, which she called a 'student model', whereas Hadiz did not.
[148]   Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 136. Hadiz has not always conflated these categories. In a paper written in 1993, he distinguished between what he called the 'trade unionist' path and 'NGO' path of alternative labour organising. Hadiz, "Workers and Working Class Politics in the 1990s."

promote independent unionism.[149] On the other, he did not distinguish between attempts to establish alternative unions and those labour NGOs.

Conclusion

Labour NGOs have a dual identity as NGOs and as organisations concerned with labour. This duality hampered analysis of their role in New Order Indonesia. Two features of the international literature are particularly important in the context of this study. The first is the division between the study of NGOs and the study of labour. Labour NGOs were described in both literatures, but analysed in neither. The second lies in the character of the developing-country organised labour literature. Scholars have begun to acknowledge NGOs' involvement in labour issues, but they have not recognised labour NGOs as labour movement organisations in their own right. Instead, they have considered them a source of inspiration, an adjunct to unions, or a temporary substitute where unions are ineffective. The Indonesian literature on labour NGOs reflected these contours. Some studies examined labour NGOs as politically active NGOs without regard to their implications for the labour movement. Scholars who approached labour NGOs from a labour perspective were influenced by the international division between the literatures on proletarianisation and labour institutions. Students of proletarianisation made no attempt to analyse the precise function of labour NGOs, while those concerned with the organisation of labour saw labour NGOs as a temporary substitute for 'true' trade unions. The resulting lack of consensus about the significance, nature and purpose of NGOs' concern for labour suggests that much remains to be done to reach a fuller understanding of labour NGOs' role. This task has two components: it requires a detailed account of the way labour NGOs operated in the particular national context of Indonesia and a deep exploration of the institution of 'labour representation'—the primary criterion against which labour NGOs have been judged.

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[149] When asked about this issue directly, Hadiz confirmed that this was his position. Interview with Vedi Hadiz, 15 March 2000.

CHAPTER 2

Indonesia's Labour NGOs

Labour NGOs played an important role in the industrial sector in Indonesia in the 1990s. They organised factory workers, provided training and legal aid, and lobbied the government, multinationals and international NGOs on those workers' behalf. Other organisations played similar roles. Radical student groups mobilised workers against the injustices of global capitalism, while alternative unions challenged the government's one-union policy by demanding the right to register. All three groups contributed to the re-emergence of organised labour during the last years of Suharto's rule. However, there were significant differences between these different types of 'non-worker' organisations despite their shared emphasis on industrial labour.

The previous chapter set out the case for considering labour NGOs as a legitimate form of labour movement organisation in Indonesia and internationally. This chapter provides the basis on which to develop a more accurate picture of NGOs' role in the labour movement in the particular national context of Indonesia. It is divided into three parts: the first describes the relationships between labour NGOs and the other types of 'non-worker' labour opposition; the second examines two typologies of labour NGOs; while the third outlines the focus and activities of the twenty-five labour NGOs surveyed for this study. The chapter provides evidence for the claim made in the previous chapter: that labour NGOs have unique features, which current analyses fail to recognise because they consider labour NGOs as substitute trade unions rather than as a distinct form of labour movement organisation.

Organised Opposition to New Order Labour Policy

By the early 1990s, there were four main types of oppositional labour movement organisations in Indonesia: informal grassroots workers' groups, self-styled alternative trade unions, radical student groups and labour NGOs. These groups were

part of a complex constellation of organisations involved in the organisation and representation of labour. The web of relationships between these organisations is best represented visually (Figure 2.1).[1]
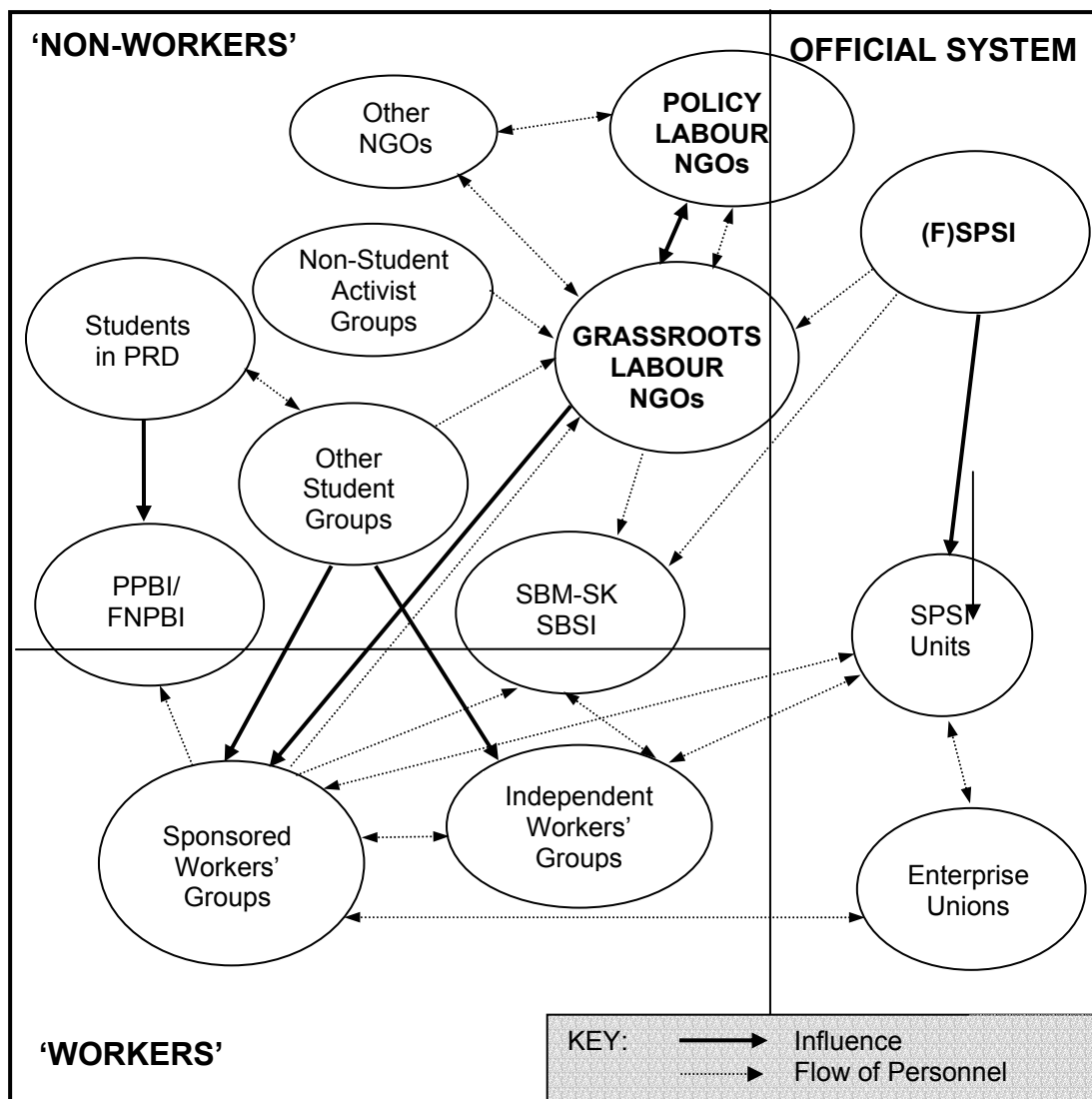
Figure 2.1 Relationships between Labour Organisations

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[1] This figure is a schema of labour representation between 1994 (after SPSI was re-federated and independent plant level unions were permitted) and 1998. The size of the diagram components does not indicate influence. Likewise, their position relative to the line dividing 'workers' and 'non-workers' has no meaning other than to indicate the perceived status of the organisation. I have no empirical data on the frequency of the personnel flows shown by the dotted lines. However, respondents from SPSI, workers' groups, and labour NGOs indicated that such flows occurred.

The principal components in the official system of labour representation were the industrial unions of the *Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (FSPSI, Federation of All-Indonesia Workers' Unions), their plant-level work units and the independent enterprise unions permitted under Ministerial Regulation No.01/MEN/1994 in workplaces where no SPSI unit existed.[2] As suggested by Figure 2.1, some labour NGOs played a limited role in the official system in their capacity as educators and advocates. However, their other major functions—the organisation of labour and participation in national and international networks critical of the government's labour policy—lay outside the official industrial relations system. As Figure 2.1 also shows, New Order Indonesia's unofficial labour movement was divided into workers' and non-workers' organisations. The distinction between the two groups was very strong because of the sharp separation between Indonesia's working and middle classes.[3]

Many informal and semi-formal community-based workers' groups emerged during the New Order period. Most organising in this period took place in export-oriented light manufacturing, although some groups were formed in heavy manufacturing or industries catering for the domestic market. These groups were different from NGOs and student groups, and from the leadership of the alternative trade unions of the period, because they were exclusively of the working class.[4] In contrast, as Hadiz has observed, distinctions between different types of 'non-worker' labour movement organisations were not entirely clear-cut.[5] Two of the three alternative labour unions grew out of labour NGOs' cooperative attempts to foster independent unionism. The third was established by a radical student group.[6] The founders of SBM-SK and SBSI sought to emulate the industrial unions of Europe.

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[2] In this thesis, SPSI is used to describe both SPSI and FSPSI because although SPSI was officially refederated in 1993, the changes were largely cosmetic. See Chapter Five for a description of the refederation and reforms contained in Ministerial Regulation No.01/MEN/1994.

[3] Recall the brief comments made about class in the Introduction. The class divide and its implications for organised labour are discussed in more detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

[4] Two organisations included in the NGOs surveyed for this study are partial exceptions. *Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi* (Bhakti Pertiwi, Service to the Nation Foundation) and *Kelompok Buruh Bandung* (KBB, Bandung Workers' Group) were NGOs staffed entirely by worker-activists formerly associated with other labour NGOs. They are considered labour NGOs rather than workers' groups in this study, because they adopted the form of the labour NGO, as defined in Chapter One, rather than the form of an embryo union.

[5] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 135-136.

[6] Ibid., 144-145.

They believed that the industrial and party-political functions of labour should be separated.[7] SBM-SK and SBSI focused their struggles on the high profile issues of union recognition and workers' rights to organise and strike, but rejected—at least rhetorically—a direct 'political' role for unions.[8] In contrast, PPBI openly advocated the marrying of industrial and political objectives (what Hadiz called 'labour and wider political struggles').[9]

SBM-SK, the first of the alternative unions, was established by a number of NGO activists, trade unionists and human rights activists in September 1990, including Muchtar Pakpahan, the labour NGO activist who later headed SBSI, and Teten Masduki, a prominent advocate of labour rights.[10] The new union, which was headed by Haji Johannes Cornelius Princen, long-time human rights activist and founder of *Lembaga Pembela Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia* (LPHAM, Institute for Defence of Human Rights), and Saut Aritonang, formerly of SPSI, held its first congress in the December of the same year.[11] SBM-SK was never officially

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[7] See Dewan Pengurus Pusat Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia, *Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia (SBSI)* (Jakarta: Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia, 1993); Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setia Kawan, "Kongres I Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setia Kawan, Jakarta, 15-16 Desember 1990" (1990).

[8] The government's sometimes-violent response to alternative unions' involvement in strikes proved an effective publicity tool in the international arena, albeit at considerable personal cost to some of the individuals involved. Both Pakpahan, the leader of SBSI, and Dita Sari, the leader of PPBI, were jailed for their labour activism. Muchtar Pakpahan was arrested after the Medan riots of 1994. Dita Sari was arrested on 8 July 1996 after the PPBI strike in Surabaya, along with two other activists. NGO activists also experienced harassment, including arrest. For example in North Sumatra, activists from *Yayasan Pondok Rakyat Kreatif* (Pondokan, Creative People's House Foundation), *Lembaga Advokasi Anak Indonesia* (LAAI, Indonesian Institute of Advocacy for Children)and *Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera* (KPS, Lamp of Prosperity Group) were arrested after the Medan Riots of 1994. See Muchtar Pakpahan, *Lima Tahun Memimpin SBSI: Pilihan atau Panggilan: Untuk Kesejahteraan, Demokrasi, Hak Asasi Manusia, Tegaknya Hukum dan Keadilan Sosial* (Jakarta: Pustaka Forum Adil Sejahtera, 1997); Dita Sari, *Indonesian Labour Fighter Dita Sari Jailed for Daring to Struggle: Her Story and Writings* (Sydney: ASIET, 1997); "SBSI Leader Accused of 'Inciting Workers'," *TAPOL Bulletin* 1994, 2; "Direktur LAAI Pusat Diperiksa Delapan Jam," *Kompas*, 20 June 1994; "Dua Aktivis LSM Hilang Misterius," *Jayakarta*, 15 June 1994.

[9] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 154.

[10] Bourchier, "Solidarity: The New Order's First Free Trade Union," 55. For further data from interviews with Saut Aritonang and detailed accounts of individual workers' experiences of SBM-SK, see Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 46-48, 101-112. Hadiz described SBM-SK as 'an uneasy coalition of human-rights activists, NGO leaders, labour organisers and rank-and-file workers'. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 145.

[11] Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setia Kawan, "Kongres I Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setia Kawan, Jakarta, 15-16 Desember 1990".

banned.[12] However, the government maintained that it was illegitimate on two grounds: first, it contravened the one-union policy; more importantly, it was formed by middle-class labour activists rather than by workers.[13] SBM-SK disintegrated in early 1992 over disagreements about whether it should take an industrial or political role. According to Saut Aritonang, SBM-SK 'was getting more and more political [and] less concerned with communicating with workers. I was worried that if it was all just strikes and being fired, the workers would lose faith.'[14] Despite its untimely demise, SBM-SK provided considerable momentum in the struggle for the right to organise in the early 1990s.[15]

SBSI was formed under Pakpahan's leadership at a national meeting of workers facilitated by *Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera* (YFAS, Justice and Welfare Forum) and *Yayasan Komunikasi* (YAKOM, Communication Foundation) in April 1992, not long after SBM-SK collapsed. It held its first congress in July 1993.[16] Pakpahan was a lawyer, academic and activist who had been involved in labour issues since the late 1970s. He had been associated with YFAS, one of the labour NGOs described in this study, at the time SBSI was formed.[17] Pakpahan argued that SBSI was a 'workers' organisation', whereas SBM-SK had been controlled by labour NGOs.[18] However, SBM-SK and SBSI shared many characteristics as a result of their connections with labour NGOs and the government's restrictions on independent unionism. Like SBM-SK before it, SBSI formally adopted *Pancasila* as its philosophical base, and Pakpahan, like Aritonang, strongly promoted Western

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[12]　Bourchier argued that SBM-SK was the beneficiary of both government attempts to cultivate a liberal image abroad and protection from elements in the military. Bourchier, "Solidarity," 58.

[13]　See Chapter Six.

[14]　Aritonang cited in Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 116-117. See also Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 147.

[15]　Bourchier, "Solidarity," 60-62.

[16]　*Yayasan Komunikasi* should not be confused with *Yakoma*.

[17]　Pakpahan's leadership of SBSI was initially meant to be transitional, and his continued occupation of the post caused a rift with his former colleagues. Interview with Amor Tampubolon on 29 March 1999. See also Pakpahan, *Lima Tahun Memimpin SBSI*, viii. Relations between SBSI and labour NGOs remained thorny after the fall of Suharto.

[18]　Pakpahan, *Lima Tahun Memimpin SBSI*, 45. Pakpahan pointed to the composition of SBSI's executive (in which nine of eleven members were workers) as evidence of this claim. However, as noted in the previous chapter, in the mid 1990s this distinction was not recognised by the government, nor indeed by the ICFTU.

social-democratic unionism as a model for Indonesia.[19] Local press coverage of SBSI's attempts to register as a trade union and Pakpahan's arrest after an SBSI strike turned into a violent race riot in Medan in February 1994 continued for many months.[20] The Medan strikes also attracted significant attention from international labour bodies and other international groups concerned with Indonesian labour issues.[21] In particular, the strikes and the government's measures to restrict SBSI received heavy coverage in the international activist press, including the British-based *Tapol*.[22] Unlike SBM-SK, SBSI survived the remainder of the Suharto period to become one of the most influential trade unions during the Habibie and Wahid presidencies (1998-2001).[23]

PPBI, which was formed by student activists in the *Partai Rakyat Demokratik* (PRD, Democratic People's Party, formerly Democratic People's Association) in

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[19] Dewan Pengurus Besar Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setia Kawan, *Anggaran Dasar Serikat Buruh Merdeka 'Setia Kawan'* (Jakarta: 1990), 4; Dewan Pengurus Pusat Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia, *Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia (SBSI)*, 1.

[20] The Medan riots occurred when a strike involving SBSI and a number of labour NGOs were overtaken by anti-Chinese sentiment. See for example "Kapolri: Muchtar Pakpahan 'Dijemput' karena Tidak Memenuhi Panggilan Polisi," *Kompas*, 14 August 1994; "Kedubes AS Khawatir Atas Penahanan Mochtar Pakpahan," *Waspada*, 18 August 1994; "Ketua SBSI Medan Diadili dengan Tuduhan Menghasut," *Kompas*, 25 August 1994; "Mencari Kambing Hitam Kasus Medan," *Barata*, Week 1 May 1994; "Muchtar Pakpahan Diperiksa 19 Jam di Poltabes Medan," *Kompas*, 16 June 1994; "Pengurus Teras SBSI Medan Mulai Diadili dalam Kasus Kerusuhan Buruh," *Media Indonesia*, 10 August 1994; "Ketua Muda Bidang Pidana Umum MA Soal Muchtar Pakpahan: 'Ndak Ada Desakan Dari Luar Negeri'," *Merdeka*, 21 May 1995; "Menaker: Tak Ada Tekanan Dalam Pembebasan Muchtar Pakpahan," *Merdeka*, 2 June 1995; "Muchtar Pakpahan Bebas, Penuntut Mengajukan PK," *Kompas*, 20 March 1996. Although most coverage of outsider involvement in the riots focused on SBSI, NGOs were sometimes mentioned. In one article for example, it was reported that SBSI and eight NGOs were involved in the Medan riots. See "SBSI Akui Terlibat Demonstrasi Medan," *Republika*, 16 April 1994. On NGO involvement, see also "Direktur LAAI Pusat Diperiksa Delapan Jam"; "Dua Aktivis LSM Hilang Misterius"; "Kasus Medan: LBH Diduga Terlibat," *Republika*, 22 June 1994; "SBSI Akui Mengorganisasikan Pemogokan Buruh di Medan," *Kompas*, 6 May 1994; "Tersangka Unjuk Rasa Buruh Medan Diproses Secara Hukum," *Kompas*, 23 July 1994; "Yang Abaikan Hak Buruh Akan Ditutup," *Republika*, 19 April 1994..

[21] See International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, "Trade Union Repression in Indonesia," (Brussels: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, 1994), 2-17. See also Vedi Hadiz, "State and Labour in the Early New Order," in *State and Labour in New Order Indonesia*, ed. Rob Lambert (Nedlands: Asia Research Centre/University of Western Australia Press, 1997), 150-152; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 320-322.

[22] See for example "Latest Strike Wave Spawns New Union," *TAPOL Bulletin* 111 (1992); "First Nationwide Strike Wins Support on Factory Floor," *TAPOL Bulletin* 122 (1994); "Free Trade Union Officially Banned," *TAPOL Bulletin* 123 (1994); "A Long Hot Week in Medan," *TAPOL Bulletin* 123 (1994); "Military Intervention in Labour Disputes," *TAPOL Bulletin* 122 (1994); "SBSI Leader Accused of 'Inciting Workers'"; "Thirteen Pematang Siantar Workers Sentenced," *TAPOL Bulletin*, 126 (1994); "Trade Unionists and Workers Under Arrest," *TAPOL Bulletin* 123 (1994).

[23] See Chapter Eight. See also La Botz, *Made In Indonesia*, 189-227.

October 1994, was the third of the alternative unions active during the late Suharto period. PPBI did not seek registration, and showed little interest in collective bargaining or the other industrial functions of unionism, although its three 'primary goals' included a number of economic demands.[24] PPBI was involved in a series of high-profile strikes between 1994 and 1996 which provoked strong reactions from the military and the bureaucracy. It was effectively destroyed in early July 1996 when Dita Sari and other PPBI activists were arrested and later jailed for subversion.[25]

NGOs, student groups, other activist groups and the leftist PRD were unambiguously identified as being comprised of non-workers, even though some activists in a small number of these organisations had working-class backgrounds. The alternative unions promoted themselves as working-class organisations; but, as noted earlier, they too were established and primarily controlled by middle-class activists from labour NGOs or radical student groups. There were, however, significant differences in the way in which alternative unions, radical student groups and labour NGOs characterised themselves which influenced their organisational structure and the strategies they employed. While the alternative unions of the period grew out of NGO and student initiatives, they were functionally very different from their parent organisations. Unlike labour NGOs, which were limited-membership organisations, or student groups, which generally had little formal organisational structure (or in PRD's case, was structured as a political party), alternative unions aspired to become mass-movement organisations of due-paying workers.[26]

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[24] These were: to increase the basic wage, to promote the freedom to organise and to end military involvement in labour disputes. *Jakarta Crackdown* (Jakarta: Alliance of Independent Journalists/Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development/Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information, 1997), 124.

[25] Dita Sari, a former law student, was a well-known labour activist. She was a founding member the radical student group *Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi* (SMID, Indonesian Students in Solidarity for Democracy) and the founding General Secretary of PPBI. Dita Sari was arrested a number of times between 1994 and 1996, when she was finally imprisoned. In 1998, while in still prison, she was elected Chair of the newly-formed FNPBI, PPBI's successor. Dita Sari was released from prison on 5 July 1999. See "Dita Sari Rindukan Kebebasan," *Kompas*, 6 July 1999; "Labor Activist Dita Released from Prison," *Jakarta Post*, 6 July 1999. For further interviews with Dita Sari and a description of the activities of FNPBI, see La Botz, *Made In Indonesia*, 229-251.

[26] NGOs' relationships with the workers groups they sponsored, particularly the fact that they created workers' groups rather than inviting workers to join their organisations *en masse*, provided concrete evidence of their professed belief in the difference between labour NGOs and trade unions.

Student groups and labour NGOs also differed from each other in important ways. The student groups were relatively unstructured and ephemeral. Individuals' involvement in a student group was generally defined by their status as students, which lasted for a finite period; in many cases, the groups themselves did not survive the graduations of influential members.[27] Ideologically, student groups were less likely to accept the individualist conception of human rights that informed much of the international NGO movement. Leninist and Maoist texts (which, although banned, were readily available in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s) strongly influenced many of the student groups involved in labour issues under the New Order. Furthermore, the examples of South Korea and the Philippines were influential in the early 1990s, when industrial workers became a 'major priority' for radical student groups.[28] In contrast, NGOs had a relatively permanent, relatively formal structure. They were less likely to be radical because the international organisations that funded them did not favour radicalism. Responsibility to donors also brought standards of accountability and demands for forward planning that restricted NGOs' spontaneity and willingness to take risks.

The New Order's approach to non-worker opposition groups masked these differences between the functional aspirations of alternative unions, student groups and NGOs. The government made little distinction between labour NGOs, radical student groups active in labour and alternative unions. It saw them all as 'outsiders', as non-workers who had no rightful place in the labour movement. The government's acceptance or rejection of particular oppositional functions—and the criteria of significance on which it based those judgments—affected its treatment of the various opposition groups. It was prepared to allow 'non-worker' groups to contribute to the development of a better system of industrial relations and the individual welfare of

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[27] Note that student identity was a stronger concept in New Order Indonesia than in Western countries. In some cases, it lasted beyond a student's period of enrolment in an institution of higher learning (which, in turn, was generally longer than for an equivalent degree in Australia). As noted in the Introduction, students had a special status in society, and the tertiary-educated were often equated with intellectuals. One unemployed graduate I knew had *eks-mahasiswa* (ex-student) recorded on his identity card as his occupation.

[28] Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 191. A number of NGO activists commented on the cases of the Philippines and Korea during interviews. According to one respondent, 'workers needed someone to bring them together, to bridge the gaps between them. In Korea, it was the students. In Indonesia, it was the NGOs'. NGO Interview BK.

workers. However, their involvement was only acceptable if they did not seek to undermine the New Order's definition of unionism by assuming the industrial functions of unions, by challenging the one-union policy, or by suggesting that unions should take on a political role.

Government policy towards non-worker labour organisations (along with international discourses of labour organisation that partially informed it) influenced the programs and approaches of these oppositional organisations, and hence the landscape of organised labour in the late New Order period. The alternative unions of the 1990s directly challenged the New Order government's one-union policy. In contrast, many student groups, and indeed some grassroots labour NGOs, chose to work 'underground' in the New Order period because their programs clearly contravened the limits of government-sanctioned involvement of 'outsiders' in the labour movement.[29] Other labour NGOs adopted welfare-based programs to camouflage their organising activities, or presented themselves as 'research' or 'legal aid' organisations, when in practice they were involved in grassroots organising. Others still became involved in 'policy' rather than 'organising' because it was perceived to be less dangerous and, indeed, to have quicker returns.

The Role of Labour NGOs

At the same time the government conflated all types of non-student opposition, it created false dichotomies between different groups of labour NGOs. At the broadest level, it separated the many NGOs that worked with traditionally non-unionised constituencies from those working with industrial labour. It also distinguished between grassroots and policy NGOs working with industrial labour, and between 'good' grassroots NGOs that 'helped' workers and 'bad' grassroots NGOs that 'organised' workers.[30] These characterisations did not always reflect the true nature of the NGOs concerned, particularly as most labour NGOs performed more than one function in the New Order period.[31] At a grassroots level, they conducted education

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[29]   The government refused to accord members of the PRD any legitimacy because of its explicit commitment to a Marxist framework.

[30]   See Chapter Five.

[31]   It is beyond the scope of this study to attempt to quantify the influence of labour NGOs at a grassroots or policy level. No attempt to do so is implied here.

programs; established community workers' groups; and provided legal aid and logistical support and encouragement for strike actions. Some even trained *gerilya buruh* (guerrilla workers) to take over some of the official union's plant-level units.[32] However, their small numbers and the oppressive situation in which they worked meant that labour NGOs reached only a small proportion of workers, and influenced even fewer.[33] Research and policy advocacy NGOs attempted to improve the situation of industrial workers at a different level. They documented the living and working conditions of factory labour and lobbied the government and multinational corporations for increases in the minimum wage, improvements in occupational health and safety and changes to labour legislation.

Labour NGOs were influential at the national level because of their collective presence rather than the efforts of any individual organisation. Consequently, an important feature of labour NGOs was their emphasis on networking and cooperative projects. Examples included seminars and workshops involving organisers and worker-activists associated with different NGOs, joint strike actions and '*sharing*' (Indonesian NGOs' borrowed term for the sharing of experiences). Cooperative efforts, such as a research project on Nike factories that involved *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta* (LBH Jakarta, Jakarta Legal Aid Institute), *Yayasan Buruh Membangun* (YBM, Foundation for Labour Movement), *Institut Sosial Jakarta* (ISJ, Jakarta Social Institute), *Pelayanan Masyarakat Kota Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* (PMK, Urban Community Mission of the Batak Protestant Christian Assembly) and the *Forum Alumni Yayasan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia* (FAYTKI, Alumni Forum of the Indonesian Manpower Foundation, a government-sponsored labour training NGO) supported by AAFLI, were undertaken in the 1980s.[34] However, the event commonly regarded as the genesis of labour NGO networking was the campaign against

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[32] Worker Interview AF.

[33] See Chapter Seven for details of NGOs' influence on workers with whom they had direct contact.

[34] The results of this study were published as LBH Jakarta et al., "Laporan Hasil Kegiatan Proyek Animasi Buruh Pabrik Sepatu Nike di Tangerang dan Serang," (Jakarta: LBH Jakarta/Yayasan Buruh Membangun/Institut Sosial Jakarta/Pelayanan Masyarakat Kota/Forum Alumni YTKI with AAFLI, 1991). As noted in the previous chapter, AAFLI was later renamed the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS). Note that Foundation for Labour Movement is YBM's institutional translation.

military involvement in labour disputes, which grew out of the Gadjah Tunggal strike of 1991.[35]

Between 27 July and 22 August, workers in the fourteen factories of the Gadjah Tunggal Group conducted a series of strikes. The military interrogated a number of activists, and eventually broke the strike by direct intervention.[36] In response, a group of NGOs (some of which had been involved in the organisation of the strike), made a public statement against the arrest of some of the strikers, and then approached the Armed Forces representatives in the parliament in early September to protest against military involvement in labour relations.[37] They then officially formed the *Forum Solidaritas Untuk Buruh* (Forsol Buruh, Solidarity Forum for Workers).[38] Forsol Buruh became a powerful policy advocacy network in the early 1990s. It later supported another major cooperative effort between labour NGOs (and other labour activists) following the death of Marsinah, a young worker activist in East Java, who was raped, tortured and murdered after participating in strike negotiations with the police, the military and management in May 1993.[39] Within a month of Marsinah's death, over twenty NGOs (many already associated with Forsol Buruh) joined the *Komite Solidaritas Untuk Marsinah* (KSUM, Solidarity Committee for Marsinah). KSUM was involved in investigation and monitoring, and ensured that the case was widely covered in the press.[40]

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[35] See Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 4-15, 174-177.

[36] Arini, "Gerakan Buruh dan Demokratisasi," 49-51.

[37] These included *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (YLBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) ISJ, *Solidaritas Perempuan untuk Hak Asasi Manusia* (Solidaritas Perempuan, Women's Association for Human Rights) *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika* (YPM, Free Women Foundation), YBM and *Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum* (Sisbikum, Channel for Social Information and Legal Guidance).

[38] "LSM Ikut Membantu Masalah Perburuhan," *Kerja* 1993, 28-29.

[39] Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 19-23, 177-178. See also YLBHI, "Investigasi untuk Kampanye Kasus Marsinah" (paper presented at the Situasi Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia: Pokok-Pokok Pemikiran Disampaikan Para Fact-Finding Training, Bandung, 11-13 August 1994); Mulyana Kusumah, "Marsinah dalam Kekerasan Struktural," *Forum Keadilan*, 8 July 1993; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, "Trade Union Repression in Indonesia." The Marsinah case re-emerged a number of times during the late New Order period, and again in 2000. See for example "4 Polisi 'Marsinah' Diperiksa," *Surya*, 29 February 2000; "Kasus Pembunuhan Marsinah Dibongkar Lagi," *Media Indonesia*, 25 January 2000; "Menaker Bawa Marsinah ke Komnas," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 5 February 2000. For a discussion of the impact of Marsinah's activism and death on Indonesian popular culture, see Michele Ford, "Beyond the Femina Fantasy: The Working-Class Woman in Indonesian Discourses of Women's Work," *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs* (forthcoming).

[40] "Laporan Kegiatan Jaringan KSUM," (Yogyakarta: Yasanti, 1995). The Marsinah case was by far the most intensively reported labour issue throughout the rest of the 1990s. Although KSUM

In 1993, Forsol Buruh focused its campaign against military involvement on lobbying against Ministerial Decision No.342/Men/1986 (which permitted military involvement in labour disputes).[41] It was also heavily involved in the review of Indonesia's most favoured nation status under the United States of America's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), a government scheme allowing import concessions for selected developing countries. Between 1987 and 1993, a number of petitions had been presented first by the AFL-CIO and, later Asia Watch and the International Labour Rights Education and Research Fund (ILRERF), urging the United States government to cancel Indonesia's access to most favoured nation status under the GSP scheme because of labour rights violations.[42] After two shorter reviews of Indonesia's treatment of labour in 1987-88 and 1989-90, the American Office of the Trade Representative implemented an extended review from August 1992. This third review eventually prompted the re-federation of SPSI in 1993 and the passing of a Ministerial Decision permitting the formation of non-aligned enterprise unions (*Serikat Pekerja Tingkat Perusahaan,* SPTP) in 1994.[43] Along with

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was dissolved in 1995, press coverage continued. Only a small sample of the articles about the Marsinah case included in *Problema* to 1995 are listed here: YB. Mangunwijaya, "Marsinah, Pahlawan Hak Asasi," *Forum Keadilan*, 23 December 1993; "Buntut Kasus Pembunuhan Marsinah: Pengadilan Jangan Tergesa Menyidangkan," *Jayakarta*, 8 November 1993; "LSM Mencari Fakta Kematian Marsinah," *Surya*, 4 June 1993; "4 Pengacara Australia Saksikan Sidang Marsinah," *Surya*, 24 June 1994; "Harapan YLBHI kepada Pangab: Usut Para Penganiaya Terdakwa Marsinah," *Media Indonesia*, 16 April 1994; "Kapuspen ABRI Brigjen TNI Syarwan Hamid: Silakan Cari Data tentang Kasus Kematian Marsinah," *Kompas*, 6 April 1994; "Sidang Kasus Marsinah Diwarnai Demo Lagi," *Republika*, 29 March 1994; "Jaksa Agung Soal Kekerasan dalam Penyidikan: Kasus Marsinah Hendaknya Terakhir," *Kompas*, 11 July 1995; "Rekonstruksi Kasus Marsinah di Rumah Yudi," *Kompas*, 7 June 1995; Mohammad Iqbal, "Pahlawan Wanita Kelas Bawah," *Kompas*, 10 November 1993.

[41] See for example "MA Diminta Menguji Materiel SK Mennaker," *Kompas*, 25 August 1993; "YLBHI Contests Labor Rules in Supreme Court," *Jakarta Post*, 8 October 1993.

[42] See Government of Indonesia, *Indonesian Government GSP Submission in Response to the Petition of June 2, 1992 and October 16, 1992* (Jakarta: 1992); Asia Watch, "Indonesia: Charges and Rebuttals Over Labor Rights Practices," *Indonesia Mirror* 13 (1993). For general press commentary on the importance of the GSP to Indonesia, see "Carla Anderson Hills: Indonesia Perlu Bernegosiasi untuk Memperpanjang GSP," *Kompas*, 10 August 1993; "RI Kirim Tim ke AS Selesaikan Masalah GSP," *Suara Merdeka*, 12 August 1993; "RI Terus Yakinkan AS agar Tidak Cabut GSP," *Media Indonesia*, 12 August 1993; "Menolak GSP akan Perburuk Hubungan Indonesia dan AS," *Media Indonesia*, 5 July 1994; Editorial, "Hubungan AS-Indonesia Agak Terganggu Hari-Hari Ini," *Kompas*, 25 August 1993; Edy Suwandi Hamid, "Antisipasi atas Ancaman Penghapusan GSP," *Suara Merdeka*, 11 August 1993; Budi Santoso, "Pencabutan GSP versus Penegakan SPSI," *Jayakarta*, 25 August 1993.

[43] Marlies Glasius, *Foreign Policy on Human Rights: Its Influence on Indonesia Under Soeharto* (Antwerpen: Intersentia, 1999), 141. For detailed accounts of the GSP reviews, see Ibid., 139-232 and Purwani Diyah Prabandari, "Efektivitas Ancaman Pencabutan Fasilitas GSP oleh

SBSI, Indonesia's labour NGOs provided much of the documentation presented in the petitions, and met with the GSP team in Jakarta in late 1993.[44] A year later, on the review team's return, they had further discussions with Forsol Buruh and with labour NGOs in Surabaya,[45] while in June 1995 they again met with Forsol Buruh, *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (YLBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation), *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta* (LBH Jakarta, Jakarta Legal Aid Institute), ISJ and *Yayasan Maju Bersama* (YMB, Foundation for Mutual Progress).[46] Labour NGOs also actively encouraged the government to deal with the GSP review 'productively' (to use the opportunity to implement real change), rather than to simply seek a diplomatic solution.[47]

Although Forsol Buruh itself eventually faltered, there were many other advocacy campaigns from the mid 1990s. One of these was the *Komite Solidaritas Titi Sugiati* (KSTS, Solidarity Committee for Titi Sugiati, another murdered worker-activist).[48] The committee formed to pursue her case consisted of representatives of SBSI and 19 NGOs, including LBH Jakarta, YPM, Solidaritas Perempuan, *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung* (LBH Bandung, Bandung Legal Aid Institute), and YFAS.[49] Other campaigns dealt with broader labour issues including occupational health and safety, child labour and the minimum wage. A campaign on occupational

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Amerika Serikat Bagi Upaya Perbaikan Kondisi Perburuhan di Indonesia." (Sarjana Politik Thesis, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1995).

[44] "Buyung Harapkan AS Tidak Mencabut GSP," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 22 September 1993; "Delegasi AS Soal GSP akan Temui Khusus FSB," *Media Indonesia*, 7 September 1993; "Tim Asistensi GSP Dari AS Tiba Sore Ini," *Media Indonesia*, 19 September 1993; "Tim GSP AS Temui Forum Solidaritas untuk Buruh," *Media Indonesia*, 23 September 1993; "Tim GSP Bertanya Soal Marsinah," *Jayakarta*, 24 September 1993; "Tim GSP Mempertanyakaan Kebebasan Buruh Berserikat," *Kompas*, 22 September 1993.

[45] "Tim GSP ke YLBHI Cari Masukan Nasib Buruh," *Kompas* 1994.

[46] "Pertemuan LSM dan Tim GSP: Restrukturisasi SPSI Belum Beri Buruh Kebebasan Berorganisasi," *Kompas*, 22 June 1995.

[47] "Kalangan LSM tentang GSP: Perbaiki Kondisi Buruh, Bukan Bentuk Tim Diplomasi," *Kompas*, 10 August 1993.

[48] Titi Sugiati's body was found in a waste disposal area at PT Kahatex, Bandung on 30 April 1994. See "Aktivis Wanita Buruh Tewas di Tempat Pembuangan Limbah," *Kompas*, 19 May 1994; "Baksorstanasda Jabar Nyatakan Kematian Titi Kurang Wajar," *Harian Terbit*, 26 May 1994; "Hidung dan Mulut Titi Sugiati Berdarah," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 20 May 1994; "Kasus Kematian Titi Sugiati di Kolam Limbah: Sebelum Ditemukan Tewas, Sudah Dua Malam Hilang," *Kompas*, 23 May 1994.

[49] See "Belasan LSM Adukan Kasus Titi," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 4 June 1994; "DPR Dukung Komite Solidaritas Titi Sugiarti," *Republika*, 3 June 1994; "Hasil Investigasi Yayasan LBH Nusantara: Kematian Titi Bermotif Pembunuhan," *Jayakarta*, 3 June 1994.

health and safety was launched in 1991.[50] Child labour was a particularly prominent issue in 1993-94 and again in 1996.[51] Regular reports appeared on worker dissatisfaction with the minimum wage, but NGO-authored articles were most common in 1996; wages were an ongoing focus for activists from YLBHI in particular in 1996-97.[52]

The final advocacy initiative of note before the fall of Suharto was the campaign against the Draft Law on Manpower (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Ketenagakerjaan,* RUUK). *Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat* (ELSAM, Institute for Policy and Advocacy),[53] YLBHI, ISJ and *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan* (LBH APIK, Legal Aid Bureau of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice) established the *Komisi Pembaharuan Hukum Perburuhan (*KPHP, Commission for the Renewal of Labour Law) in June 1996.[54] By March 1997, KPHP had 11 members, including YLBHI, ELSAM, LBH APIK, Sisbikum, Akatiga, Solidaritas Perempuan, ISJ, LBH Bandung and LBH

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[50] See for example a statement by eight NGOs, including YLBHI, *Solidaritas Perempuan,* (and SBM-SK) reported in "Pernyataan Bersama Delapan LSM tentang HAM: Hapuskan Perlindungan Terhadap Pemodal Besar," *Pelita*, 11 December 1991.

[51] See for example "Empat LSM Desak Depnaker Cabut Permenaker 01/1987," *Jayakarta*, 7 August 1993; Dedi Haryadi, "Pekerja Anak: Profil dan Dilema," *Republika*, 23 July 1994; Arist Merdeka Sirait, "Dilema Buruh Anak dalam Program Wajib Belajar," *Jayakarta*, 22 August 1994; "Kemiskinan dan Anak-Anak yang Terpaksa Bekerja," *Media Indonesia*, 23 July 1994; "Kesejahteraan (Buruh) Anak, Tugas Kita Semua," *Kompas*, 21 September 1994; Tadjuddin Noer Effendi, "Pekerja Anak-Anak," *Kompas*, 27 August 1994. Opinion pieces on child labour in 1996 include Dedi Haryadi, "Ornop dan Pemberdayaan Buruh Anak," *Kompas*, 21 July 1996; Dedi Haryadi, "Pekerja Anak," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 21 July 1996; Indra Ismawan, "Pendidikan bagi Pekerja Anak," *Kompas*, 23 July 1996; Ramches Merdeka, "Masalah Anak Bekerja dan Perlindungannya," *Waspada*, 23 July 1996; Murdiyat Moko, "Pekerja Anak, Membiarkan atau Melarang," 24 July 1996; Arist Merdeka Sirait, "Buruh Anak, Agenda yang Tercecer," *Republika*, 16 December 1996.

[52] "Kapuspen: 'Agar Aksi Mogok Pekerja Dapat Dikurangi': ABRI akan Lebih Ketat Awasi Pelaksanaan UMR," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 30 December 1995; "Kenaikan Upah Minimum Harus Riil," *Kompas*, 8 January 1996; "10 LSM: Kami Sangat Kecewa," *Merdeka*, 7 June 1996; "Apapun Alasannya, UMR Mesti Berjalan," *Barata*, Week 2 April 1996; "Sekitar 1.308 Pekerja Mogok Tuntut Kenaikan Upah: Kenaikan UMR Belum Imbangi Laju Inflasi," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 January 1996; "UMR Naik, Tetap Harus Main Sulap," *Kompas*, 10 January 1996; "Depnaker Sayangkan Evaluasi YLBHI," *Kompas*, 12 February 1997; "UMR Masih Jauh Dari Kebutuhan Nyata Buruh," *Media Indonesia*, 25 January 1997. See also Hendardi, "UMR, Katup Pengaman, dan Kedaluwarsa," *Kompas*, 16 January 1996; Teten Masduki, "Upah dan Biaya Birokrasi," *Kompas*, 24 January 1996; Suryadi Radjab, "Menghitung Kebutuhan Riil Buruh," *Kompas*, 11 April 1996.

[53] Institutional Translation.

[54] "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Belum Lindungi Hak Dasar Pekerja," *Kompas*, 15 June 1996. See also "'Bill Doesn't Reflect Workers' Interests'," *Jakarta Post*, 26 December 1996; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Jauh Dari Proteksi Buruh," *Republika*, 19 December 1996; "Sangat Kurang, Perlindungan Hak Dasar Pekerja," *Kompas*, 19 December 1996.

Jakarta.[55] A North Sumatran committee was also formed, involving three of the NGOs that had been involved in the 1994 Medan strike, one of which was KPS.[56] KPHP argued that the draft law legitimated unfair labour practices established by extra-legal means during the New Order period.[57] After an initial postponement in April 1997, the Bill entered the House for consideration in the June of 1997 with considerable fanfare. Despite the intensive campaign, the parliament passed the draft law, as Law No.25/1997, on 11 September 1997,[58] and it was approved on 3 October by President Suharto. NGOs renewed their demands when they later discovered that the Minister for Manpower, Abdul Latief, had used *Jaminan Sosial Asuransi Tenaga Kerja* (Jamsostek, Employee Social Security and Insurance Guarantee) funds to bribe legislators to pass the draft law.[59] YLBHI demanded that Latief step down,[60] while *Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (PBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid Association),

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[55] See for example "50 Activists Protest Labor Bill at House," *Jakarta Post*, 13 March 1997; "Mempertanyakan RUU Naker," *Kompas*, 22 September 1997; "Sengketa Pekerja, Siapa yang Menyelesaikan?," *Republika*, 23 June 1997; "Teten Masduki: 'Secara Hukum, RUU [Ketenagakerjaan] Ini Sudah Salah...'" *Media Indonesia*, 30 March 1997; "Wawancara dengan Munir, SH (Wakil Direktur YLBHI): Dari Aspek HAM, RUU Ini Mundur," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 17 March 1997; "YLBHI Usulkan RUU Naker Dibahas DPR Mendatang," *Kompas*, 18 June 1997; Sudarto, "Lima Masalah Buruh dalam RUU Ketenagakerjaan," *Surya*, 16 July 1997.

[56] KPS' official English title in the post-Suharto era is The Institute for Development of Independent Union Workers. "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Belum Cerminkan Keadilan," *Waspada*, 24 April 1997.

[57] Amiruddin and Teten Masduki, eds., *RUU Ketenagakerjaan: Pantas Meresahkan Buruh* (Jakarta: Komisi Pembaharuan Hukum Perburuhan, 1997). Criticism of the RUUK also came from within SPSI. See for example "F-SPSI dan Pekerja Protes RUUK," *Republika*, 19 August 1997; "FSPSI Minta Pembahasan RUU Ketenagakerjaan Tak Diforsir," *Kompas*, 7 June 1997; "Ketua Umum DPP FSPSI Marzuki Achmad SH: 'Sebaiknya Pemerintah Bikin RUU Baru'," *Republika*, 14 April 1997; "Ketua Umum FSPSI: RUU Naker Perlu Ditata Ulang," *Kompas*, 20 June 1997; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Mengebiri Hak Pekerja," *Kompas*, 1 March 1997; Wilhelmus Bhoka, "RUU Ketenagekerjaan," *Merdeka*, 28 August 1997.

[58] See "DPR Sepakat Perbaruhi RUU Ketenagakerjaan," *Harian Terbit*, 24 June 1997; "Pemandangan Umum Fraksi: RUU Ketenagakerjaan Perlu Penyempurnaan Mendalam," *Kompas*, 24 June 1997; "Pemerintah Resmi Ajukan RUUK," *Republika*, 17 June 1997; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan: Disusun untuk Masa Depan Pekerja yg Lebih Cerah," *Business News*, 17 June 1997; "RUUK Minta Diperbaiki, Hak-Hak Dasar Pekerja Masih Diabaikan," *Suara Pembaruan*, 24 June 1997. Law No. 25/1997 was originally to go into effect on 1 October 1998, however it was delayed twice after the fall of Suharto—first to 1 October 2000 and again to 1 October 2002, before it was finally scrapped.

[59] For details of the Jamsostek scandal, see "Abdul Latief: Saya Bertanggung Jawab," *Suara Merdeka*, 22 November 1997; "Dana Jamsostek untuk RUUK Rp 2,8 Miliar," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 November 1997; "Jamsostek Ibarat Sebuah Gunung Es," *Kompas*, 22 December 1997; "Latief Akui ada 'Pelicin'," *Surya*, 19 November 1997; "Menaker: Kami Siap Diperiksa," *Suara Merdeka*, 2 December 1997; "Soal Penggunaan Dana Jamsostek: Ditangani Presiden," *Kompas*, 5 December 1997; "Wapres Panggil Latief," *Surya*, 25 November 1997.

[60] "Pemegang Kartu Jamsostek Punya Hak Menggugat: Menaker Terancam 'Class Action'," *Media Indonesia*, 26 November 1997.

another legal aid organisation, threatened a class action.[61] The investigation into the scandal, which was dwarfed by the rise in unemployment in December 1997-January 1998, was terminated in February 1998. However, Latief was nevertheless replaced in mid-March 1998 by Theo Sambuaga.[62] Although the debate about Law No.25/1997 continued well into the post-Suharto period, KPHP became inactive in the early months of the Habibie presidency, when its main figures became heavily involved in campaigns unrelated to labour.

Labour NGOs' domestic initiatives in late New Order Indonesia were complemented by cooperation with international NGOs and labour organisations.[63] As noted earlier, labour NGOs' international connections, which continued into the post-Suharto period, were a source of both funding and ideas.[64] Labour NGOs took part in general NGO forums such as INFID (International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, formerly INGI, International NGO Group on Indonesia).[65] They also had extensive links with labour groups in other Asian countries, including the Philippines and South Korea, as well as labour and other activist groups in Europe, Australia and North America. International pressure on the Indonesian government to improve its human rights record was most sustained on three labour issues in the 1990s: the right to organise,[66] the murder of Marsinah,[67] and the

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[61] "YLBHI: Mennaker Harus Berhenti," *Surya*, 22 November 1997. PBHI was formed in 1996 by a group of dissatisfied activists from YLBHI.

[62] See "Kasus RUUK-Jamsostek Dihentikan," *Surya*, 11 February 1998. In response, FSPSI threatened to establish its own workplace insurance scheme. See "Ancaman DPP FSPSI Tak Ditanggapi," *Harian Terbit*, 24 February 1998; "FSPSI Bisa Membentuk Asuransi Tenaga Kerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 23 February 1998. "Selamat Datang Theo Sambuaga," *Surya*, 19 March 1998.

[63] See Teten Masduki, "Globalisasi Solidaritas Buruh," *Kompas*, 28 August 1993. For a brief, leftist, American-centred overview of the history of international labour solidarity with reference to present-day Indonesia, see La Botz, *Made In Indonesia*, 295-327.

[64] See Chapter Six.

[65] See Augustinus Rumansara, "Pengalaman INFID dalam Advokasi dan Kerjasama Internasional," in *Agenda LSM Menyongsong Tahun 2000*, ed. Rustam Ibrahim (Jakarta: CESDA-LP3ES, 1997). For an example of INFID cooperation with other interested parties internationally, see David Harris, ed., *Prisoners of Progress: A Review of the Current Indonesian Labour Situation* (Leiden: FNV/INDOC/INFID, 1995).

[66] See for example "Report of the ICFTU/APRO Delegation to Indonesia April 5 to 9, 1993," (Brussels: ICFTU, 1993); International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, "Trade Union Repression in Indonesia."

[67] "Voices of the Dead (Labor Practices Criticized After Deaths of Several Organizers)," *The Economist* 332 (1994); "Aktivis Buruh yang Tewas Misterius di Nganjuk: Kasus Marsinah Dibahas di Jenewa," *Surya*, 11 June 1993; "Di Samping Jenewa: Kasus Marsinah Juga Dibahas dalam Konferensi HAM di Wina," *Surya*, 16 June 1993; "Kematian Marsinah juga akan Dibahas di Paris," *Surya*, 15 June 1993.

imprisonment of Muchtar Pakpahan and Dita Sari.[68] The GSP process forced the government to make significant concessions to independent unionism in the mid-1990s, whilst campaigns to free Muchtar Pakpahan and Dita Sari were both eventually successful. These international campaigns were an important component of both labour NGOs' and alternative unions' strategies.[69]

There was considerable discussion amongst labour NGO activists themselves about their role in the labour movement and the relative contribution of grassroots and policy NGOs.[70] When questioned about the specific focus of labour NGOs' activities, respondents acknowledged both grassroots organising work and the role NGOs had played in raising public awareness of labour issues and running campaigns about the abuse of workers' rights. Although some labour NGOs concentrated exclusively on either grassroots organising or policy advocacy, many were involved at both levels. Most respondents agreed that the roles of grassroots and policy NGOs were (at best) complementary, or, indeed, 'synergetic'.[71] According to one respondent, who had expressed a number of reservations about the dynamics between policy NGOs and their centralistic tendencies, policy NGOs acted as 'bumper-bars', because, by raising labour issues, they 'collided first'—thus, to some extent protecting workers who experienced the outcomes of those policies on a day-to-day basis.[72] This 'synergy' between grassroots and policy labour NGOs defined their role in the New Order period. It is therefore necessary to recognise the contribution of both grassroots and policy labour NGOs. As suggested in Chapter

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[68] "Indonesia: Workers Have it Better, But Not by Much: Labour Activist Pakpahan Stands Trial," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 157, No. 43 (1994); "SBSI Leader Jailed for Three Years," *TAPOL Bulletin* 1994; "Ketua Muda MA: Dunia Sorot Kasus Pakpahan," *Kompas*, 22 May 1995.

[69] The PRD was also involved in international campaigning, most significantly through its links to the Australian Trotskyist organisation, Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (ASIET). However, its more radical stance meant it had less opportunity to harness the power of international union organisations, or, indeed, international labour NGOs. Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000.

[70] NGO Interview AL. Also NGO Interview AA. See also M.M. Billah, Mufid Busyairi, and Helmi Aly, "Ornop Mencari Format Baru: Laporan Pertemuan Cisarua-Bogor Tanggal 18-19 Juni 1993," (Jakarta: Pokker CPSM, 1993); Fakih, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Social Transformation."

[71] NGO Interview AC. Also NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview AT. See Chapter Seven for details of respondents' more critical comments of relationships between labour NGOs.

[72] NGO Interview AL. In another traffic analogy, one NGO activist complained about 'hit and run' [English in the original] NGOs, which raise issues but don't take any responsibility for what comes out of their campaigns. NGO Interview AZ.

One, this is only possible if the union ceases to be an absolute standard against which labour NGOs are measured.

Two Typologies

Few typologies of Indonesian labour NGOs are available. Both Hadiz (whose continuum is the only published typology of labour NGOs) and Abdullah (a prominent labour NGO activist) based their categorisations of labour NGOs on an analysis of those NGOs' function and ideology. As indicated in Figure 2.2, Hadiz used a continuum to describe 'labour-based NGOs'—a group in which he included the alternative unions and grassroots labour NGOs of the period. Three clusters of organisations were identified on the continuum: 'corporatist reformist', 'liberal/social democratic reformist' and 'radical'. Labour NGOs with 'corporatist reformist' tendencies broadly accepted the stated ideals of Pancasila industrial relations, but were critical of its practical shortcomings. They attempted to provide 'essential services' to workers in the hope that SPSI could eventually be reformed from within. Hadiz described YBM and the women's section of SPSI—which he noted was 'clearly not a NGO… [but] played a role which [was not] much different to that of NGOs, with whom its personnel have been closely involved'—as examples of this category.[73] The largest cluster, the liberal and social democratic reformists, included two of the alternative trade unions of the period (SBM-SK and SBSI), and many grassroots labour NGOs.[74] An important feature of this group was its commitment to international human rights and to 'the example of contemporary Western trade unionism, which promoted a separation of political from purely trade unionist objectives'.[75] In addition to SBM-SK and SBSI, Hadiz included ISJ, PMK, and Sisbikum in this category, as well as YLBHI.[76]

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[73] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 142-144. My research indicates that Hadiz at least partially misrepresented YBM and other organisations in this category. Whilst it is true that they did take a relatively conservative stance, their philosophy was at least as strongly based in social-democratic concepts of trade unionism as many of the organisations Hadiz included in his second category.

[74] Hadiz did acknowledge that the NGOs and alternative unions in this category 'differed with regard to the appropriateness of adopting, at this time, the strategy of openly establishing alternative trade unions'. Ibid., 152.

[75] Ibid., 144.

[76] Ibid., 144-153.
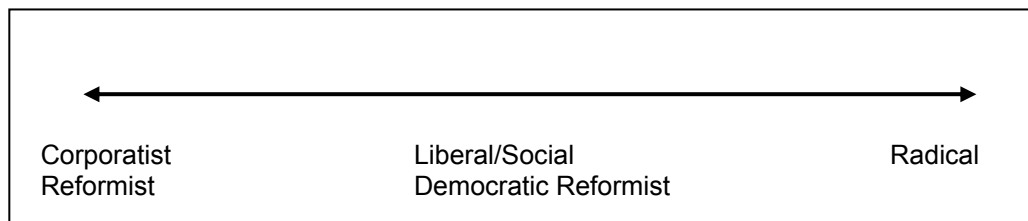
Figure 2.2 Hadiz's Continuum of Labour-Based NGOs

Hadiz's final category consisted of radical labour-based organisations, whose 'middle-class agents' sought to facilitate consciousness-raising among workers 'to enable them to take up their historical role'. Hadiz maintained that members of this group identified with the 'past Indonesian tradition of labour militancy' rather than with Western trade unionism. Hadiz included PPBI, the third alternative trade union, in this cluster and cited YMB as an example of a 'radical' NGO. With the incorporation of PPBI, Hadiz implicitly included the radical student groups who organised both PPBI and its successor, the *Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia* (FNPBI, Indonesian National Front for the Workers' Struggle).[77] However, he did not mention the radical labour-oriented student groups involved in research or advocacy in his description of this category.

Hadiz acknowledged that his classification was 'somewhat stylised', and that there was both considerable overlap between the clusters and variation within them.[78] He also recognised the particular difficulty of accommodating 'women-oriented organisations' in his typology, because of the variation within their feminist convictions and their other sources of ideological inspiration.[79] Hadiz's typology did

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[77] Ibid., 153-155. FNPBI was founded in May 1999 at a congress attended by representatives of labour groups from Greater Jakarta, Solo, Bandung, Semarang, Medan, Makasar, North Sulawesi, Bitung and Malang and officially declared on June 20 1999. Dita Sari, who was still in prison at the time, was elected as Chair of the FNPBI in absentia. Its program contains a mixture of industrial and political aims. Raymond Kusnadi, "Radikalisme FNPBI: Membangun Kesadaran Politik Kaum Buruh," *Sedani: Jurnal Kajian Perburuhan* 1, No. 1 (2002); Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia, "Profile, Perspectives, Goals and Organisational Structure," (n.d.).

[78] Any classification of labour NGOs—including my own—is necessarily 'stylised' given the complex relationships between labour movement organisations described in Figure 2.1 and the unstable boundaries between grassroots and policy NGOs.

[79] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 140-141. It should be noted that as Hadiz's fieldwork focused on Greater Jakarta, the examples he gave are all drawn from this area.

not explicitly exclude legal aid, policy advocacy or research NGOs, which could be located between the Liberal/Social Democratic Reformist and Radical points on the continuum. However, his explication of labour NGOs generally, and of the continuum in particular, reflected his emphasis on those labour NGOs that performed functions traditionally associated with unions. This is confirmed by his description of labour NGOs (including alternative unions) as a 'transitional form of organisation', and when he asserted that 'ultimately, the growth and future prospects of an independent labour movement would lie in the successful establishment of organisations that take the form of a more regularised trade union'.[80]
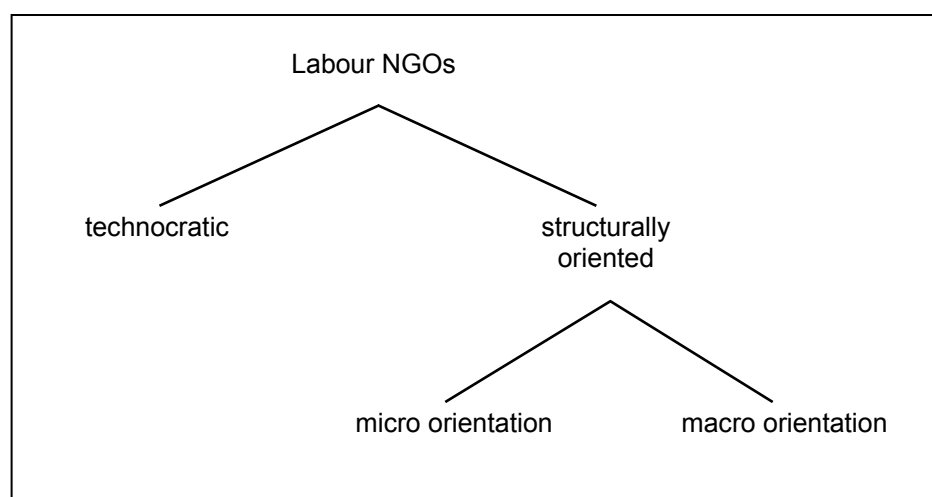
Figure 2.3 Abdullah's Typology of Labour NGOs

Abdullah's typology, which is illustrated here as a schema, differentiated grassroots NGOs that approached worker education from a 'technocratic' perspective from structurally oriented labour NGOs. In turn, he divided structurally oriented labour NGOs according to their focus on either micro- or macro-level issues (Figure 2.3). According to Abdullah, technocratic labour NGOs defined workers' needs in terms of the knowledge and skills required to fight for good wages and conditions within the workplace. In the late New Order period, these NGOs concentrated on providing legal education, legal aid and the technical skills required to create and maintain a

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[80]   Ibid., 139.

workers' organisation. NGOs working from the micro-level structural orientation focused on strengthening workers in the hope that the growth of democratic workers' organisations would eventually bring about change in the wider society; however, their techniques had much in common with those used by technocratic labour NGOs. In contrast, those focused on mobilising workers for a 'broader cause' concentrated on developing the potential of labour as a mass political movement. This category of organisations (which Abdullah limited to student groups associated with PPBI/FNPBI), concentrated on organising rallies and protests, and put little emphasis on workplace organising *per se*. A report published by *Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane* (LIPS, Sedane Institute for Labour Information) in 1999 indicated that Abdullah chose not to separate NGOs' grassroots and policy functions:

> In Indonesia, many NGOs are active in the area of labour. Some of these NGOs include labour as one of their fields of activity while other NGOs focus exclusively on labour. Both types of NGOs enter into all labour-related areas, i.e. litigation, advocacy, organising, education and training, research and so on. There is no single NGO that has specialised in one aspect because all the aspects are inter-related and must be handled at the same time. This is because labour NGOs fill a vacuum in labour activities that should be the work of labour unions.[81]

Abdullah's emphasis on labour NGOs' role as a temporary substitute union explains his inclusion of radical student groups and the PPBI/FNPBI in his typology.[82] It becomes apparent why he excluded policy advocacy labour NGOs from his analysis when his emphasis on unions is considered in the context of this statement about NGOs' multiple roles. His omission of SBSI suggests that he considered it a 'real union';[83] SBM-SK was not included because it was disbanded a decade before this typology was formulated.

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[81] "Unions in Transition, 1998-1999," (Bogor: Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Semarak, 1999), 70. A list of sixteen labour NGOs active in Java was included in the report, all of which were grassroots or legal aid NGOs. They were *Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi, Yayasan Lembaga Daya Dharma, Institut Sosial Jakarta, Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat,* Sisbikum*, Humanika, Yayasan Arek Surabaya, Yayasan Wahyu Sosial, Lampu Buruh, Yayasan Annisa Swasti, Yayasan Bina Karya, Pastoral Perburuhan Keuskupan Bandung, LBH Jakarta, LBH Bandung, LBH Surabaya* and *LBH Semarang.* The majority of these organisations are included in the list of labour NGOs surveyed for this study, as listed in Table 2.1.

[82] Interview with Fauzi Abdullah on 28 March 1999.

[83] By 2001, when Abdullah proposed this typology, SBSI was well established.

Table 2.1   Summary of Selected Labour NGOs Incorporating Hadiz's and Abdullah's Typologies[a]

ORGANISATION[b]	ACTIVE[c]	LOCATION	Hadiz[d]	Abdullah[e]
GRASSROOTS LABOUR NGOs				
Labour NGOs Formed by Ex-Unionists				
Yayasan Bina Karya (YBK)[f]	1973	Bandung	CR	T
Yayasan Buruh Membangun (YBM)[f]	1985	Jakarta	CR	T
Labour NGOS formed by Worker Activists				
Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi	1985	Jakarta	*	S/Mi
Kelompok Buruh Bandung (KBB)	1995	Bandung	*	S/Mi
Christian Labour NGOs				
Lembaga Daya Dharma (LDD)	1991	Jakarta	L/SD	T
Institut Perburuhan Jakarta (ISJ/IPJ)	1985	Jakarta	L/SD	T
Pelayanan Buruh Jakarta (PMK/PBJ)	1983	Jakarta	L/SD	T
Sisbikum	1988	Jakarta	L/SD	T
Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera (YFAS)	1990	Jakarta	L/SD	T
Student-Based Labour NGOs				
Yayasan Arek Surabaya	1991	Surabaya	R	S/Mi
Kelompok Kerja Humanika	1983	Surabaya	R	S/Mi
Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera (KPS)	1990	Medan	R	S/Mi
Yayasan Maju Bersama (YMB)[g]	1986	Jakarta	R	S/Mi
Feminist Grassroots Labour NGOs				
Yasanti	1982	Yogyakarta	L/SD	S/Mi
Yayasan Perempuan Mardika (YPM)[g]	1991	Jakarta	R	S/Mi
POLICY ADVOCACY LABOUR NGOs				
Legal Aid NGOs with a Labour Focus				
YLBHI	1980	Jakarta	L/SD	*
LBH Jakarta	1980	Jakarta	L/SD	*
LBH Bandung	1989	Bandung	L/SD	*
LBH Surabaya	1989	Surabaya	L/SD	*
LBH APIK (feminist)	1996	Jakarta	*	*
Research/Policy NGOs with a Labour Focus				
LIPS	1992	Bogor	*	*
Akatiga	1991	Bandung	*	*
Lapera	1992	Yogyakarta	*	*
ELSAM	1993	Jakarta	*	*
Solidaritas Perempuan[h]	1990	Jakarta	*	*

* These labour NGOs do not fit into Hadiz's and Abdullah's typologies.
a. This list does not purport to be exhaustive.
b. As many of the organisations in this table perform a range of functions, type refers to an organisation's dominant composition / focus / activities.
c. This date refers to when the organisation claimed to become active in labour, not when it was formed.
d. CR=Corporatist Reformist; L/SD=Liberal Social/Democratic Reformist; R=Radical
e. T=Technocratic; S/Mi=Structuralist/Micro-Oriented; S/Ma=Structuralist/Macro-Oriented
f. These NGOs operated during the early post-Suharto period, but their current status is unclear.
g. These NGOs disbanded before the fall of Suharto.
h. Although *Solidaritas Perempuan* was mainly involved with overseas migrant labour, it took an active role in a number of forums dealing with industrial labour.

Although NGOs' ideological orientation varied both over time and between activists within any particular organisation, the ideological focus of these typologies is pertinent. Ideology underpinned labour NGOs' concepts of the limits of trade unionism and the role of the middle class in the labour movement, as well as their practice and strategies. However, the assumptions around which Abdullah's and Hadiz's functional analyses were constructed limit their utility and comprehensiveness. By limiting their focus to 'union-like' organisations, both Hadiz and Abdullah excluded important groups of labour NGOs from their analyses— including Abdullah's own research and training-oriented NGO, LIPS. They also at least partially collapsed the categories 'alternative union', 'labour NGO' and 'student group'. Table 2.1, which lists the labour NGOs surveyed for this study, demonstrates how Hadiz and Abdullah effectively omitted a significant proportion of labour NGOs from their analyses.[84] The final two columns indicate where each NGO would fit in Hadiz's and Abdullah's typologies respectively. It is evident from the table that neither Hadiz's nor Abdullah's typologies adequately accounted for organisations that supported or lobbied for industrial workers but were not involved in labour organising. The overview of the labour NGOs that follows, and the detailed account of labour NGOs' activities in later chapters, provides evidence supporting the inclusion of these policy or research oriented organisations in the category, 'labour NGO'.

The Labour NGOs Surveyed

According to one estimate, some 58 labour NGOs were active in Indonesia in 1999.[85] However, it is difficult to determine precisely how many NGOs were involved in

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[84]   After compiling Table 2.1, I consulted both Abdullah and Hadiz to ensure that I was not misrepresenting their typologies.

[85]   Sakai's estimate was based on LP3ES data for 1999. It is not clear how 'labour NGO' was defined in this data, although the data suggests it was limited to NGOs working with industrial labour, and did not include NGOs that focus on migrant workers, child labour, workers in the informal sector, or other groups that are encompassed in the broader sense of the word, 'labour'. Yumiko Sakai, "Indonesia: Flexible NGOs vs Inconsistent State Control," in *The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia*, ed. Shinichi Shigetomi (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 167. See also the online version of LP3ES' directory at Imam Ahmad, E. Shobirin Nadj, and Muhammad Husain, *Direktori Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat di Indonesia/Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations in Indonesia* (LP3ES, [cited 20 April 2003]); available from http://www.lp3es.or.id.

labour issues in Indonesia because there was no definitive list of active NGOs or accepted standard for categorising them. The 25 labour NGOs included in Table 2.1 were surveyed in fieldwork conducted in January-March 1999, January-April 2000 and June-July 2001. Some activists were interviewed only once, but many respondents were consulted a number of times in order to monitor and record changes in perceptions of their position in the labour movement through the period of transition after the fall of Suharto. Interviews were supplemented by observer-participation in worker and activist training sessions and in strike meetings, and by factory visits.[86] Follow-up interviews were conducted by email during and after this time. The descriptions given here are brief. Their purpose is not to analyse the achievements and failures of particular organisations, but to provide background information for the analysis in the chapters that follow. Except where otherwise noted, the information given here was provided in interviews with representatives of the organisation described.

Labour NGOs Established by Ex-Unionists

A small number of disenchanted unionists established labour NGOs in the late 1970s and early 1980s in direct response to the changing structures and objectives of the Indonesian trade union movement. These were the organisations Hadiz described as 'corporatist reformers'. The two best-known examples in this category were *Yayasan Bina Karya* (YBK, Work Guidance Foundation) and *Yayasan Buruh Membangun* (YBM, Foundation for Labour Movement).[87] YBK was established in 1973 in response to growing centralisation in the union movement. Its members were former shop stewards who lost their jobs and were arrested because of their union activities. Its status as a foundation was formalised in 1980. In the same year, it began a workers' cooperative in conjunction with Adi Sasono's *Lembaga Studi Pembangunan* (LSP, Institute for Development Studies), through which it established

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[86] Whilst not all interviews and meetings or training sessions were taped, those that were yielded over 150,000 words of Indonesian-language data, which I personally transcribed.

[87] A labour NGO called *Yayasan Prakarsa* operated in a similar manner in Yogyakarta. For details, see Rachmawati, "Dimensi Internasional LSM dan Pemberdayaan Buruh di Indonesia Tahun 1990-an." 91-94.

a workers' housing project.[88] By 1987, YBK had built 120 houses. These practical measures were an entrée into worker organising, which also masked its attempts to challenge the monopoly of SPSI. In an interview in 2000, its founders claimed that its community-based workers' groups had some 960 members from 32 factories.

YBM was also established in direct response to the government's single-union policy. YBM, which became active in 1985, grew out of one of FBSI's sectoral unions, and had strong links to former members of the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party).[89] According to Tarmono, one of its founding members, YBM's primary aim was to 'infiltrate SPSI and improve it from the grass roots'.[90] To this end, YBM maintained close connections with labourist reformers in the official trade union movement, including Haruno, another of YBM's founding members, who continued to be active in SPSI. YBM's initiatives included income-generating projects for ex-workers, community workers' groups, legal advocacy and training for SPSI members. It also administered a labour news clipping service. After 1994, YBM provided training services on a user-pays basis. In 1998, it participated in the government's Safety Net program, providing training for workers who had lost their jobs in the economic crisis.

Both YBK and YBM received some international funding during the New Order period. However, after the fall of Suharto, renewed efforts to gain access to overseas funding failed—a situation activists from both organisations blamed on their inability to speak the 'language' of the donors.[91] At the time of writing, it is unclear whether either organisation is still active.

Labour NGOs Established by Former Workers

Labour NGOs formed by ex-workers were also primarily focused on labour organising. These organisations were omitted from Hadiz's typology, but were included in Abdullah's 'structural-micro' grouping. NGOs in this category, such as *Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi* (Bhakti Pertiwi, Foundation for Service to the Nation) and

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[88] Achmad Rofi'ie, ed., *Labour Cooperative Movement* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Pembangunan, 1986).

[89] PSI's labour links before 1965 are described in Chapter Three.

[90] See also Haruno, "Untitled" (paper presented at the Pertemuan III Pokker Jinggo, Jakarta, 1993).

[91] Interview with Activists from Yayasan Bina Karya on 12 March 1999; Interview with Yayasan Buruh Membangun Activist on 4 January 2000.

Kelompok Buruh Bandung (KBB, Bandung Workers' Group), were the only labour NGOs in which activists were predominantly ex-workers. Both Bhakti Pertiwi and KBB were spin-offs from the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation's forays into structural aid in the 1980s and 1990s, which began life as informal workers' groups sponsored by LBH Jakarta and LBH Bandung respectively.[92] Activists interviewed from both organisations were ambivalent about their status as NGOs, primarily because they saw themselves as workers, not middle-class NGO activists. In some senses, these NGOs were hybrid organisations. They were groups of workers who wanted to form a union, but chose to adopt a NGO structure in order to circumvent the New Order's restrictions on mass organisations.

Five ex-workers formerly associated with LBH Jakarta established Bhakti Pertiwi in 1985. The worker activists in Bhakti Pertiwi adopted a NGO structure in order to facilitate access to foreign funding. Bhakti Pertiwi retained a close association with LIPS, the labour research NGO established by Fauzi Abdullah not long before he left YLBHI. During the Suharto era, Bhakti Pertiwi adopted a very low profile. Its members approached factory workers as individuals rather than as representatives of the organisation. After the fall of Suharto, Bhakti Pertiwi changed its strategy dramatically when it very publicly established *Serikat Buruh Jabotabek* (SBJ, Greater Jakarta Labour Union) in cooperation with a number of other labour NGOs, including LDD.[93]

KBB was officially established in 1995. It grew out of workers' groups sponsored by LBH Bandung in the early 1990s. KBB's members, who were all volunteers, were ex-worker activists associated with those earlier initiatives. The members of KBB were not comfortable being identified as a NGO. However, KBB, (like other NGOs) was a small, limited-membership organisation that arranged worker education programs and sponsored the formation of structurally separate grassroots workers' groups. When interviewed in early 2000, representatives of KBB indicated that workers associated with one of the KBB-sponsored groups had registered a plant-level union in one factory. Unlike Bhakti Pertiwi, KBB did not

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[92]   See the section on YLBHI below.
[93]   SBJ is described in more detail in Chapter Eight.

have direct access to overseas funding, although it received some international support indirectly through LBH Bandung.

Christian Labour NGOs

A number of Christian NGOs also focused on grassroots organising, drawing on concepts of social justice and liberation theology. Abdullah categorised these NGOs, along with YBM and Bina Karya, as 'technocratic'. The Christian NGOs fell into Hadiz's cluster of liberal and social democratic reformers, although the terms Christian NGOs used to describe their aims during (and, indeed after) the New Order period did not contravene the stated ideals of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.[94] Three sub-groups can be identified amongst the Christian NGOs. The first (represented here by LDD) had a direct connection with the Catholic Church, like church-based NGOs in countries such as the Philippines and Korea. The second sub-group also had direct links to churches, but unlike LDD, worked hard to maintain a strongly secular tone in their labour activism. This sub-group included ISJ and PMK, which had links to the Catholic and Batak Lutheran Churches respectively. The third sub-group, which included Sisbikum and YFAS, was overtly Christian in orientation but had less formal links to the Batak Lutheran Church than PMK.

As its name suggests, *Lembaga Daya Dharma Keuskupan Agung Jakarta* (LDD, Outreach Institute of the Jakarta Archdiocese) was a social institute of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jakarta.[95] LDD was established in l962. Initially it worked with the urban poor, providing basic healthcare, housing and education. It first became involved with formal sector workers in 1991. LDD focused on strengthening workers' communities and developing networks. Initially it offered education to Catholic workers, but later made its programs available to workers of other faiths. LDD characterised its approach as a holistic one, which sought to meet the needs of workers in all aspects of their lives. LDD also published a workers' magazine called *Sepakat* (Agreement), and undertook labour-related research. After the fall of Suharto, workers' groups associated with LDD in Tangerang and Bekasi were dissolved into SBJ, but LDD continued to offer educational services. The contents of

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[94]   Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 144.
[95]   Institutional translation.

LDD's programs did not change markedly, but they were conducted more openly. Although LDD was mostly involved in grassroots organising, it joined in NGO campaigns on a range of issues, and was involved in a national forum of labour NGOs associated with the Catholic Church. However, it had few international links.

The Jesuit-linked *Institut Sosial Jakarta* (ISJ, Jakarta Social Institute), established in 1973, operated at arm's length from the Catholic Church. ISJ was originally involved in labour research and the dispensing of charity to small groups of workers, but it became active in labour organising from 1985. After 1990, ISJ widened its focus to include the informal sector and the urban poor. Before the fall of Suharto, ISJ used what it called a 'cadre approach', in which worker activists were 'involved in the work of the NGO', specifically the recruitment and training of other worker-activists. It established a series of *Paguyuban* (a Javanese and Sundanese term for 'association'), which they described as an 'intermediate organisational form between a workers' community group and a union'. After the relaxing of union registration policies in 1998, ISJ's labour section encouraged the *Paguyuban* to take responsibility for training and organising and move towards registration as plant-level unions.[96] In 2001, ISJ spun off its labour section as a separate organisation called *Institut Perburuhan Jakarta* (IPJ, Jakarta Labour Institute). IPJ continued to be involved in labour education, organising and advocacy, but although it operated independently, it was funded by ISJ.[97]

Pelayanan Masyarakat Kota Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (PMK, Urban Community Mission of the Batak Protestant Christian Assembly) was established under the auspices of the Batak Lutheran Church. Whilst PMK had close links to the church and was 'based on faith', it used a secular human rights approach in its labour work. PMK employed Muslims and Christians of other denominations as well as members of the Batak Lutheran church. PMK was founded in 1983 by Indera Nababan, the director of *Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat* (YAKOMA, Social Communication Foundation), a NGO associated with the *Persatuan Gereja Indonesia* (PGI, Indonesian Communion of Churches). According to Nababan, PMK

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[96] After the fall of Suharto, these workers groups formed an association called the *Forum Paguyuban Buruh* (The Forum of Workers' Associations), which became involved in advocacy. See for example "Paguyuban Buruh Demo ke DPR," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 2 December 1999.

[97] See Jakarta Institute of Labour, *Prospectus 2000: Strategy, Forecasting, and Hope* (Jakarta: Institut Perburuhan Jakarta, 2001).

did not identify as a LSM, because LSMs were 'usually just two to three people who were only responsible to themselves', whereas PMK was an *organisasi non-pemerintah* (*ornop*, non-governmental organisation) accountable to the church.[98] PMK had two divisions: a migrant worker division (CIMW, Centre for Indonesian Migrant Workers), and an industrial labour division, *Pelayanan Buruh Jakarta* (PBJ, Jakarta Workers' Service). PBJ provided legal services, ran intensive training workshops in workers' rights and leadership, and had links with community-based workers' groups in a number of areas, mostly in the Greater Jakarta region.[99] Although these groups did not attempt to form unions, many of their members were actively involved in unions in their workplaces. PBJ did not contribute to national-level advocacy campaigns, but participated in international labour campaigns, particularly the anti-Nike campaign.[100] It also published a workers' tabloid called *Buruh: Media untuk Buruh, dari Buruh, oleh Buruh* (Workers: Media for Workers, From Workers, By Workers).

Sisbikum, whose name was an acronym for *Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum* (Channel for Social Information and Legal Guidance), was established in 1988. Like Muchtar Pakpahan of SBSI, Arist Merdeka Sirait (one of Sisbikum's founders) was previously active in PMK.[101] Unlike most labour NGO activists (apart from those in KBB and Bhakti Pertiwi), Sirait had worked in a factory before joining a NGO. Sisbikum was involved in legal aid, grassroots organising and worker education—a field in which it was a leader in alternative approaches such as workers' theatre.[102] It also published a labour newsletter called *Berita Reaksi: Media*

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[98] As explained in Chapter One, the government promoted LSM as the indigenous alternative to *ornop*. The process through which LSM came to be used is described in more detail in Chapter Five.

[99] Athreya has reported that in 1995, PMK training sessions contained 'overtly political' content, but 'at no time did the speakers suggest that participants organize and strike, or provide any concrete guidance for doing so'. Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 117-118. When I attended a similar training session in 2000, strikes were high on the agenda. Worker-activists associated with PMK described in detail how they been 'infiltrating' SPSI units for some years.

[100] See for example Urban Community Mission, "Cruel Treatment: Working for Nike in Indonesia," (Report produced for Press for Change, 1999).

[101] Saut Aritonang, one of the founders of SBM-SK, was also involved in the establishment of Sisbikum.

[102] For an account of workers' theatre in Indonesia, see Michael Bodden, "Workers' Theatre and Theatre about Workers in 1990s Indonesia," *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs* 31, No. 1 (1997).

Sarana Informasi Masalah Perburuhan (Reaction News: Labour Issues Information Media) intermittently from the early 1990s.[103] After the fall of Suharto, some seventeen Sisbikum-associated workers' groups registered as plant-level trade unions in the Textile, Garment and Footwear sectors, and became members of *Gabungan Serikat Buruh Independen* (GSBI, Association of Independent Labour Unions). Sisbikum, which viewed labour from within a human rights framework, was also heavily involved in international campaigning for labour rights, including the anti-Nike campaign, and in national labour NGO networks.

The final organisation in this group, *Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera* (YFAS, Justice and Welfare Forum), was another labour NGO established by activists previously associated with PMK, including Muchtar Pakpahan. YFAS formed in 1988 and registered as a Foundation in 1990. It combined legal aid with organising and educational work.[104] After 1990, YFAS published a quarterly Indonesian language newsletter called *Suara Pinggiran,* which covered a range of social issues including labour. From 1998, it also produced a biannual English-language newsletter called *Sociality.* After the fall of Suharto, a number of informal workers' groups associated with YFAS registered as independent plant-level unions. By the end of 2002, there were 24 registered plant-level unions associated with YFAS in Jakarta, Bekasi and Cikarang.[105]

Student-Based Labour NGOs

A fourth group of grassroots labour NGOs grew out of the left of the student movement. Student-based labour NGOs generally fell into Hadiz's radical cluster and Abdullah's structural-micro category. Some of these organisations, most notably *Yayasan Maju Bersama*, used the political history of Indonesia's working-class movement to encourage workers' awareness of broader contemporary social and political issues.[106]

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[103] Later titled *Reaksi: Media Saluran Informasi Perburuhan.*
[104] Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera, *FAS: Forum Adil Sejahtera* (Jakarta: Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera, n.d.). See also Pakpahan, *Lima Tahun Memimpin SBSI*, 43-44.
[105] Personal communication with Amor Tampubolon, 17 December 2002.
[106] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 139. For one example of labour NGOs' public commentary on worker awareness, see "Legal Aid Office Sees Rise in Workers' Awareness," *Jakarta Post*, 24 August 1996.

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The most recently established NGO in this category was *Yayasan Arek Surabaya* (Arek), formed in 1991. '*Arek*', a term meaning 'child of' or 'original inhabitant' in East Java, was an acronym for labour advocacy, research, and education (*advokasi, riset, edukasi ketenagakerjaan*).[107] Arek was involved in both grassroots organising and advocacy. It promoted labour organising and education at a grassroots level, and conducted research, held seminars and published books on labour related issues. In the post-Suharto period, workers' groups sponsored by Arek formed the *Serikat Buruh Kerakyatan* (SBK, The People's Labour Union).

Kelompok Kerja Humanika (*Humanika*, Humanika Working Group), another Surabaya-based labour NGO, began in 1981 as a study-group at Airlangga University. When the study group's members began a worker-education and legal aid program in 1983, they adopted their current name, which they said was chosen to reflect the group's concern with humanity. In 1988, *Humanika* expanded its program to include organisational work and advocacy. The group registered as a legal entity in 1991. *Humanika* described its activities as part of a class-based attempt to promote democratisation, which, its spokesperson argued, 'begins with the democratisation of the unions'. Since the fall of Suharto, some workers' groups encouraged by *Humanika* in the late New Order period collectively adopted the name *Serikat Buruh Regional* (SBR, Regional Labour Union). Whilst *Humanika* activists readjusted their priorities in the post-Suharto era, they made little change to their overall strategy. However, like a number of other grassroots NGOs, *Humanika* did pull back from direct organisational work to concentrate on education, resource development and advocacy. They characterised this repositioning as a shift from 'being a facilitator of workers' groups to being a partner and supporter of unions'.

Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera (KPS, Lamp of Prosperity Group) had its roots in a student study group called *Kelompok Studi Masyarakat Perkotaan* (Urban Community Study Group), established in 1990. It claimed to be the only long-standing NGO specifically focused on workers in Medan, although several other NGOs also dealt with labour issues during the New Order period.[108] KPS's interest in

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[107] Yayasan Arek Surabaya, *Profil Yayasan Arek Surabaya* (Surabaya: Yayasan Arek Surabaya, n.d.).
[108] Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera, "Refleksi Pengorganisasian Buruh" (paper presented at the Lokakarya Refleksi Pengorganisasian, Bogor, 8-12 January 1999). See also Human Rights

workers arose out of a series of student discussions focusing on problems associated with development, including social inequality, environmental degradation and the forced requisition of land for development projects. In 1993, it was involved in the formation of the *Forum Aspirasi Kaum Buruh* (FAKB, Forum for Workers' Aspirations), a workers' network that had 'contact people' in 42 companies.[109] KPS undertook grassroots organising and education, and published a labour newspaper called *Protes* from late 1994.[110] Like many other grassroots labour NGOs, KPS took advantage of the changing regulatory climate after the fall of Suharto to encourage the development of independent trade unions whilst continuing to offer training, education and advocacy to individual workers and informal workers groups.[111]

Yayasan Maju Bersama (YMB, Foundation for Mutual Progress) was founded by former labour history students from the University of Indonesia in 1986. It considered itself to be 'further to the left than most NGOs'.[112] In its early years, YMB concentrated on worker education with a strong focus on labour history and politics. From late 1991, it published a magazine called *Cerita Kami*, which included pieces written by workers and articles about industrial issues such as strikes and occupation health and safety, in addition to more politically oriented articles.[113] An English language newsletter, *Indonesian News*, was also published from March 1994. In 1993, YMB expanded its activities to the formation of worker cooperatives designed to increase members' income and provide opportunities for workers' organisation. However, by 1997, it had effectively disbanded.

Watch, "Petition on Indonesian Worker Rights to the U.S. Trade Reperesentative," *Human Rights Watch/Asia*, 14 June 1995. As noted earlier, activists from KPS, along with activists from Pondokan and LAAI, were arrested after the Medan demonstrations of 1994. For information on Pondokan and LAAI, see Lembaga Advokasi Anak Indonesia, *Profile* ([cited 20 April 2003]); available from http://www.lsm.or.id/laai; Yayasan Pondok Rakyat Kreatif, *The Work of Yayasan Pondok Rakyat Kreatif* ([cited 20 April 2003]); available from http://www.cwa.tnet.co.th/vol11-1/YPRK.htm.

[109] Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera, "Refleksi Pengorganisasian Buruh".

[110] Before the fall of Suharto, *Protes* bore the additional heading *Media Suara Rakyat* (Media of the People's Voice). After the fall of Suharto, this was changed to *Tabloid Buruh* (Workers' Tabloid). The issues it covered did not change significantly since the fall of Suharto.

[111] Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera, "Refleksi Pengorganisasian Buruh". Also *Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera (The Institute for Development of Independent Union Workers)* ([cited 30 April 2003]); available from http://www.lsm.or.id/ykps/.

[112] Interview with former member of Yayasan Maju Bersama on 17 January 2001.

[113] An electronic copy of some editions of *Cerita Kami* can be found at Yayasan Maju Bersama, *Cerita Kami* ([cited 20 March 2003]); available from http://www.angelfire.com/id/edicahy/ceritakami/.

Feminist Grassroots Labour NGOs

The final group of grassroots labour NGOs focused on labour issues from within a wider frame of feminist concerns. While there were few women's NGOs that concentrated on industrial labour, most labour NGOs included 'gender equity' or 'women's issues' as part of their labour programs.[114] What distinguished grassroots women's NGOs from other grassroots NGOs was their view on the relationship between work and other aspects of women's lives. Whereas most labour NGOs saw women as an important sub-group of the wider category of workers, women's NGOs that dealt with labour issues focused on work as a part of women's overall experience. The two best-known feminist grassroots labour NGOs involved with industrial labour during the late New Order period were Yasanti and *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika*.

Yayasan Annisa Swasti (Yasanti, the Independent Women's Foundation) was established in 1982 by six female students.[115] Yasanti began working with rural women in 'traditional' developmental activities such as skills development and the provision of micro-credit. From the late 1980s, it focused its attention on industrial workers in Central Java in response to the increasing involvement of rural women in factory work. It also worked with female porters in Yogyakarta. Yasanti's long-term goal was to create independent women workers' groups. It had three sub-programs: grassroots organising, publishing and networking.[116] At the grassroots level, it sought to raise awareness of workers' rights, encourage workers to be critical of their situation, and to establish a pattern of routine meetings amongst small groups of workers. Yasanti's tabloid, entitled *Annisa: Suara Kaum Perempuan* (*Annisa: the Voice of Women*) focused on issues such as the history of workers' organisations in Indonesia, patriarchy and its effect on women workers, the role of women in unions, the empowerment of women, and women's human rights. Yasanti also published monographs that provided extensive details of the living and working conditions of

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[114]   See Chapter Seven for comments on politics surrounding NGOs' gender programs.

[115]   For a more detailed account of the activities of Yasanti, see Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 311-317. Of interest is the fact that the only other labour NGOs that Kusyuniati, a founding member of Yasanti, mentions in a footnote on labour NGOs are *Yayasan Buruh Membangun, Yayasan Bina Karya* and *Yayasan Arek Surabaya.* Ibid., 311.

[116]   See also Rachmawati, "Dimensi Internasional LSM dan Pemberdayaan Buruh di Indonesia Tahun 1990-an." 84-91.

women workers. It essentially continued its existing program after the fall of Suharto.

Unlike Yasanti, which used a Muslim feminist framework, *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika* (YPM, Free Women Foundation) combined feminism with a strongly Marxist analysis of Indonesian society. YPM was founded in 1991 by a group of feminist students. It held discussions with workers' communities about labour law, capitalism and the need for workers' organisations and childcare facilities and ran a workers' theatre program.[117] YPM chose to target female factory workers, rather than other groups of women, because it believed industrial workers were the most progressive group in society. Its stated objectives in doing so were to 'create critical awareness amongst workers towards structures which oppressed female workers [and to] promote a shift from a system of oppression to a system that strengthened justice, gender equity and democracy'.[118] Differences in opinion about the efficacy of NGOs and the best way to implement Marxist principles in Indonesia forced the group to disband in 1995.[119]

Legal Aid NGOs with a Labour Focus

Legal aid foundations were another important category of labour NGOs in late New Order Indonesia. Whilst these organisations were not focused exclusively on labour issues, they played a particularly visible role after adopting the principle of structural legal aid in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[120] Although *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (YLBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid Institute) and its regional affiliates

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[117] Yayasan Perempuan Mardika, "Bercermin Dari Pengalaman: Belajar Bersama Buruh Perempuan" (paper presented at the Dialog Nasional Perburuhan: Dialog untuk Penguatan Buruh, Bandung, 21-23 September 1995).

[118] Ibid.

[119] Personal Communication with Nori Andriyani on 13 February 1999. See also Andriyani, "Myth of the Effective Little NGO."

[120] Structural Aid was YLBHI's attempt to address the root causes of the community's legal aid needs by becoming involved in political advocacy and community work. For an overview of YLBHI's approach and activities to 1995, see Benny K. Harman et al., eds., *25 Tahun LBH: Memberdayakan Rakyat Membangun Demokrasi* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1995). See also *Legal Aid in Indonesia (Five Years of the Lembaga Bantuan Hukum)* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1976); Mulyana Kusumah, *Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia dan Struktur-Struktur dalam Masyarakat Indonesia* (Bandung: Alumni, 1982), 92-113; Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 95-108; Kastorius Sinaga, "Bantuan Hukum Structural ke Lokomotif Demokrasi," in *25 Tahun LBH: Memberdayakaan Rakyat Membangun Demokrasi*, ed. Benny K. Harman, et al. (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1995); Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." 142-157.

were not the only legal aid foundations active in labour, they were certainly the best known.[121] At its peak, YLBHI had fourteen regional affiliates. A number of these (particularly LBH Bandung, LBH Jakarta, and LBH Surabaya) were involved in both labour organising and advocacy, whilst YLBHI played a coordinating role in several labour campaign coalitions in the 1990s, including Forsol Buruh and KPHP. YLBHI published a wide range of books and other forms of information on labour issues.[122] Its activities and opinions, and those of its affiliates, were frequently reported in the press.

YLBHI's first foray into labour organising began in 1980, after a number of workers who had been sacked and blacklisted for leading a strike came to *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta* (LBH Jakarta, Jakarta Legal Aid Institute) for help. Those workers (some of whom eventually established Bhakti Pertiwi) began to work closely with the LBH Jakarta staff first running education programs and then organising informal workers' groups. LBH Jakarta's direct involvement at the grassroots level decreased after Bhakti Pertiwi was formed and Fauzi Abdullah first moved to YLBHI and then left LBH altogether in 1993. After 1993, LBH Jakarta worked with other labour NGOs and workers' groups such as *Komite Buruh untuk Aksi Reformasi* (KOBAR, Workers' Committee for Reform Action), a grassroots labour network later affiliated with FNPBI.[123] After the fall of Suharto, LBH Jakarta's program focused on advocacy, awareness raising, campaigns, training and litigation. It has continued to offer support to KOBAR and other grassroots labour organisations in the post-Suharto period.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung, (LBH Bandung, Bandung Legal Aid Institute) was established in 1981. It officially opened its labour division eight years later. During the 1990s, it was active in grassroots organising, legal aid and national-

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[121] For example, *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Nusantara* (LBHN, Archipelago Legal Aid Foundation) was very active in labour issues in Bandung in the 1990s.

[122] See for example YLBHI, *Pokok-Pokok Pikiran YLBHI tentang Reformasi Politik Perburuhan Nasional* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1998). See also the labour chapters in YLBHI, *Portret Keadilan Indonesia: Laporan Keadaan Hak Asasi Manusia di Indonesia 1984-1985* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1987); YLBHI, *Remang-Remang Indonesia: Laporan Hak Asasi Manusia 1986-1987* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1989); YLBHI, *Demokrasi di Balik Keranda: Catatan Keadaan Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia di Indonesia 1992*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, 1992); YLBHI, *Demokrasi: Antara Represi dan Resistensi* (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1994).

[123] For a critique of YLBHI's approach to labour from PPBI, see Wilson, "LBH dan Kaum Buruh Indonesia," in *25 Tahun LBH: Memberdayakan Rakyat Membangun Demokrasi*, ed. Benny K. Harman, et al. (Jakarta: YLBHI, 1995).

level campaigns, and, as noted above, supported KBB and a range of other workers' groups. LBH Bandung adopted a strong class analysis of labour issues within the broader framework of structural legal aid. Not long after the fall of Suharto, the staff of the labour division left to form their own labour NGO, the Labour Education Centre. The labour division became inactive, although LBH Bandung continued to maintain its informal links with KBB.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surabaya (LBH Surabaya*,* Surabaya Legal Aid Institute) was established in the late 1970s by the Surabaya branch of the Indonesian Lawyers' Association (*Persatuan Advokad Indonesia*). In 1983, it was invited to join YLBHI. When LBH Surabaya implemented YLBHI's structural aid policy in the late 1980s, it initially concentrated on land and environment cases, because of their importance in the local context of East Java. LBH Surabaya's labour division was established when its Malang branch first began to organise workers' groups in 1989-1990. It was heavily involved in publicising Marsinah's death and in campaigns against military involvement in labour relations in the early-mid 1990s. In addition to its organising work, its labour division undertook advocacy, litigation and case documentation. Like many other NGOs involved in grassroots organising, LBH Surabaya stepped back after the fall of Suharto to act as advisor to independent trade unions and workers' groups wishing to register as trade unions. However, it continued to be heavily involved in campaigns and networking.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (LBH APIK, Legal Aid Bureau of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice) was established by seven feminist lawyers, including Nursyabani Katjasungkana, in 1996 in Jakarta. Although LBH APIK did not deal only with workers, its labour programs were quite extensive. LBH APIK provided legal aid for poor working women and labour migrants; ran training and empowerment programs for 'strategic' groups (including labour and NGO activists); and was involved in policy advocacy, publication and the provision of information. Before the fall of Suharto, LBH APIK sought access to female workers through labour NGOs. After new legislation on trade unions was passed in 2000, LBH APIK began to work with unions, although the substance of its training programs remained the same. LBH APIK published a quarterly bulletin called *Suara APIK untuk Kebebasan dan Keadilan,* (Voice of

APIK for Freedom and Justice) which was supported by USAID. LBH APIK was active in a number of national labour advocacy networks concerning both factory labour in Indonesia and overseas migrant workers, including the campaign against Manpower Law No.25/1997, and campaigns about the reproductive rights of female labourers, workplace violence and occupational health and safety.[124]

Research/Policy NGOs with a Labour Focus

Like legal aid organisations, most research and policy NGOs did not deal exclusively with labour issues. In the labour arena, they were best known for their prominent roles in the organisation of labour NGO campaigns. In addition, they played an important support role for other labour NGOs—and, in the post-Suharto period, for the new wave of trade unions operating in Indonesia.

Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane (LIPS, Sedane Labour Information Centre) was the only NGO in this category that focused exclusively on labour.[125] LIPS, which was located in Bogor, was established by Fauzi Abdullah in 1992. It maintained a research library with a particular focus on labour developments in West Java. It also ran workshops and seminars for worker activists and other labour NGO personnel. In the post-Suharto period, it began publishing a quarterly update on labour issues, distributed by email to interested parties, and an Indonesian-language labour journal. LIPS conducted research for foreign NGOs, including 11.11.11, an umbrella group of labour organisations, church groups and other groups interested in labour issues in Belgium.[126]

Akatiga (whose name was an acronym for its original address) specialised in research about industrial labour, small business and land issues. Akatiga, which was based in Bandung, was a large, well-funded organisation. It was established in September 1991, following a series of workshops from 1988, held in conjunction with *Institut Pertanian Bogor* (IPB, Bogor Agricultural Institute), *Institut Tekonologi Bandung* (ITB, Bandung Technology Institute) and the Institute of Social Studies in

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[124] Many other legal aid bureaus were also active in labour issues in the 1990s. Examples of these include *LBH Nusantara* (in Bandung) and *LBH Ampera* (in Bogor).

[125] LIPS originally stood for *Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Semarak*.

[126] For details of 11.11.11 see 11.11.11, *Koepel van de Vlaamse Noord - Zuidbeweging 11.11.11*; available from http://www.11.be/.

The Hague.[127] After completing its original project on non-farm labour, it undertook extensive micro-level research projects. It maintained a research library, provided support for domestic and international scholars, and published a wide range of labour-related monographs and other printed materials. It has also participated in a number of national-level advocacy campaigns. In later years, Akatiga was criticised by student groups and other NGOs for taking on projects funded by the World Bank.

In contrast, *Yayasan Lapera Indonesia* (Lapera, Lapera Foundation) was a small research labour NGO that grew out of a radical student discussion group. It was officially established in 1992. Lapera, which claimed to locate its class analysis in a wider framework of human rights, chose to work with farmers and industrial labour because they were the 'most exploited' groups in Indonesia. It focused primarily on researching and producing publications about labour and agriculture. In the late 1990s, its labour specialist spent six months living in the field in Ungaran (the industrial area on the outskirts of Semarang, where Yasanti also works) and Lapera assembled some training modules for labour activists. Yet despite having itself experimented with worker education and organisation, Lapera was critical of the efforts of many labour NGOs, arguing that 'the middle class had too strong a role in labour' and that 'workers' organisations must come from the workers themselves'.[128] The activists in Lapera did not have strong connections with international networks. They believed they could best contribute to the labour movement through their involvement in domestic NGO networks and publishing.[129]

Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat (ELSAM, Institute for Policy and Advocacy) was a human rights policy NGO closely associated with YLBHI.[130] ELSAM was actively involved in publishing and advocacy of labour and women's issues, indigenous rights and pro-democracy groups from the time of its formation in 1993. ELSAM's involvement with labour issues was framed by its understanding of

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[127] AKATIGA, *Seputar Pendirian Akatiga* [Internet] (Akatiga, 1999 [cited 19 January 1999]); available from http://www.melsa.net.id/~akatiga/profil.htm. See also AKATIGA, *Profil Lembaga /Institutional Profile* (Bandung: Akatiga, n.d.).

[128] See also Yayasan Lapera Indonesia, "Modul Pelatihan untuk Pendamping Buruh," (Yogyakarta: Lapera, 1998), 41.

[129] For further details about Lapera, see Rachmawati, "Dimensi Internasional LSM dan Pemberdayaan Buruh di Indonesia Tahun 1990-an." 94-100.

[130] Institute for Policy and Advocacy is ELSAM's official institutional translation. In its early years, it used the acronym LSAM rather than ELSAM.

labour rights as a category of human rights.[131] Its concern with the strengthening and promotion of the 'universal values' of human rights ran strongly through its publications. Like most other organisations in this category, ELSAM did not deal directly with workers. Instead, it provided training and research support to a range of grassroots labour NGOs including KPS, LBH Bandung and Sisbikum.

Solidaritas Perempuan untuk Hak Asasi Manusia (*Solidaritas Perempuan*, Women's Solidarity for Human Rights) was a feminist organisation primarily concerned with domestic and international advocacy on behalf of female overseas migrant labour and grassroots activism involving women planning to work overseas or returning from overseas work. However, it also played an important role in a number of advocacy campaigns concerned with labour issues in Indonesia. Solidaritas Perempuan was established in 1990 by a group of activists concerned with the impact of a number of high profile land rights cases on women. Originally Solidaritas Perempuan was structured as a *yayasan* (foundation), the most common legal form adopted by NGOs. However, it was restructured as a *perserikatan* (union or association) with an open, due-paying membership in 1995. This decision was taken after lengthy discussions about the limitations of the NGO as an organisational form, including its exclusive membership structure, activists' lack of control of the organisation (which is responsible to its board) and the project-driven nature of NGO activities. After 1998, Solidaritas Perempuan broadened its focus to include state violence against women and the promotion of feminist principles in politics, but continued to have a strong focus on labour issues.[132]

Conclusion

Labour NGOs emerged in the particular socio-political context of late New Order Indonesia. Consequently, their activities and success were affected by the

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[131] See for example Tim Studi ELSAM, "Analisis Dampak Proyek Terhadap Hak Asasi Manusia dan Parameter Hak Asasi Manusia Untuk Kebijakan Pembangunan: Kasus PIR dan Perburuhan," (Jakarta: ELSAM, 1994). This document was later published as Meutia Rochman, Teten Masduki, and Paskah Irianto, *Human Rights as Development Parameter* (Jakarta: ELSAM, 1996). and Meutia Rochman, Teten Masduki, and Paskah Irianto, *HAM Sebagai Parameter Pembangunan* (Jakarta: ELSAM, 1997).

[132] Perserikatan Solidaritas Perempuan, *Perserikatan Solidaritas Perempuan/Women's Solidarity for Human Rights* (Jakarta: Perserikatan Solidaritas Perempuan, n.d.).

government's policy towards mass organisations and other interest groups. Labour NGOs were also influenced by the international growth of NGO networks, and the dynamics of the NGO community within Indonesia. In the late New Order period, individual labour NGOs encouraged workers to organise, defended them in the courts, or conducted research on their conditions and needs. Collectively, they campaigned against repressive labour policy, legislation and practice. Only grassroots labour NGOs and legal aid organisations were directly involved with workers. However, research and policy NGOs made an important contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement through their involvement in advocacy work.

Labour NGOs were not the only 'non-worker' groups in the New Order's oppositional labour movement. There was considerable overlap between labour NGOs and the alternative unions and radical student groups that emerged in the period. However, alternative unions, labour NGOs and student groups each had distinctive organisational features. Alternative unions aspired to become mass organisations of workers, whereas student groups and labour NGOs sought to sponsor and support workers' groups that were structurally separate from their own organisations. Student groups and labour NGOs were superficially similar, but they too had different characteristics. NGOs were more permanent and more structured than student groups, and they were answerable to the international donors, whose priorities influenced their programs. All three made an important contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement. However, each group should be considered separately as part of the labour movement in its own right.

CHAPTER 3

Constructing the Labour Intellectual

The different roles undertaken by alternative unions, radical student groups and labour NGOs in late twentieth century Indonesia corresponded with their different perceptions of the function of intellectuals in the labour movement. These perceptions were shaped by international theories about the nature and purpose of labour movement organisations. As Hess has argued, after Rey, developing countries have a 'double history' of international influence and local culture, which, in the industrial relations arena, has meant that the operation of a foreign-built machinery of industrial relations is mediated by local cultural factors.[1] This chapter takes international labour theory as its starting point because (reversing Hess' emphasis) although the institutions of organised labour have been produced differently in different non-European contexts, the process has inevitably been informed by international conceptions of the labour union, particularly those familiar to the colonisers when unions were first established.[2]

The early development of the Indonesian labour movement took place under the influence of Dutch socialists, and communist unions quickly established links with the Comintern.[3] According to Hawkins, a contemporary observer, non-

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[1] Hess, "Unions and Economic Development." 53, 233.

[2] Foreign influence is very direct in developing countries. It is often transferred directly through colonial rule, but can continue in post-colonial situations (either with previous colonial power or a new relationship of dependency), or through the influence of international labour organisations, such the WFTU, ICFTU or ILO, or transnational labour organisations, such as the AFL-CIO.

[3] Some of these links are described in the historical accounts summarised in Appendix A. A number of foreigners attended the first *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Organisation of Trade Unions) congress in 1947, including representatives from the communist *Eenheids Vakcentrale* and the *Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen* (NVV, Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions); the ACTU and the Waterside Workers' Federation; and the *Gabungan Buruh Malaja* (The Malayan Labour Association). SOBSI representatives also attended the WFTU general assembly in Prague in the same year, and the Asian and Australian conference in Peking in 1949. Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Rakjat, 1961), 70-71, 108-109. For accounts of Indonesian unionists' and labour intellectuals' relationships with groups outside Indonesia, see Ibid., 39-41, 44-47, 52-53, 61. For details of Australian links to the PKI, see Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada* (South Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1975). The ILO also played a role in Indonesia during this period. Harold Butler (the ILO director) visited Indonesia in October 1937, while Hindromartono, the head of the

communist unions' international ties were not as strong as Communist unions' ties with Profintern (Red International of Labour Unions) and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU); however a number of unions joined affiliates of the ICFTU and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL).[4] Despite protestations to the contrary, the international aspects of Indonesia's 'double history' of labour relations continued to be a strong influence on labour institutions and patterns of labour relations after the New Order regime came to power in the late 1960s.[5] It is argued in this chapter, and in those that follow, that many of the terms in which labour institutions were described in New Order Indonesia originated not in Indonesia itself, but in the European labour theory debates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first part of the chapter outlines the relevant parts of those debates, specifically exchanges between Lenin, Bernstein and Kautsky, and the neo-revisionist arguments of Perlman. The second part of the chapter describes the extent to which references to Leninism and revisionism were used to justify particular understandings of the relationship between workers and intellectuals, as experienced

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Federated Union of Railway and Tram Workers from 1937 and a member of the executives of the Union of Harbour and Dockyard Employees, the Union of Oil Company Employees and the Federation of Civil Servants' Unions, was later sent to the ILO. See Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 422.

[4]   Some Muslim unions, namely *Gabungan Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia* (GASBIINDO, The Indonesian Association of Muslim Unions), *Sarekat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia* (SARBUMUSI, Indonesian Muslim Workers' Union) *Kongres Buruh Islam Merdeka* (KBIM, The Congress of Free Muslim Workers) and *Gabungan Organisasi Buruh Serikat Islam Indonesia* (GOBSII, The Association of Muslim Workers' Unions) joined the ICFTU. Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement* (Bandung: Alumni, 1984), 47; Agus Sudono, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia dan Kebijaksanaannya: Kumpulan Pidato, Ceramah, Sambutan, Disampaikan pada Berbagai Forum & Konperensi Nasional & Internasional* (Jakarta: FBSI, 1978), 15. Hawkins reports that earlier there was 'great reluctance' to be associated with the ICFTU because of its perceived imperialist leanings. See Hawkins, "Indonesia," 97.

[5]   Union links with the ICFTU were strong in the 1960s and early 1970s. Sudono, head of GASBIINDO (and later of FBSI) had a leadership position in the ICFTU's Asian section from 1958, and became a member of the ICFTU executive in 1969. Agus Sudono, *Pengabdian Agus Sudono* (Jakarta: Dunia Pustaka Jaya, 1999), 80. Although the ICFTU no longer recognised the Muslim unions after they were effectively made inactive in 1973, ICFTU texts continued to be translated into Indonesian in the New Order period. See for example *Apakah Serikat-Buruh Itu* (Jakarta: Perwakilan ICFTU di Indonesia, 1980). The Catholic *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Pantjasila* (SOB Pantjasila, Federation of Pancasila Workers' Organisations) and the Protestant *Kesatuan Pekerja Kristen Republik Indonesia* (Kespekri, Union of Christian Workers of the Republic of Indonesia) were amongst the unions that joined the Christian WCL. See Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 47.

through the union and the political party. This is done using texts written before 1965 by authors from a range of political backgrounds.[6]

Lenin and the Revisionists on the Labour Intellectual

Lenin was perhaps best known for his work on imperialism in pre-New Order Indonesia.[7] Lenin argued that the promotion of global socialism required a two-stage revolution in colonised states: the proletariat must first cooperate with other classes to bring about a bourgeois democratic (or nationalist) revolution before a second, socialist revolution would be possible.[8] From 1951, when the Indonesian Communist Party was rebuilt after being destroyed for a second time in 1948, Aidit and others in the new leadership group—the Leninist Wing (*sajap Leninis*)—concentrated on constructing a united front to achieve Indonesia's national (bourgeois) revolution.[9] However debates about the role of intellectuals in labour unions, both in the PKI and in other parts of the Indonesian elite, continued to reflect Lenin's earlier contributions, and reactions to them, in the long-running debate about the role of

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[6] There was a renewed emphasis on the publication of texts about socialism after the fall of Suharto. Some texts available in bookshops in Indonesia at the end of 2001 included Erich Fromm, *Konsep Manusia Menurut Marx* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001); Edvard Kardelj, *Jalan Menuju Sosialisme Sedunia* (Yogyakarta: Tarawang Press, 2001); Rosa Luxemburg, *Reformasi atau Revolusi*, trans. R.M Gunardi (Yogyakarta: Gelombang Pasang, 2000); Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx: Dari Sosialisme Utopis ke Perselisihan Revisionisme* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2001); Soedjatmoko, *Kebudayaan Sosialis* (Jakarta: Malibas, 2001).

[7] For Aidit's opinions on imperialism in Indonesia, see D.N. Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia (Dari Tahun 1905 Sampai Tahun 1926)* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1952), 13-35.

[8] V. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest State of Capitalism," in *Lenin on Politics and Revolution: Selected Writings*, ed. James Connor (New York: Pegasus, 1968); V. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," in *Lenin on Politics and Revolution: Selected Writings*, ed. James Connor (Moscow: Library of Marxist-Leninist Classics, 1968).

[9] The PKI was also crushed in 1926–27. For a history of the Indonesian Communist party, see Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); Ruth McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965); Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); Olle Tornquist, *Dilemmas of Third World Communism: Destruction of the PKI in Indonesia* (London: Zed Books, 1984); Justus van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program and Tactics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1965). For documents on 1926-27, see Harry Benda and Ruth McVey, eds., *The Communist Uprising of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1960). For an account of the events of 1948 see Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1989). For biographical details of Aidit, Lukman, Njoto and Sudisman, see Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965*, 34-40.

intellectuals in the labour movement within the classical Marxist tradition of trade union theory.[10]

Lenin and the Revisionists

For the purposes of this study, the most significant debate about the role of intellectuals in the labour movement was the exchange between Lenin and the revisionists in Germany and Russia.[11] When Bernstein and the Russian Economists questioned the inevitability of revolution and the efficacy of intellectuals' intervention in trade unions, Lenin responded with his most influential explication of the relationship between trade unions and the vanguard party. The terms of the debate were set in Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism* and Lenin's *What is to be Done?*: should socialism be achieved through evolution, based on the growing strength of trade unions and workers' participation in parliamentary democracy? Or should revolutionary intellectuals intervene in trade unions to free workers from the shackles of trade union consciousness? As debates around these questions within Indonesia drew on the authority and language of Lenin and Bernstein, it is necessary to map out their positions on trade union consciousness and its limits, and the issues of spontaneity, revolution and the role of the revolutionary intellectual.[12]

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[10] For a detailed explication of the influence of Leninism on Indonesia's trade unions, see Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement*, 63-84. See also Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963*, 132-156. For a concise overview and typology of theories of the labour movement, see Simeon Larson and Bruce Nissen, eds., *Theories of the Labour Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987). For an accessible explication of classical Marxism, see Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976), 1-23.

[11] See Richard Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism* (London: Pluto Press, 1971), 11-14, 39-44; James Connor, "Introduction," in *Lenin on Politics and Revolution: Selected Writings*, ed. James Connor (New York: Pegasus, 1968), xv-xxi. See also Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working Class Mentality in Germany, 1897-1912* (Cambridge and London: Hazard University Press, 1993).

[12] V. Lenin, "What is to be Done?: Burning Questions of Our Movement," in *Lenin on Politics and Revolution: Selected Writings*, ed. James Connor (New York: Pegasus, 1968). Bernstein's most famous work, *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie,* was first published in English in the early twentieth century. I have used Harvey's translation, which was published by Schocken 1961, and reprinted for the seventh time in 1975, as Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation*, trans. Edith Harvey (New York: Schocken Books, 1975). A new translation by Henry Tudor was published in 1993 as Eduard Bernstein, *The Preconditions of Socialism*, trans. Henry Tudor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For biographical details about Bernstein, see Kolakowski, *Main*

Whereas Lenin saw revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat as essential pillars of scientific socialism, Bernstein argued that Marx's theory of revolution failed to take into account the heterogeneity of the proletariat and the tenuousness of the link between the experience of industrial work and a yearning for socialist production.[13] Bernstein had spent time in England, and had been strongly influenced by the English Fabianism.[14] His critique of Marxist practice was aimed particularly at tactics which he argued belied the fact—also recognised by orthodox Marxists—that neither the economic preconditions for working class emancipation nor the requisite working-class maturity had been achieved in agriculturally-based economies such as that of late nineteenth century Russia. In *Evolutionary Socialism*, he referred to the dilemma arising from the role of intellectuals in political action aimed at revolution, arguing that:

> One can overturn a government or a privileged minority, but not a nation. When the working classes do not possess very strong economic organisations of their own and have not attained, by means of education on self-governing bodies, a high degree of mental independence, the dictatorship of the proletariat means the dictatorship of club orators and writers.[15]

According to Bernstein, the conditions necessary for the achievement of socialism's ethical aims could be created through the exertion of economic and political pressure within the capitalist system and 'trade union consciousness' without the involvement of a vanguard party or the necessity of revolution. Trade unions, he argued, were 'indispensable organs of democracy, and not only passing coalitions' which could 'only further simultaneously the interests of its members and the general good as long as they [were] content to remain a partner [with the employer]'—be that employer a government, a capitalist or the community.[16]

Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution, 98-114. See also Luxemburg's response to Bernstein in Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982). A translation of this edition was published in Indonesia in 2000 as Luxemburg, *Reformasi atau Revolusi*.

[13] Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, 103-108.

[14] Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 101.

[15] Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, 216-219.

[16] Ibid., 140-141. For a contemporary critique of the limits of trade unionism, see Perry Anderson, "The Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action," in *Trade Unions Under Capitalism*, ed. T. Clarke and L. Clements (Sussex: Harvester, 1978). For a brief account of Gramsci's position on

Lenin responded to these propositions in *What is to be Done?* where he argued that evolutionary socialism denied many of the tenets of Marxism, including the process of proletarianisation, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the 'antithesis in principle' between liberalism and socialism.[17] In particular, Lenin attacked the Russian Economists' commitment to the merits of trade union consciousness— a commitment they shared with Bernstein.[18] Lenin argued that trade union consciousness, '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', could never free workers from the shackles of capitalism because it had no vision for an alternative economic system.[19]

Lenin's critique of trade union consciousness was closely linked to his beliefs about the scientific nature of Marxism and the distinction between revolution and the proletariat's spontaneous protests against capitalism. The spontaneity to which Lenin referred is the spontaneity born of trade union consciousness: 'the spontaneity of those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than any socialism or politics', fuelled by exhortations that 'that they must "fight, knowing that they are fighting not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children"'. Lenin condemned such exhortations as counter-revolutionary, claiming that 'Phrases like these have always been a favourite weapon to the West-European bourgeois, who, in their hatred for socialism, strove…to transplant English trade-unionism to their native soil'.[20] Lenin later restated the necessity of intellectuals' involvement in the labour movement in even more emotive terms, in response to a critique of the lack of rank and file strength in the Russian trade union movement by Ivanovo-Voznesensk in *Svoboda.*

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economism, see Frank Annunziato, "Gramsci's Theory of Trade Unionism," *Rethinking Marxism* 1, No. 2 (1988): 145-148.

[17] Lenin, "What is to be Done?" 32. For a critique of Lenin's 'rigid dichotomy' between revolutionary and trade union consciousness, see Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*, 11-43.

[18] Hammond identifies four themes in the Economists' position, as described by Lenin in a range of tracts: the importance and effectiveness of economic struggle; the participation of the workers in the political struggle; and the differences between conscious leadership, the economic struggle as a means of developing political consciousness, and spontaneity. Thomas Hammond, *Lenin on Trade Unions and Revolution 1893-1917* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974), 19-33.

[19] Lenin, "What is to be Done?" 40.

[20] Ibid., 43.

Lenin, having accused Ivanovo-Voznesensk of being 'a next-door neighbour to the Economist', argued that:

> The conclusion [Ivanovo-Voznesensk draws], however, is that the working-class movement must not be pushed on from outside! […] There has never been too much of *such* 'pushing on from outside'; on the contrary, there has so far been all too little of it in our movement, for we have been stewing too assiduously in our own juice; we have bowed far too slavishly to the elementary 'economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government.' We professional revolutionaries must and will make it our business to engage in *this kind* of 'pushing on' a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hithero [emphasis in the original].[21]

Lenin's charge that 'opponents of any non-worker intelligentsia (even a socialist intelligentsia)…are compelled, in order to defend their positions, to resort to the arguments of the *bourgeois* "pure trade-unionists" [emphasis in the original]'[22] was not unique. As Feuer has indicated, Lenin's vision of the intellectual's role in bringing socialist consciousness to the workers had already been put forward both by the Fabians and by Kautsky.[23] Indeed, Lenin appealed to Kautsky's critique of the draft program of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party in support of his claims for the revolutionary intelligentsia. In *What is to be Done?* he quoted Kautsky's contention that the revisionists had misread Marx, that:

> Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so…The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsa* [K.K's italics]…[24]

There was no place for spontaneity in this vision, because 'socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without (*von*

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21   Ibid., 66.
22   Ibid., 44.
23   For a description of Kautsky's critique of Leninism and Kolakowski's own analysis of the inconsistencies in Kautsky's philosophy, see Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 50-57.
24   Lenin, "What is to be Done?" 45.

Hineingetragenes) and not something that arose within it spontaneously (*urwüchsig*)'.[25]

Kautsky and Lenin publicly parted ways after *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* was published in 1918. In *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* Kautsky points to the 'clashing of two fundamentally distinct methods' of class struggle, namely democracy and dictatorship. Kautsky favoured the former, arguing that the working class comes to maturity through peaceful methods of class struggle within a democracy; that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be achieved through an electoral majority. Intellectuals continued to have a place in Kautsky's vision, but he viewed their support for labour as a product of majority support rather than the producer of it. Thus, he rejected Lenin's program for the vanguard party, arguing that 'a class can rule, but not govern…[and a party is] not synonymous with a class, although it may, in the first place, represent a class interest'.[26] In Kautsky's version of democratic socialism, workers gained knowledge and experience through their trade union involvement, and power through trade union solidarity. This, and not the intervention of outsiders, allowed them to work towards a socialist society.[27]

The Neo-Revisionism of Selig Perlman

In the late 1920s, Selig Perlman, a Russian émigré living in the United States of America, offered a spirited defence of a position similar to that of the revisionists.[28] As Fink noted, Perlman's *A Theory of the Labour Movement*, published in 1928 'was as much an analysis of intellectuals as workers', and, indeed, was originally entitled *Capitalism, Labor, and Intellectuals*.[29] While none of the accounts of the Indonesian labour movement examined for this thesis referred explicitly to Perlman, some were clearly influenced by his analysis of the purpose of unions and the relationship

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Karl Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 50.

[27] Ibid., 50, 1, 31.

[28] Selig Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1928). For critiques of Perlman, see Charles Gulick and Melvin Bers, "Insight and Illusion in Perlman's Theory of the Labor Movement," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 6 (1953); Adolf Sturmthal, "Comments on Selig Perlman's *A Theory of the Labor Movement*," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 4 (1951).

[29] Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge, Massachusets and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 70.

between intellectuals and labour. In the 1950s, many unionists not only read American labour literature, but also visited the United States of America on trade union training courses.[30] An Indonesian translation of *A Theory of the Labor Movement* was published by the Department of Manpower in 1956.[31]

Perlman was a prominent member of the Wisconsin School of industrial relations whose concept of 'pure and simple unionism' continues to be influential in the United States of America.[32] In addition to his intellectual debt to the Russian Economists, Perlman was influenced by his mentor, John Commons.[33] Commons, the founder of the Wisconsin School, adopted a pluralist view of industrial relations in which trade unions were one interest group amongst many competing in a 'system' whose overall form was essentially unchanging. He argued that while unions worked within this system to improve wages and conditions and to raise living standards, their more general function was to promote representative democracy in industry.[34] He believed unions were characterised by 'wage consciousness', rather than 'class consciousness', and saw markets, rather than class struggle, as the catalyst for union growth.[35] Commons addressed the question of labour intellectuals in his discussion of the shift from the American Associationists' belief in a 'harmony of interests of all classes' in the 1840s to the 'philosophy of antagonism of interests' adopted by the trade unionists of the 1860s, and later by the Knights of Labour. He argued that an understanding of these shifts in meaning 'requires attention to be paid to a miscellaneous class of men and women, taking

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[30]   Iskandar Tedjasukmana, "The Development of Labor Policy and Legislation in the Republic of Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cornell University, 1961), 265. Between 1951 and 1957, 107 trainees from 17 unions and the Ministry of Labour were sent to the United States of America on ICA-sponsored training programs. Tedjasukmana, the Minister for Labour in 1951-52, undertook his PhD at Cornell University on a Rockefeller Foundation grant. My thanks to Jan Elliott for providing this information.

[31]   Selig Perlman, *Teori Gerakan Buruh*, trans. Imam Sudjono, Gajus Siagian, and K. Tobing (Djakarta: Lintasan Masa, 1956).

[32]   See Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment;* Larson and Nissen, eds., *Theories of the Labour Movement;* Leon Fink, "'Intellectuals' versus 'Workers': Academic Requirements and the Creation of Labor History," *American Historical Review* 96 (1991).

[33]   For a useful outline of the Wisconsin School, its place in American labour history, and a personal history of Commons and Perlman, see Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment*, 52-79.

[34]   Perlman, "Labor Movement Theories," 341.

[35]   John Commons et al., *History of Labour in the United States*, Vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 3.

more or less part in labour movements, yet distinct from manual workers'. He described the term 'intellectuals' as 'a convenient designation of such individuals' who, in general, tended to 'direct the manual workers away from the strict and narrow interest of wage-earners as a class, and to lead them towards affiliation with other classes'.[36]

While Perlman drew on Commons' approach, he was also strongly influenced by the arguments of Bernstein and the Russian Economists. Indeed, Perlman 'stands out as the conscious comparer of the evolved heritage of labor movement theory with the original Marxian legacy'.[37] At the centre of Perlman's work lay the question of 'whether workers would necessarily *militate* for social *revolution,* be willing to accept social *evolution,* or conceivably, strive for some maintenance of an unchanging political situation' (emphasis in the original).[38] Perlman recognised the historical role of the intelligentsia, noting that 'Labor history cannot deny to the revolutionary intellectual a truly pivotal part in the labor struggles of the past'.[39] In his view, however, in the United States of the 1920s (the context in which he was writing), labour's struggle was less a struggle against capitalism than a struggle against the 'intellectual imagination', in which labour is merely 'an abstract mass in the grip of an abstract force'.[40]

Like Lenin, Perlman based his argument about the role of intellectuals in the labour movement on the assumption that 'there is a natural divergence in labor ideology between the "mentality" of the trade unions and the "mentality" of the intellectuals'.[41] For Perlman, as for the European revisionists, the incompatibility between trade union consciousness and the 'mentality' of the intellectuals left no place for the revolutionary intellectual.[42] He argued that a 'basic contradiction which exists between the mentality of organic labor and that of the [Leninist] revolutionary intellectual' that 'must, in every instance, sooner or later become strikingly plain'.

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[36] Ibid., 18-19.
[37] Perlman, "Labor Movement Theories," 342.
[38] Ibid.: 342-343. See also Sturmthal, "Comments on Selig Perlman's *A Theory of the Labor Movement*," 485-486. The New Order regime expected unions and workers to accept the latter—an unchanging political situation.
[39] Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement*, 299.
[40] Ibid., 9-10.
[41] Ibid., vii.
[42] Ibid., viii.

He maintained that, for revolutionary intellectuals, 'the labor movement is only an instrument of the inevitable revolution,' while for 'practical unionists' labour activism took place within the capitalist framework, because 'Labor leaders know that if with…revolution there should come a disruption of production, a consequence which to practical unionists seems not at all unlikely, the hard-won labor standards would be just as much a thing of the past as employers' profits'.[43]

However, unlike the European revisionists, Perlman did not confine his critique to the activities of Leninist revolutionaries. He nominated two other types of intellectuals in turn of the century Europe, namely 'ethical' (Christian Socialist and Utopian) intellectuals, and 'efficiency' intellectuals, who were best represented by the English Fabians in general, and by Sidney and Beatrice Webb in particular.[44] According to Perlman, these intellectuals, too, had a picture of labour that 'differs widely from the real person whom employers and union leaders know'.[45] Perlman argued that for the 'ethical' intellectual, who 'places the highest value upon the liberated human personality,' the 'individual workingman' bore 'a very striking resemblance to his maker', while for the 'efficiency' intellectual, the 'individual workingman' is 'totally indifferent as to who gets what job or jobs, so long as the employer observed the union standards of wages and hours'.[46] According to Perlman, all three types of intellectuals sabotaged trade unions' representation of workers' 'true' (purely economic) interests.

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[43] Ibid., 300-301. Howe echoes these sentiments, arguing that 'The working class is a reality, the proletariat an idea. The reality occupies a physical and social space, the idea survives in the minds of intellectuals.' In his short polemic, Howe presents the cases of the 'intelligent unionist' against the radical intellectual and the intellectual against the unionist, arguing that unions executives must be more accepting of the possible contributions of (non-revolutionary) intellectual workers in their ranks. See Irving Howe, "Sweet and Sour Notes On Workers and Intellectuals," *Dissent* 19 (1972): 264.

[44] Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement*, 291-295. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, prominent Fabians, were influential labour theorists who argued that trade union reformism would eventually bring a reconstruction of society. See Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy* (London: Longmans, 1902); Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London: Longmans, 1907).

[45] Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement*, 283.

[46] Ibid., 283-4.

A Shared Vision of the Labour Intellectual

For Lenin, the revolutionary intellectual was an outsider who developed workers' consciousness from trade union consciousness and spontaneity to revolutionary consciousness in order to overthrow capitalism and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat under the guidance of the vanguard party. For Bernstein—and, indeed, for Kautsky—socialist ideals could be achieved by evolutionary, democratic means as workers gained organisational experience and the confidence and skills to participate more fully in society through their involvement in democratic trade unions. For Perlman, unions were the instrument of workplace democracy within the capitalist system which, when truly reflecting the interests of the workers, had no desire to overthrow capitalism. However, despite their differences, within Lenin's revolutionary vision, Bernstein's evolutionary socialism and Perlman's theory of the labour movement, the analysis of the role of the intellectual essentially reflected a single understanding: that intellectuals involved in the labour movement were inherently different from the workers they sought to mobilise.[47] The legacies of this shared concept of the labour intellectual—along with the New Order's reading of Indonesia's own labour history—defined labour NGOs' position as being outside the legitimate boundaries of the labour movement in contemporary Indonesia.

Leninism and Revisionism in Indonesia to 1965

Labour theory debates amongst Indonesia's labour leaders were not limited to considerations of the claims and counter-claims of Lenin and the revisionists. A survey of sources written before 1965 indicates that unionists and members of the major political parties drew on concepts ranging from Anarcho-syndicalism, to Catholic corporatism and early versions of *Pancasila*.[48] Nevertheless, from the early twentieth century, the most important of Western influences on educated Indonesians

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[47]   Note Kimeldorf's contention that 'old' labour history had, at its heart, the 'essentialism, dichotomous imagery, and vanguardism' of the 'Lenin–Perlman consensus'. Kimeldorf, "Bring Unions Back In," 97.

[48]   See Amin's political primer for an overview of socialism, communism, anarchism and an early version of Pancasila written in 1946 (Pancasila was first promoted by Sukarno in 1945). Amin argued that Indonesia's ongoing struggle to achieve fully-recognised statehood required the labour movement's cooperation with the government rather than opposition to it. S.M. Amin, *Pengetahoean Politik Oentoek Rakjat* (Koetaradja: Libreria Indonesiana, 1946), 3-19.

generally, and labour intellectuals in particular, were Leninist and social democratic thought.[49] Individuals' and parties' use of the arguments of Lenin and the revisionists varied considerably over time, reflecting the intellectual ferment of the period and the fluidity of ideas. The quotations from contemporaneous sources used in the later parts of this section are not intended to convey the fullness of their authors' positions. Rather, they are included to give a sense of the pervasiveness of the language of Lenin and the revisionists in Indonesia before 1965.[50]

Leninism and Revisionism in the Indonesian Vocabulary

In the colonial period, union leaders were 'members of a small, closely-knit…intellectual elite', who were 'well read in European labour history'.[51] These leaders 'shaped the ideological tone of union meetings, rallies and magazines, as they sought to educate ordinary workers to see their grievances over wages and conditions in the wider context of the international labour movement and the anti-colonial struggle'.[52] As Ingleson observed, it is unsurprising that 'Many non-communist, as well as communist, political and union leaders made a class analysis of their society in the 1910s and 1920s' because socialist thought complemented traditional concepts of nobility's duty to the 'little people' (*orang kecil/wong cilik*), which were particularly strong in Javanese culture, where the labour movement was most developed.[53] Ingleson cited the example of Surjopranoto, the leader of the *Personeel*

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[49] For a discussion of how the PKI's efficacy as an educational institution helped spread modernity and Marxist categories of analysis, see Ruth McVey, "Teaching Modernity: The PKI as an Educational Institution," *Indonesia* 50 (1990): 6.

[50] Given the length of the period examined in this study, its focus on labour NGOs and the poor availability of primary sources, it was not feasible to undertake a thorough review of these organisations' positions. The documents used here were primarily sourced from the Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project Microfiches. Other sources included the *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* ANRI, Indonesian National Archives), the private archives of Koeswari (formerly General Secretary of the KSBI) and the collection of Jan Elliott.

[51] At a meeting of PKI branches and SI locals in 1921, attended by some 1500 people, portraits of Marx, Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Lenin and Trotsky were hung alongside of Indonesian heroes in the struggle against the Dutch. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 113-114.

[52] Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia," 92-93. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, many of the strengths and weaknesses of unions' western-educated leadership Ingleson identified have also been frequently attributed to NGOs' involvement in the labour movement of the 1990s.

[53] Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*, 5-6. Anderson has also noted that the influence of Dutch socialist and communist texts on 'virtually the whole of the intelligentsia' in the 1920s and 1930s meant

Fabrieksbond (PFB, the Sugar Factory Workers' Union), whose 'aristocratic sense of duty towards the ordinary people was strengthened by the socialist critique of the oppressive impact of colonialism on workers and peasants'.[54] Surjopranoto and other intellectuals involved in the labour movement at that time shared a strong sense of difference between themselves and the 'ordinary people' with other progressives of their class. This was reflected in common metaphors used to describe the relationship between union leaders and the rank and file in the colonial period, which included conductor and gamelan, teacher and student, father and child and spirit and body.[55]

Communist and socialist sentiment grew in the Netherlands East Indies at a time when the colonial government had moved to liberalise its social policy.[56] Accordingly, in the 1910s, unionism was permitted in the Indies. However, the authorities supported the economic unionism later favoured by neo-revisionist labour theorists:

> To the colonial state and European employers, an acceptable labour union was one that worked to improve the moral, spiritual and material life of urban workers by providing social welfare and promoting self-help. Their ire was directed not at this kind of unionism but at those labour unions that stressed the class struggle, engaged in direct industrial action or were closely connected to the anti-colonial nationalist parties.[57]

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that a 'socialist-communist vocabulary became the common property of the entire nationalist elite'. Benedict Anderson, "The Languages of Indonesian Politics," *Indonesia* 1 (1966): 102.

[54] Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*, 162. See also Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 109-112.

[55] Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia," 95. See also Savitri Scherer, "Soetomo and Trade Unionism," *Indonesia* 24 (1977): 29-32.

[56] 'Ethical Policy' was a term commonly used to describe Dutch colonial policy in the first decades of the twentieth Century under which health care, education and infrastructure in the Netherlands East Indies. The policy was effectively ended in the 1930s. The Ethical Policy was established after Queen Wilhelmina gave a speech about the Christian Netherlands' moral duty to treat the people of the Indies ethically. Robert Cribb, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992), 148-149. See also Merle Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1200*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 193-205; Frans Husken, "Declining Welfare in Java: Government and Private Inquiries, 1903-1914," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994).

[57] Ingleson, "Labour Unions and the Provision of Social Security in Colonial Java," 480. See also Justus van der Kroef, "Dutch Colonial Policy in Indonesia 1900-1941." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1953), 306-307.

A small number of Dutch socialists in the colony in the 1910s and early 1920s strongly influenced Indonesians like Semaun, who became active in labour unions, *Sarekat Islam* and the PKI.[58] This group included Sneevliet, who was involved in both the revisionist and radical splinters of the Dutch socialist party before he came to the Indies.[59] In 1917, the year in which Sneevliet was tried for suggesting that the Russian Revolution could be repeated in the Indies and attempts were made to set up soviets of soldiers and sailors, members of the moderate *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging* (ISDV, the Indies Social Democratic Association) denounced the revolutionaries using the arguments of evolutionary socialism.[60] The Leninist-revisionist debate almost split the ISDV at its conference in May of that year. Only months later, on 8 September, the moderates deserted the ISDV and formed the Indies *Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij* (SDAP, Social-Democratic Workers' Party).[61] When the ISDV changed its name to *Perserikatan Kommunist di India* (Indies' Communist Union) in 1920, a principal factor in its decision was to 'distinguish itself from revisionist socialism' and declare its allegiance with the Comintern.[62]

In the early 1920s, debates about orthodoxy continued to be couched in terms of the dichotomy between revolutionary and revisionist socialism—particularly with regard to Semaun's stances on a range of issues, which McVey observed 'sounded

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[58]   Ingleson, *In Search of Justice,* 76. For details of Semaun, an influential Communist leader of the late colonial period who, unlike many of his colleagues, had been employed on the railway, see Ibid.; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism;* Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 98-103. See also Semaoen, *Penoentoen Kaoem Boeroeh: Dari Hal Sarekat Sekerdja*, Vol. 2 (Soerakarta: Pesindo Soerakarta, 1920); Semaun, "An Early Account of the Independence Movement," *Indonesia* 1, No. April (1966). For a contemporary biographical account of Semaun, see Tamar Djaja, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia (Tan Malaka, Alimin, Samaoen) Berikoet Stalin dan Lenin* (Boekittinggi: Penjiaran Ilmu, 1946), 27-34.

[59]   McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 13. Sneevliet, along with Semaun, was influential in the *Vereeniging van Spoor-en Tram Personeel* (VSTP, the Railway and Tram Workers' Union).

[60]   The ISDV was formed in 1914.

[61]   McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 27-28. For an account of similar debates amongst labour leaders and statements by the government-appointed inquiry into the 1925 strikes on the Communist leadership of the VSTP, see Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*, 97-98, 126, 307-313.

[62]   The party's name was changed to *Partai Komunis Indonesia* in 1924. Before Independence in 1945, the archipelago was known as the Dutch East Indies. However, the term (and idea of) 'Indonesia' began to gain currency amongst nationalists early in the twentieth century. Ingleson noted that by 1927, 'Indonesia' had supplanted 'Netherlands Indies' or '*Hindia*' in the names of almost all political organisations. By 1933, almost all labour unions had followed suit. See McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 46, 112; Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia." See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

more like revisionist than Orthodox Marxism'.[63] However, even under the 'bloc within' strategy, the PKI remained convinced of its value as a vanguard party. By 1924, under pressure from a government campaign against communism, Aliarcham (then Chair of the PKI) was advocating an end to attempts to organise the peasantry and a renewed focus on revolutionary labour unions and a smaller, more disciplined party.[64]

Although the Communist Party was destroyed in 1926-27, many texts describing international and Indonesian socialism written in the 1930s were also framed within the Leninist-revisionist debates. As Suwarsih Djojopuspito recalled in 1951, in the 1930s 'The Western world…claimed our attention, but even in that we were not universal; in general whatever was socialist or Marxist in character, that we studied, and whatever happened in Soviet Russia, that we paid attention to at that time'.[65] In a speech reflecting on the late colonial period, Njoto noted the wide range of socialist texts available in the late colonial period.[66] In addition to volumes by Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin, Stalin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Dimitrov, 'the books of the social-democratic parties and those dealing with the trends in thinking of other opportunists were also imported into Indonesia', including volumes by Bakunin, Kautsky, Bukharin and Trotsky and Dutch social-democrats such as Henriette Roland Holst.[67] The range of texts available, he complained, explained why 'with the emergence of revolutionary socialism in Indonesia, there also

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[63] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 135. Ingleson argued that Semaun, and many other labour leaders, were, in fact, accommodationists who were often alarmed by the radical tendencies of the rank and file. Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia." For Semaun's own definitions of trade unionism, see Semaoen, *Penoentoen Kaoem Boeroeh*.

[64] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 263. See also Ingleson, "Worker Consciousness and Labour Unions in Colonial Java," 266-267.

[65] Heather Sutherland, "Pudjangga Baru: Aspects of Indonesian Intellectual Life in the 1930s," *Indonesia* 6 (1968): 114. Suwarsih Djojopuspito was a leading Indonesian novelist, sister-in-law to A.K. Pringgodigdo, and contributor to the Malay-language literary magazine *Pudjangga Baru,* a magazine known for its cultural rather than political tone.

[66] Recall that Njoto, along with Aidit, Lukman, and Sudisman, assumed the leadership of the Communist Party after it was destroyed in 1948. Quotations cited here are taken from an English-language version of the speech published in Peking in 1965. See Njoto, *Strive for the Victory of the Indonesian Revolution with the Weapon of Dialectical and Historical Materialism: A Speech at the Aliarcham Academy of Social Sciences on June 3, 1964* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965).

[67] Ibid., 3-4. For a list of communist books and pamphlets put forward for translation by the PKI's Central Committee in March 1951, see Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963*, 71-72.

appeared socialism of various shades ranging from "critical-utopian socialism" to "conservative socialism"'.[68]

The vocabulary of Leninism and revisionism remained influential in shaping political discourse after Independence.[69] One indication of the continuing currency of the Leninist-revisionist debate during this period was revisionism's inclusion in political dictionaries of the time. In a political encyclopaedia of 1955, for example, revisionism was defined as:

> A school (*aliran*) of socialism that deviates from Marx's teachings about the necessity of revolution to change the structure of society. Revisionism desires an evolutionary path. With this school (which was led by Bernstein), socialism split into two: the evolutionary and the revolutionary.[70]

The number of works translated into Indonesian between 1945 and 1965 was further evidence of the strength of both Leninism and revisionism in Indonesia in the Sukarno years. Books published included *What is to be Done?*, *Marxism and Revisionism*—complete with a glossary of terms—and the Marxist Leninist Institute's Foreword to *Against Revisionism*, which gave an extensive overview of the debate between Lenin and the revisionists and the circumstances in which it occurred.[71] Such volumes were supplemented by translated and Indonesian-authored volumes on the history of socialism in Europe. These included works like Werbin's Leninist account of Soviet trade unions,[72] and *Sedjarah Sosialisme di Eropah dari Abad ke-19 sampai 1914*, which described the history of socialism in England, France, Germany and Russia as well as the international socialist movement to

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[68]   Njoto, *Strive for the Victory of the Indonesian Revolution with the Weapon of Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, 3-4.

[69]   For an overview of the politics of the 1950s, see Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1962).

[70]   Tatang Sastrawiria and Haksan Wirasutisna, *Ensiklopedi Politik* (Djakarta: Perpustakaan Perguruan Kementrian P.P. dan K., 1955), 16-17. For a very different definition, see Dul Arnowo, *Kamus Marhaen* (Kediri: Pustaka Rakjat, 1950), 81.

[71]   V. Lenin, *Apa Jang Harus Dikerjakan* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1957); V. Lenin, *Marxisme dan Revisionisme*, trans. R. Sjarifah (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1957); *Katapengantar untuk 'Melawan Revisionisme'* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1964).

[72]   A. Werbin, *Serikatburuh Sovjet* (Djakarta: Badan Penerbit D.N. SOBSI).

1914,[73] as well as volumes about socialism in Indonesia, many of which had chapters on Leninist and revisionist thought.[74]

The Vanguard Parties and their Associated Unions

The Leninist-revisionist debate was understandably sharpest within the group of political parties that saw themselves as 'Marxian' parties—most notably, the PKI; *Partai Murba* (Proletarian Party); *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party), *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party) and *Partai Buruh Indonesia* (PBI, Indonesian Labour Party)—and their associated unions.[75] Tedjaksukmana noted in 1958 that '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'.[76] Tedjasukmana and his colleagues in the PBI supported the former. *Partai Murba* and the PKI accepted Lenin's definition of the vanguard party, while the PNI and the PSI explicitly adopted both Leninist and revisionist principles.

For much of the time, the PKI supported strategies such as the 'bloc within' and the 'united front'.[77] The PKI's accounts of the relationship between the party and

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[73] Soemardjo, *Sedjarah Sosialisme di Eropah Dari Abad Ke-19 Sampai 1914* (Djakarta: N.V. Harapan Masa). See also Amin, *Pengetahoean Politik Oentoek Rakjat;* Partai Komunis Indonesia, *A B C Gerakan Buruh Internasional* (Djakarta: Depagitprop CC PKI, 1962); Partai Nasional Indonesia, *Getaran Sosialisme, Komunisme, Marhaenisme, Pantjasila* (Djakarta: Departemen Penerbitan-Propaganda-Pendidikan Kader Partai, Dewan Pusat Partai Nasional Indonesia, 1957); Adisoemarta, ed., *Revolusi Nasional dan 1 Mei* (Jogjakarta: Sentral Biro SOBSI, 1947).

[74] See for example Roeslan Abdulgani, *Sosialisme Indonesia* (Djakarta: Jajasan Prapantja, 1963); Djaja, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia (Tan Malaka, Alimin, Samaoen) Berikoet Stalin dan Lenin;* Proleter Indonesia, *Kesanalah! Kaoem Sosialis Revolusioner;* Juti, "Revisionisme didalam Marxisme," in *Sumbangan2 Pikiran Mengenai Marhaenisme*, ed. Juti (Djakarta: Jajasan Badan Penerbit Lontarsari, 1963).

[75] Tedjasukmana omitted *Partai Murba* from his list. See Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement*, 47-52. Tedjasukmana was the leader of the Indonesian Labour Party, and Minister for Labour between 1951 and 1953 and again briefly in 1955-1956.

[76] Ibid., 47.

[77] See Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963;* McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism;* Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*. For a New Order account of the Indonesian Communist Party, see *Gerakan 30 September Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia: Latar Belakang, Aksi, dan Penumpasannya* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994), 7-39; A.Z. Abidin and Baharuddin Lopa, *Bahaya Komunisme: Kepalsuan Ideologi dan Politiknya Kebengisan Strategi, Taktik dan Propagandanya Fakta-Faktanya di Seluruh Dunia* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), 79-104. See also Alex Dinuth, ed., *Kewaspadaan*

its associated trade unions nevertheless focused most explicitly on its role as the vanguard party of the proletariat. The party maintained a rhetorical commitment to its duty to prevent workers from falling victim to spontaneity and trade union consciousness in the hope that, after national independence was achieved, Indonesia would be firmly set on the path towards a proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The importance of the Leninist Party was emphasised in Sandra's *Siasat Massa Actie: Dasar Dan Garis Besar Leninisme*,[78] where he identified and rejected 'the opportunists, the reformists, social imperialism, social chauvinism, social patriotism and social pacificism' as the enemies of Leninism.[79] Unions, he argued, 'must be turned to the political direction of the party because the party is the political leader of the workers themselves'.[80]

In contrast, Aidit did not support the small vanguard party proposed in *What is to be Done?*—preferring instead to follow 'inspiration' provided by the 1917 Revolution.[81] However, Aidit, too, remained intellectually committed to intellectuals' role in keeping unions on a revolutionary path. This was confirmed when, on the occasion of the celebration of the fortieth year of the Indonesian Communist Party, Aidit presented a brief history of the Indonesian labour movement and the PKI in which he specifically described the difference between the trade union and the party.[82] He argued that, unlike the party, the trade union is 'an economic organisation of the workers that demands better conditions from their bosses, not an organisation for the destruction of capitalism'.[83] He emphasised this point with

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Nasional dan Bahaya Laten Komunis: Kumpulan Tulisan Terpilih tentang Gerakan Komunis dan Bahaya Ekstrim Lainnya di Indonesia (Jakarta: Intermasa, 1997).

[78] Sandra, *Siasat Massa Actie: Dasar Dan Garis Besar Leninisme* (Jogjakarta: Pendidikan Boeroeh Jogjakarta, 1945). Sandra's much more muted later work, which was written as a study text for adult education centres, has been widely quoted in academic studies of the Indonesian labour movement. In its conclusion, Sandra is careful to maintain a very neutral tone when describing Sukarno's push to depoliticise the trade unions. Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 144-145.

[79] Sandra, *Siasat Massa Actie*, 18.

[80] Ibid., 8.

[81] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 44.

[82] Aidit gave a fuller history of the PKI in his 1955 speech on the occasion of the PKI's thirty-fifth anniversary. See D.N. Aidit, *Lahirnja PKI Dan Perkembangannja (1920-1955): Pidato Untuk Memperingati Ulangtahun ke-35 PKI, Diutjapkan Tanggal 23 Mei 1955 di Djakarta* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1955).

[83] D.N. Aidit, *Peladjaran Dari Sedjarah PKI* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1960), 7. For example, Aidit attributed the formation of ISDV to workers' dissatisfaction with the limitations of trade

regard to Indonesia—arguing that in both theory and reality, 'the Indonesian working-class has determined…that the trade unions are their economic organisations and that the PKI is their political organisation'.[84] In another speech some years later, Aidit reinforced the hierarchical differentiation between the trade union and the party and emphasised the need to prevent the spread of trade unionist tendencies (the hallmark of revisionism). He reminded his audience that:

> Socialism cannot be achieved with trade unions alone, because trade unions operate in a limited field, while the fundamental task of the workers must be carried out in a range of fields not reached by trade unions. Because trade union issues generally involve the struggle for wages, social guarantees and so on, by its very nature the trade union struggle is contained within the frame of capitalist relations of production.[85]

Revisionism was dealt with at length in the PKI's *ABC Gerakan Buruh Internasional*, which outlined the theories of Marx, the Utopians, and the revisionists.[86] In the section on revisionism, the authors noted that, after Marx's and Engels' death, there emerged 'efforts to change the teachings of Marx, to eliminate its revolutionary character in exchange for revisionist (*revisionis*) views'. They argued that the undermining (*penggerowotan*) of Marx' teachings 'reached its height between 1897 and 1914' and was 'centred in the German Social Democratic Party under the leadership of Bernstein and Kautsky'.[87] The authors went on to claim that it became evident that a 'proletarian political party that was truly revolutionary' was required, and so 'the developments of the age gave birth to Lenin, who reinforced the teachings of Marx and Engels' by showing that 'the time had arrived for the proletarian class, led by its independent (*berdiri-sendiri*) party, to take the initiative and speed up the burying of the capitalist system'.[88]

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unions rather than to the revolutionary zeal of socialist intellectuals. Aidit, *Peladjaran Dari Sedjarah PKI*, 7.

[84] Aidit, *Peladjaran Dari Sedjarah PKI*, 26.

[85] D.N. Aidit, "Artikel Tanggal 6 Mei Tentang Mencegah Kecenderungan Trade Unionisme," in *Inventaris Arsip SOBSI 1950-1965, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: 1965).

[86] *ABC Gerakan Buruh Internasional* (Djakarta: Depagitprop CC PKI, 1962).

[87] Ibid., 8. In 1917, when the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany was formed, its leadership included both Bernstein and Kautsky. James Connor, ed., *Lenin on Politics and Revolution: Selected Writings* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 288.

[88] *ABC Gerakan Buruh Internasional*, 8.

Njoto also both attacked revisionism and emphasised the intellectual/ ideological role of the party in terms that reinforced the prevailing notion of a gap between the leaders and the led. After criticising the 'Many famous and influential people' who 'accept[ed] Marxism, but not thoroughly' or 'accept[ed] Marxism in a revisionist or in a modified way' for their 'Indonesian opportunism', and condemning the international tendency towards pragmatism (what he called the 'modern revisionism'), he turned his attention to the intellectual work of the PKI.[89] In addition to the importance of educating the masses, he stressed the need to study, and reiterated the party's 'call on all cadres….including theoreticians, artists, writers and journalists to go down to the grassroots' so that they could 'understand the situation from personal experience'. He argued that without such understanding, 'a revolutionary cannot identify himself with the oppressed people'.[90]

Leninist concepts of the revolutionary intellectual also figured strongly in internal critiques of the PKI. Darsono, disillusioned with post-independence communism, wrote that while some intellectuals remain among the 'top leaders' of the PKI, 'the guidance of the party today is in the hands of semi-intellectuals'.[91] This, he claimed, meant that 'pure Marxism' had been sacrificed for a 'mixture of some of Marx's thoughts with petit bourgeois thinking' by party members who were 'not Marxists in the western sense, but people whom Lenin once designated as middle class men "growing wild"'.[92] Like Darsono, the anonymous author of an essay entitled *A PKI Self-Criticism*[93] (written in 1966) attributed 'the serious weaknesses and mistakes of the party…after 1951' to its petit bourgeois leadership and their lack

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[89]   Njoto, *Strive for the Victory of the Indonesian Revolution with the Weapon of Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, 4.

[90]   Ibid., 20.

[91]   Darsono was a journalist and propagandist for Sarekat Islam. He was President of the PKI from 1920-1925. Darsono spent time in Europe in 1923-23. In 1925 he was arrested then expelled from Indonesia in 1926. He returned to Indonesia in 1950, and later renounced communism. According to McVey, Darsono, who 'was one of the few Indonesian Communist leaders to make a serious study of Marxism…frequently had trouble adjusting his Western Communist ideas to eastern conditions.' McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 36.

[92]   Darsono, "The Indonesian Communist Party," *Eastern World* 11 (1957): 23. I obtained a copy of this document from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[93]   In their introduction to this abstract, Feith and Castles note that the essay was supposedly written by the Politburo of the PKI's Central Committee, and that its authorship is usually attributed to Sudisman. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking 1940-1965* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), 270. Sudisman, was a member joined the PKI during the Japanese occupation, during which he was arrested and imprisoned. Earlier he had been a member of Gerindo. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 443-444.

of knowledge of Marxism-Leninism.[94] According to the author, the PKI failed as a vanguard party because it strayed into revisionism (right opportunism) by placing too much emphasis on its parliamentary work and on the united front.[95] This assessment of PKI feeling was confirmed in the Politburo's report on its Marxist-Leninist auto-criticism after 1965, which signalled a renewed commitment to an armed revolution and a rejection of the 'opportunistic and revisionist mistakes' of its past.[96]

The communists' rhetorical enthusiasm for party intervention in the labour movement was not shared by the leaders of *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Organisation of Trade Unions), the labour union federation closely associated with the PKI.[97] This is apparent in a comparison of the labour histories written by Aidit and SOBSI.[98] Aidit attributed a major role in the organisation of labour to the ISDV, and later the PKI, in the period to 1926. In contrast, the SOBSI account, which drew directly on Aidit's volume, emphasised the independence of the unions. Some sections of the SOBSI volume were taken almost verbatim from Aidit's 1952 account; however, adjustments made these sections shifted agency from the PKI to the unions.[99] For example, where Aidit stated that the communists succeeded in attracting important unions to the *Revolutionaire Vakcentrale* (RV, Revolutionary Trade Union Federation), SOBSI used a passive construction with no agent.[100] Where Aidit claimed that the influence of the communists in the *Vereeniging van Spoor-en Tram Personeel* (VSTP, Railway and Tram Workers' Union) grew in 1921, SOBSI claimed simply that the influence of VSTP grew.[101]

Earlier, in 1947, Harjadi (the Head of SOBSI's Malang Branch) clarified SOBSI's position on the relationship between party and union in response to queries

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[94] Feith and Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking 1940-1965*, 271.

[95] Ibid., 271-278.

[96] Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Pesan Politbiro CC PKI 23 Mei 1967: Kibarkan Tinggi-tinggi Pandji Marxisme-Leninisme-Fikiran Mao Tje-Tung: Madju Terus Diatas Djalan Revolusi* (Peking: Suara Rakjat Indonesia, 1967), 4. These criticisms are repeated throughout the pamphlet, as is recognition of Maoism as the 'current peak of Marxism-Leninism'. ibid., 14.

[97] For details of SOBSI, see Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963*, 132-156.

[98] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia;* Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

[99] Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 41-51.

[100] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 48; Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 45.

[101] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 52; Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 49.

put by a foreign delegation including a representative of the United States' State Department, a journalist from the American *Christian Science Monitor* (the wife of the State Department representative) and a representative of the French newspaper, *Havas.*[102] Having been asked about SOBSI's relationship with political parties, Harjadi described a 'spiritual' relationship with the Communist, Socialist and Labour Parties—strongly emphasising SOBSI's independence, and categorically denying that SOBSI was the wing (*onderbouw*) of any of them.[103] Later in the interview, attention turned to the role of intellectuals in SOBSI and the ideological education of workers. When asked if 'non-intellectual workers [could] become labour leaders', Harjadi emphasised the participation of 'ordinary workers' in the SOBSI leadership. However, when the interviewer observed that those present were non-worker intellectuals, Harjadi conceded they were.[104] SOBSI's denial of the strength of its links to the PKI was also demonstrated in its official literature. The SOBSI publication *Revoloesi Nasional dan 1 Mei* (published in 1947) began with pictures of Marx, Lenin and Stalin and includes a description of conditions in Soviet Russia and a program of SOBSI's demands, but the PKI was not mentioned once.[105] Likewise, the Communist Party was not mentioned in SOBSI's 18-page 1960 program of demands.[106]

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[102] I obtained a copy of this typescript from the private archives of Koeswari, a former member of the PSI and General Secretary of *Kongres Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (KBSI, All-Indonesia Workers' Congress). Koeswari was a signatory to the 1974 Seminar Declaration under which *Pancasila* Labour Relations was established.

[103] Soepardi, "Soal Djawab Koresponden Loear Negeri dengan S.O.B.S.I.," (Malang: Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia,, 1947), 2.

[104] Ibid., 4. For other statements of SOBSI's position on the trade union-party question, see Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, "Diktat Tanpa Tanggal Tentang Masalah Organisasi," in *Inventaris Arsip SOBSI 1950-1965, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: n.d.); Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, "Pidato Tanpa Tanggal Tentang Hubungan Serikat Buruh SOBSI dengan Partai PKI," in *Inventaris Arsip SOBSI 1950-1965, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: n.d.). Missing from the SOBSI file at the Indonesian National Archive was a document on the role of the intellectual in the trade union, catalogued as "Berkas Tanggal 15 Mei 1962 Tentang Kaum Intelektual Dalam Kepengurusan Serikat Buruh," in *Inventaris Arsip SOBSI 1950-1965, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: 1962). The Constitutions of the SOBSI member-unions, *Serikat Buruh Gula* (SBG, Sugar Workers' Union) and *Serikat Buruh Rokok Indonesia* also emphasised the 'non-party' nature of SOBSI. See Serikat Buruh Gula, *Peraturan Dasar Serikat Buruh Gula (SOBSI)* (Surabaja: Dewan Pusat Serikat Buruh Gula, 1956), 13; Serikat Buruh Rokok Indonesia, *Peraturan Dasar S.B.R.I.* (Surabaja: Pimpinan Pusat Serikat Buruh Rokok Indonesia, 1957), 14.

[105] Adisoemarta, ed., *Revolusi Nasional dan 1 Mei*.

[106] Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Program Tuntutan SOBSI: Untuk Sandang Pangan dan Demokrasi Disjahkan oleh Kongres Nasional Ke-III SOBSI* (Solo: SOBSI, 1960).

It is not certain whether Sukarno coined the term *Marhaen*, but he popularised the concept of Marhaenism as early as 1930.[107] Sukarno described his vision of the *Marhaen* society at length an article called 'Capitalism of Our Own Nation?' published in *Fikiran Rakjat* in 1932. According to Sukarno, Dutch colonialism had led to a wholesale proletarianisation of the Indonesian labour force:

> [Because] Dutch imperialism has been monopolistic in principle and by nature–seizing every single root of business, craft-industry, commerce or shipping that existed here in Indonesia…[t]oday, for the greatest part, Indonesian society knows only small-scale agriculture, small-scale shipping, small-scale trade, small-scale business. Today, 90% of Indonesian society is small-scale society—Marhaen society which is almost entirely deprived of economic life. This is the reason why it is Marhaenist nationalism alone that can perform the historical task of bringing in Indonesia Merdeka as speedily as possible—an historical task that is also in accord with the historical task of putting an end to all bourgeoisie-ism and capitalism![108]

However, in another article in *Fikiran Rakjat* published in 1933, Sukarno argued that whilst the proletariat were subsumed into the category of Marhaen (which also includes 'peasants and other poverty-stricken groups'), 'the proletariat takes a very large part indeed' in the 'struggle of Marhaen'.[109] The significance of the proletariat, he said, lay in its modernity; in the fact that it was most directly affected by modern ideologies and by capitalism, and best '[understood] all about the modernity of socio-nationalism and socio-democracy'.[110] For Sukarno, the oppositional potential of the proletariat was 'greater than that of other groups', particularly peasants, because 'peasants still live with one foot in the ideology of feudalism, live in mystical

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[107] Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*, 28. Sukarno was Indonesia's first President. For an overview of his ideology, see Donald E. Weatherbee, *Ideology in Indonesia: Sukarno's Indonesian Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1966).

[108] Translated in Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*, Vol. 1 (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 169-173. This definition was restated in almost identical terms in a range of publications, including the first of a series of articles in *Marhaen* giving an extended exposition on the Marhaenist philosophy. In it, Mangunsarkoro noted that, according to 'research numbers for 1930-1940', the Indonesian labour force consisted approximately of 82% small farmers and farmers' labourers; 2% medium farmers; 7% traders; 7% factory workers and 2% civil servants. He argued that 91% of this labour force (excluding the medium farmers and traders), 'share the same fate, because they are so poor that their only source of income is their labour power.' It is this group, he concludes, 'that we call 'Marhaen''. S. Mangunsarkoro, "Sendi2 Marhaenisme (I)," *Marhaen* 5 (1952): 4. I obtained a copy of Mangunsarkoro's article from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[109] Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*, 241-242.

[110] Ibid., 242.

fantasies floating up in the air'. Peasants were 'not so much "in harmony with the times" and not so "clear-thinking" as the proletariat who live[d] in the turbulence of twentieth century social relations'.[111]

Marhaenism contained both Leninist and revisionist constructs.[112] Sukarno drew heavily on the language of Leninism—particularly with regard to the need for a vanguard party. For example, in '*Bolehkah Sarikat Sekerja Berpolitik*?' Sukarno engages directly with the question of trade unions' economic and political functions.[113] After quoting at length from a journalist who was concerned that any political activity had the potential to split labour organisations and hinder their socio-economic struggle, Sukarno expounded on the need for political unionism.[114] The links between the politicisation of labour and the need for a vanguard party were made explicit in another 1933 pamphlet, 'To Reach Indonesia *Merdeka*', where Sukarno asked, 'how can we transform an unconscious, and uncertain and groping movement, into a movement that is **conscious** and **radical**? [emphasis in the original]'. His answer was unequivocal:

> **By means of a party**! By means of a party which educates the common people in consciousness and radical thinking. By means of a party which guides the common people in the course of their journey to victory, welds the forces of the common people in daily struggle—becomes the vanguard of the common people in marching toward their aims and ideals [emphasis in the original].[115]

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[111] Ibid.

[112] For an extended explanation of Sukarno's differences with communism, see Sukarno, *To My People*. For an account of European revisionism and Marhaenism's particular characteristics as a new universal form of revisionism, see Juti, "Revisionisme didalam Marxisme." For an account of the renewed interest in Sukarno's thought after the fall of Suharto and the text of '*Shaping and Reshaping: Menggalang Massa Aksi Revolusioner Menuju Masyarakat Adil dan Makmur*', a lecture given by Sukarno on the thirtieth anniversary of the PNI on 3 July 1957, see *Bung Karno tentang Marhaen dan Proletar* (Jakarta: Grasindo/Presidium Gerakan Nasional Rakyat Indonesia, 1999).

[113] Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*.

[114] Ibid., 220. This pamphlet, which was first published in 1933, was later included in an Indonesian-language collection of Sukarno's writing published in 1959 (translated into English in 1966). The English version is used here. Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*, 215-223. The Indonesian version was reprinted by an NGO called *Lembaga Kajian Hak-Hak Masyarakat* (The Institute for the Discussion of the People's Rights) in Yogyakarta in 1993 as part of its labour series. Sukarno, *Bolehkah Sarekat Sekerja Berpolitik?* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Kajian Hak-Hak Masyarakat, 1993).

[115] Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*, 268.

Sukarno's vanguard party, like the Leninist party of *What is to be Done?,* was not a mass party, but rather a party of the 'most conscious and radical', which 'knows how to unleash the entire forces of the masses'.[116]

The Indonesian Nationalist Party, which saw Marhaenism as 'socialism that has been adjusted to the situation and interests of the Indonesian people', was supportive of revisionism.[117] In a 1957 volume, for example, the party presented revisionism in a very positive light. Having identified PSI, PKI, *Partai Murba* and *Partai Buruh Indonesia* as Marxist parties, the authors turned their attention to the shortcomings of Marxism, with reference to Indonesia.[118] In contrast, revisionism ('the review of elements of Marxism') and reformism (which 'rejects many of the teachings of Marxism and searches for a new basis for the renewal of society') were both described positively because they rejected violence and used 'democratic means' in their struggle. Finally, Bernstein, who the authors heralded as the 'most prominent leader of Marxist renewal',[119] was explicitly mobilised in support of Marhaenism. According to the authors, like Marhaenists, 'Bernstein himself rejected historical materialism and based his struggle to improve the fate of the Workers on the basis of justice and the interests of society'.[120]

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[116] Ibid., 268-270. Sukarno's concept of vanguardism remained popular in the PNI in the early post-independence period. Mangunsarkoro, writing in 1952, for example, described the Marhaenist vanguard party as 'the front line of the mass movement of Marhaen'. See S. Mangunsarkoro, "Sendi2 Marhaenisime (II)," *Marhaen* 6 (1952): 4. I obtained a copy of this document from the collection of Jan Elliott. See also Juti, *Antara Marhaenisme dan Marxisme* (Djakarta: Pembimbing Rakjat, 1958); S. Mangunsarkoro, *Sosialisme, Marhaenisme dan Komunisme* (Jogjakarta: Wasiat Nasional, 1955); "Makalah tentang lahirnya Marhaenisme," in *Inventaris Arsip Koleksi Pribadi Winoto Danu Asmoro Tahun 1933, 1939, 1949, 1951-1969, 1971, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: n.d.); Kusin, "Kusin Corresspondence [sic] Club kepada Presiden Soekarno: Surat Tanggal 24 April 1966 tentang Gagasan Mengenai Viva Marhaenisme dan Integritas Pasal 33 UUD 1945, disertai Lampiran," in *Inventaris Arsip Dr. H. Roeslan Abdulgani 1950-1976, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: 1966); Jose Eliseo Rocamora, "Nationalism in Search of Ideology: The Indonesian National Party, 1945-1965." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cornell University, 1974).

[117] Mangunsarkoro, "Sendi2 Marhaenisime (II)," 4. For Mangunsarkoro's formulation on the differences between socialism, Marhaenism and communism (what he called 'the three most important…streams of socialism to emerge in Indonesia'), see Mangunsarkoro, *Sosialisme, Marhaenisme dan Komunisme.*

[118] Partai Nasional Indonesia, *Getaran Sosialisme, Komunisme, Marhaenisme, Pantjasila*, 13-14.

[119] Ibid., 8-9.

[120] Ibid., 13-14. In an essay entitled 'Studying the Marhaenist Way of Thinking', Juti gave a much stronger statement of the indigeneity of Marhaenism. In it, he argued that the main reason for studying other ideologies, including Marxism, is 'to make us more certain of the truth of Marhaenism.' He went on, however, to argue that Marxism is useful for 'adding to/deepening/making [Marhaenism] more complete', because Marhaenism is, in fact, Sukarno's 'interpretation of Marxism'—as opposed to the interpretation of 'Bernstein, Kernsky, Rosa

Tan Malaka offered an alternative vision of the Indonesian commoner and the struggle for socialism.[121] On returning to Indonesia in 1942 after twenty years in exile, Tan Malaka began to promote the concept *Murba* (lit. common, ordinary, lowly), which has often been compared to Sukarno's *Marhaen*.[122] In her introduction to Tan Malaka's autobiography, Jarvis argued that while Malaka probably adopted the term *Murba* in response to Sukarno's use of *Marhaen*, the terms were easily distinguished:

> The difference between the two concepts is obvious, both in the content of the categories and in the intent of their advocates: Tan Malaka developed his term to adapt and explain the Marxist category [proletariat] in the Indonesian environment; Sukarno's aim was precisely to cut across and paste over class categories.[123]

Like the PKI, Tan Malaka recognised that the Indonesian proletariat was too small to achieve the revolution. However, in contrast to the communists, who promoted a National Front after Independence, Tan Malaka argued that the revolutionary party must consist only of the proletariat and those parts of the petit bourgeoisie most closely allied to the proletariat. Intellectuals had an important role in this vision, because, in the colonial context of the Indies, they were no more than an 'educated proletariat'. Tan Malaka argued that since Indonesia lacked a national bourgeoisie all intellectuals desiring independence would necessarily become revolutionaries,

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Luxembourg, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Tito, Djilas, Mao Tse-tung, Krusjtjov or some other'. See Juti, "Mempeladjari Tjara Berfikir Marhaenis," in *Sumbangan2 Pikiran Mengenai Marhaenism*, ed. Juti (Djakarta: Jajasan Badan Penerbit Lontarsari, 1963), 29-31.

[121] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, Vol. 1 (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1991), lxxxiii-lxxxviii. After spending time in Holland during World War One before returning to Indonesia after the War, Tan Malaka moved from Sumatra to Java in 1921. Soon after his arrival, he was elected chair of the *Serikat Pegawai Percetakan* (SPP, Printing Workers Association) and vice-chairman and treasurer of *Serikat Pegawai Pelikan Indonesia* (SPPI, Indies Oil Workers Association). He was later a member of the executive of the Revolutionaire Vakcentrale (Revolutionary Trade Union Federation). Tan Malaka was exiled from Indonesia in 1922, and did not return to Indonesia until 1942. For a contemporary biographical account of Tan Malaka, see Djaja, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia (Tan Malaka, Alimin, Samaoen) Berikoet Stalin dan Lenin*, 8-26; Muhammad Yamin, "Tan Malaka: Bapak Repoeblik Indonesia," in *Trio Komoenis Indonesia (Tan Malaka, Alimin, Samaoen) Berikoet Stalin dan Lenin*, ed. Tamar Djaja (Boekittinggi: Penjiaran Ilmu, 1946). For more recent accounts, see Jarvis' introduction in Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, xxv-cxxvi. and Mrázek, "Tan Malaka: A Political Personality's Structure of Experience," *Indonesia* 14 (1972). See also Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 270-295.

[122] Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, lii.

[123] Ibid., xciv.

because revolution was the only means through which independence could be achieved.[124] Jarvis has noted that Tan Malaka's ideas about the role of the revolutionary party were 'highly contradictory'. *Partai Republik Indonesia* (PARI, Indonesian Republican Party), the party formed by Tan Malaka after the destruction of the PKI in 1926-27, was intended to be a mass party of the proletariat whose aim was the immediate achievement of 'full and complete independence for Indonesia as soon as possible'.[125] In contrast, *Partai Murba* (the party formed by Tan Malaka's supporters in November 1948), was a vanguard party with links to the mass movement organisations in *Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat* (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement).[126]

Sjahrir, the leader of the Western-oriented Indonesian Socialist Party, believed that intellectuals had no place in the trade union leadership.[127] His stance was demonstrated in his classic 1933 statement in which he described the union using the principles of democratic socialism, as espoused by the English Fabians and Europeans such as Kautsky. Sjahrir identified two objectives of labour movements generally—to maintain and improve workers' standard of living within the capitalist society and to make workers aware of their situation, 'their enslavement and suffering' under capitalism. He argued that the former was the task of the trade union, while the latter was 'primarily the task of information and education' about capitalism, about the movement and about the workers' ability to establish a different type of society.[128] Sjahrir did not deal directly with the question of union-party relations when describing the situation in Indonesia. Instead, he addressed it obliquely in statements about the nature of trade unionism and the relationship between the labour and independence movements. In Sjahrir's view, unions should amalgamate to form industry-wide bodies better suited to completing the first task of the labour movement: achieving recognition of workers' economic rights. In order to fulfil trade unionism's second purpose (the realisation of a different type of society),

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[124]   Ibid., xcv-xcvi.
[125]   Ibid., lxxxvi-lxxxvii.
[126]   Ibid., c-cii.
[127]   For biographical details of Sjahrir, see Soetan Sjahrir, *Out of Exile*, trans. Charles Wolf (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969). See also Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994).
[128]   Soetan Sjahrir, *Pergerakan Sekerdja* (Djakarta: Sarekat Buruh Pertjetakan Indonesia, 1947 (1933)), 9-11.

those unions should provide information and education for their members to build up their ability to defend themselves against capitalism. When clarifying his view of the relationship between the labour and independence movements in Indonesia, Sjahrir proposed that while independence would benefit workers, the labour movement should neither be subsumed into the nationalist movement nor dependent on it, because the objectives of the labour movement went beyond those of the nationalists.[129] Consequently, he argued (in the classic terms of revisionism), trade unions should be led by their own members, and should generate leaders for the labour movement as a whole and for the independence movement.[130]

While Sjahrir downplayed the role of the party, other spokespeople for the PSI did not. In a document entitled *Apa Partai Kita?*, the Party Council cited 'Marxist understandings' of the vanguard party, noting that 'Only a revolutionary party based on [Marxist] revolutionary theory can safely bring and lead the people through a revolutionary period'.[131] It then quoted Stalin on the role of a 'strong proletarian revolutionary party' in preparing for the revolution, which, they said, 'clearly describe[d] the meaning and duty of the party'.[132] For the PSI, however, the task of the party was to achieve Sjahrir's revisionist program, rather than Lenin's revolutionary aims. They did not seek to destroy the capitalist system; they sought to hasten the raising of society from one level of progress to the next by 'spreading and developing the understanding of democracy in the political, economic and social fields' so that socialism could be achieved.[133]

In contrast, like SOBSI, *Kongres Seluruh Buruh Indonesia* (KBSI, All-Indonesia Workers' Congress), the trade union federation closely associated with the PSI, rhetorically rejected direct links with a political party.[134] Unions associated with the KBSI adopted a strong revisionist position, and were suspicious about connections between KBSI and PSI. According to a 1959 report by the executive of

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[129] Ibid., 25. This is clearly different from the government position at the time. See Sarli, "Beberapa Tjatatan Tentang: Susunan Organisasi Sarekat-Sarekat Buruh," *Tindjauan Masaalah Perburuhan* 1, No. 2 (1950): 25.

[130] Sjahrir, *Pergerakan Sekerdja*, 27-30.

[131] Partai Sosialis Indonesia, *Apa Partai Kita?* (Dewan Partai Sosialis Bagian Penerangan), 9.

[132] Ibid., 10.

[133] Ibid., 23-25.

[134] KBSI, "Program Perdjuangan Buruh," (1956). This document was obtained from the private archives of Koeswari.

Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api (PBKA, Railway Workers' Union), for example, the PBKA had always 'operated in the socio-economic field to improve the lot of its members and workers generally', and had avoided being 'controlled or dominated by a particular Political Party's ideology'.[135] Later in the document the authors again emphasise that PBKA had no relationship with the PSI; that the PBKA reserved the right to expel members who persisted in their attempts to bring PBKA under PSI control; and that if it could be proven that the KBSI was under PSI control, PBKA would resign from KBSI.[136] In practice, however, the PSI's links with the PBKA and the KBSI were very strong. Poeradiredja held executive positions in both PBKA and PSI, while the KBSI paid part or all of the salaries of some KBSI organisers.[137]

Asmara Hadi, a member of another union with links to the PSI, also presented a case against political trade unionism, using revisionist terms to critique the influence of political parties—particularly the communists—on trade unions.[138] Hadi was not averse to ideological unionism, but argued that unions must be careful not to become 'political footballs', or 'instruments of a political party'.[139] Consequently, he concluded that:

> Incidental cooperation to achieve a particular objective is, of course, permissible, but unions must be very careful not to give up their freedom, they must be on guard so that political parties do not intrude on the domain of the labour movement and must

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[135]   Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api, "Laporan Kerdja 3 Tahun, Nopember 1955 sampai achir 1958 untuk Kongres ke V," (Bandung: Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api,, 1959), Ie-7. I obtained a copy of this document from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[136]   Ibid., 2b-41-42. The PBKA later shifted its formulation of trade union duties from the revisionist position of economic trade unionism to one more closely aligned with the catholic/corporatist position described below after it became closely associated with military initiatives in the Guided Democracy period—noting at its 1963 conference that unions should be partners of management working towards a common future For a detailed case study of PBKA and its communist counterpart, SBKA between 1945-1965, see Elliott, "Bersatoe Kita Berdiri Bertjerai Kita Djatoeh [United We Stand Divided We Fall]: Workers and Unions in Indonesia: Jakarta 1945-1965." 36-96.

[137]   My thanks to Jan Elliott for this information.

[138]   Hadi, who had been an official in the Printers' Union (which published the Sjahrir account described above), published nationalist and radical verse in *Pudjangga Baru*, including a sonnet to Rosa Luxembourg. Sutherland, "Pudjangga Baru: Aspects of Indonesian Intellectual Life in the 1930s," 117.

[139]   Asmara Hadi, *Sarikat Buruh: Membangunnja dan Tugasnja* (Djakarta: Djambatan, 1952), 158.

also be careful that they do not become involved in quarrels between political parties.[140]

Hadi rejected Lenin's call for communists to become involved in all labour unions because he believed communists did 'not allow the labour movement to choose its own path'.[141] Citing the example of European and American unions, which viewed control by the communist parties (or, indeed, any party) as a 'huge disaster',[142] Hadi argued that unions, unlike political parties, are '24 carat class organisations', whose membership should be comprised completely of workers.[143] On the question of individual intellectuals' involvement in unions, Hadi again compared Indonesia with Europe and America, where it was 'seldom true that non-workers hold a role in trade unions'. In contrast, he argued, high levels of illiteracy in Indonesia meant that 'for the time being, it cannot be avoided that many non-worker intellectuals hold important positions in the union leadership', as he, himself, had done in the Printer's union.[144] However, he noted that such a situation was not desirable because of the gap between the life experiences of intellectuals and workers:

> Only leaders who emerge from the workers themselves can gain and maintain the trust of the workers. There are exceptions, but, in general, we cannot hope that non-worker intellectuals can truly absorb the life of the workers into their own lives, and that is the primary skill required of the union leadership.[145]

Hadi again emphasised this point when describing his understanding of the relationship between the labour movement and political parties. He argued that 'no matter how great their love for the workers, and irrespective of the fact that their ultimate objectives are the same as the ultimate objectives of the labour movement', the point of departure of political parties was different from that of the labour movement.[146]

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[140]   Ibid., 157.
[141]   Ibid., 67.
[142]   Ibid.
[143]   Ibid., 3-4.
[144]   Ibid., 18-19.
[145]   Ibid., 19.
[146]   Ibid., 157.

Finally, the Indonesian Labour Party saw the role of the party not as a political vanguard, but as the political wing of the labour movement in the traditional labourist sense favoured by the English Fabians and many European social democrats of revisionist persuasion. Trimurti's *ABC Perdjuangan Buruh*—a study guide published in 1948—contained an extended statement of the labourist, social-democratic position against political unionism.[147] This did not mean that she rejected the politicisation of labour; rather that she believed that unions should not be controlled by political parties. Trimurti differentiated between workers' immediate (economic) goals, which she characterised as 'reformist' and their long-term (political) goals, which she calls 'radical'. She argued both must be achieved in order to create a social structure based on social sovereignty and prosperity for all.[148] Unions should 'fight to improve the fate of workers themselves in their everyday lives' while labour parties undertook the task of improving the conditions of the community as a whole.[149] For Trimurti, the difference between unions and parties lay in the nature of their membership. Whereas members of a political party could come from any group in society as long as they agree with the philosophy and objectives of the party, members of a labour union were drawn from a particular industry, occupation or company:

> As members of labour unions are free to belong to any political party, unions do not follow political guidelines. The focus of their work is to struggle for things directly related to the everyday needs of the workers themselves, for example: wages, hours of

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[147] Like many Indonesians, Trimurti's name was not spelt consistently. In this publication, it appeared as 'Trimurty'. See S.K. Trimurty, *ABC Perdjuangan Buruh* (Jogjakarta: Pusat Pimpinan Partai Buruh Indonesia, 1948). See also *Bagaimana Boeroeh Haroes Berdjoang?* (Jakarta: Badan Penerangan Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia, 1946). and "Azas dan Pendirian," in *Perdjoeangan Boeroeh: Kongres SOBSI Ke I 15-16-17-18 Mei 1947 di Malang* (1947). S.K Trimurti was the Republic's first Minister for Labour (1947-48), a trade unionist, member of the *Partai Buruh Indonesia* (PBI, Indonesian Labour Party) head of the *Barisan Buruh Wanita* (BBW, The Women's Labour Front), and later member of the transitional parliament from 1966-1971. For a chronology of her public life, see S.K. Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional: Ceramah Pada Tanggal 11 Mei 1975 di Gedung Kebangkitan Nasional Jakarta* (Jakarta: Yayasan Idayu, 1975), 28-29.

[148] Trimurty, *ABC Perdjuangan Buruh*, 6.

[149] Ibid., 5.

work, rest-days, the right of association, the right to strike, the right to protection of workers and so on.[150]

Trimurti claimed that political parties, on the other hand, were clearly guided by their politics. Members of a labour party should, therefore, also be members of an appropriate trade union. Trimurti concluded that there is no reason why parties and unions should not influence one another as long as there were no organisational ties, and certainly no direct control of unions by a party. In adding this qualification, she unequivocally rejected the Leninist conception of a direct relationship between the Party and trade unions. However, she also rejected the purely 'reformist' unions, which did not threaten capitalism, but rather mollified the workers with the achievement of small demands so that they did not demand the destruction of capitalism—a reference to the 'pure and simple' unionism favoured by theorists such as Perlman and his colleagues in the Wisconsin school of labour relations.[151]

In summary, for the PKI, the party was an institutional revolutionary intellectual in the Leninist sense. Sandra and Aidit emphasised that trade unions must follow the party to avoid trade union consciousness. Njoto, in stressing that revolutionaries should get close to the masses so that they could understand them, underscored the difference between the intellectuals and the masses. Darsono, in his critique of the PKI, noted the lack of true intellectuals in the party leadership, whilst other internal critics pointed to the PKI's failure to remain true to its Leninist vision as the root of its destruction. Sukarno and the PNI adopted elements of revisionism and Marxism. On one hand, Sukarno argued that a Marhaenist vanguard party was a Leninist party of the 'most conscious and radical' in the service of an immediate revolution against the foreign oppressors of the *Marhaen*. On the other, the party was proudly revisionist on the grounds that Marhaenism was an indigenous form of socialism. Likewise, the PSI adopted a mixture of revisionist and Leninist rhetoric. Sjahrir rejected the direct involvement of intellectuals in trade union leadership, yet the PSI saw itself as a vanguard party. However, it believed its role was to promote the evolutionary achievement of socialism, not revolution. In contrast, Tan Malaka

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[150]   Ibid., 9.
[151]   Ibid., 9-10.

strongly promoted the role of the intellectual in the proletarian party, and accepted the orthodox Marxist link between the proletariat and revolution. Finally, Trimurti, representing the PBI, proposed a labourist position in which a labour party undertakes the workers' political struggle, but was neither directly tied to the trade unions nor automatically the political party of choice for all workers. Meanwhile, union accounts all rejected direct links with political parties. In doing so, they implicitly rejected the involvement of institutional labour intellectuals in unions.[152] It should be noted, however, that regardless of what union publications said about intellectuals' involvement, union leadership involved at least some non-worker intellectuals.[153] Even unionists like Hadi, who rejected the principle of intellectual involvement in union leadership, acknowledged the transitional need for intellectual involvement in unions in developing countries such as Indonesia.[154]

Religious and Conservative Perspectives

Feith has observed that conservative social theories were only considered seriously by a very few before 1965.[155] However, the religious labour unions of the Sukarno period were influential in the early years of the New Order,[156] and conservative voices were involved in debates about the nature of unions throughout the Sukarno period. According to Trimurti's 1948 primer:

> There are voices amongst the workers who say that workers should not be involved in politics; that workers must only struggle in the socio-economic field. They say that workers must only struggle for improvements in their own conditions…[and that] socio-politics should be left to the politicians. Such suggestions are false, and very dangerous…such a struggle does not oppose the principles of capitalism, and cannot

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[152] See for example A.S. Margo, "Mendjadikan Organisasi Serikat-Buruh Kuat dan Demokratis," *Gema S.S.B.R.I.*, 27/6/1960 1960; Agung Sutadi, "Buruh dan Politik," *Gema S.S.B.R.I.*, 27/6/1960 1960.

[153] Elliott, "Bersatoe Kita Berdiri Bertjerai Kita Djatoeh [United We Stand Divided We Fall]." For an account of intellectuals' involvement in unions in the late colonial period, see Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia."

[154] Hadi, *Sarikat Buruh: Membangunnja dan Tugasnja*, 18-19.

[155] Feith, "Introduction," 15.

[156] Note that religious influences in unionism were not new in Indonesia. Islam had been an influence in Indonesian trade unionism since its genesis in the early 1900s, while from the 1930s, a number of Christian and other religiously based unions emerged. Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia," 99. See Chapter Four for a description of the influence of religious unions in the early years of the New Order.

destroy capitalism…The capitalists spread their agents amidst the masses of workers so that they influence workers to relinquish their political struggle.[157]

In another part of her discussion, she explicitly condemned conservative religious thinkers for their rejection of socialism:

> We often hear from religious people who still have a narrow view that a socialist society is a *kafir* [unbelievers'] society of people who have disavowed God, and consequently a socialist society should not be embraced by religious people, even workers. Such opinions are completely wrong (*salah belaka*)…People are free to hold their own religion or beliefs. But that should not be used as a reason for religious people to reject socialism.[158]

As Trimurti suggested, unionists inspired by religious principles were no more united than their secular counterparts. Catholic writers of the period invoked the authority of *Rerum Novarum* when engaging with the questions of Marxism and the right to strike.[159] In Sastrawiria and Wirasutisna's *Ensiklopedi Politik* of 1955 (published by the Indonesian Government), the *Rerum Novarum* was described as follows:

> **RERUM NOVARUM.** An announcement (encyclical) of Pope Leo XIII in 1891 about the stance of the Roman Catholic Church on the development of the labour movement. This announcement has been most influential, because Roman Catholic parties throughout the world in facing issues related to the [labour] movement looked to that encyclical precisely at the time that socialism was at its peak. The Rerum Novarum encourages cooperation between workers and employers and condemns the exploitation of the weak.[160]

For example, Brotodarsono's Catholic perspective (published by the Ministry of Religion) condemned liberalism, but argued also that history has proven Marx's theories to be false.[161] He claimed that strikes were not natural, because most employers and employers could work in a mutually satisfactory way, particularly if

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[157] Trimurty, *ABC Perdjuangan Buruh*, 36-37.
[158] Ibid., 23-24.
[159] Badan Penerangan Katolik, *Kaum Komunis dan Serikat² Sekerdja* (Djakarta: Badan Penerangan Katolik, 1949), 5; M.S. Brotodarsono, *Masalah Pergerakan Modern dan Geredja Katolik* (Djakarta: Kementerian Agama Bagian Penerbitan, n.d.), 5, 27.
[160] Sastrawiria and Wirasutisna, *Ensiklopedi Politik*, 272.
[161] This argument was commonly put forward by New Order officials. See Chapter Five.

they were true to Christian principles. Of particular note was Brotodarsono's Perlman-like invocation of the non-worker union leader, when he argued that 'Workers generally do not strike because of their own desire to, but because of [the wishes of] a number of leaders'.[162]

Muslim unionists' rejection of class struggle in favour of cooperation with management had much in common with the position adopted by the religious trade union movement in Western Europe.[163] GASBIINDO's 1964 history of the Indonesian labour movement emphasised the parallels between the Muslim position and other religious approaches to labour relations. These parallels were made explicit in a section entitled 'other influences', which dealt with Marx, Islam, Christianity and Gandhi.[164] The bulk of the section was devoted to Marx, who, in the opinion of the authors was a 'GREAT THINKER' (capitals in the original), who unfortunately arrived 'rather too late', and did not live long enough to observe the developments of history. GASBIINDO argued that this had been demonstrated by the fact that there had not been a revolution, as Marx had predicted. GASBIINDO's account emphasised that in Islam, 'the class struggle proposed in Marxist analysis cannot be condoned (*dibenarkan*)'. While Islam did 'not specifically deal with labour issues', the Islamic belief that social problems should be solved humanely was 'a strong indication of the means in which labour problems should be solved in this modern era'. The authors concluded by saying that 'This seems the case too in Christian and Gandhian teachings'.[165]

Yet while Muslim unions denounced Marxism, Tedjasukmana argued they were 'often guided by socialist ideas and pursuing socialist aims, to the extent that these ideas and aims are derived from the Qur'an'.[166] The convergence of religious convictions and socialism was nowhere better illustrated than in a speech by Sjafrudin Prawiranegara published by the Yogyakarta-based Muslim weekly

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[162] Brotodarsono, *Masalah Pergerakan Modern dan Geredja Katolik*, 21.
[163] Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement*, 46.
[164] Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO: Sokoguru Revolusi Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gabungan Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia, 1964), 26-27.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement*, 47.

Indonesia Raya in 1948.[167] In a section in which he compared Marxism and religious socialism, Prawiranegara declared that:

> To be blunt, I am amazed to see that amongst the Communists and Socialists of Indonesia there are many who embrace Islam or Christianity. What amazes me more is that they are not just casual Muslims or Christians, but Muslims and Christians who perform their religious duties and prostrate themselves before God, perhaps more diligently and more fervently than other Muslims and Christians.[168]

It was logical, therefore, that some authors writing from a religious perspective adopted the terms of Leninist–revisionist debate. The Christian authors of a volume entitled *Masalah Mogok Kerdja,* for example, applauded revisionist principles.[169] Having defined the acceptability of a range of types of strikes in terms of Christian doctrine, they described the difference between socialist and Christian objectives. Whereas for socialists, the struggle is based on class, they argued that for Christians, it was defined in terms of justice.[170] A little further on, they approvingly quoted the Dutch Socialist Troelstra, who, in 1908, wrote that 'Trade unions know that their work is actually done within the limits of capitalism; their duty is not to destroy employers, but to get as much as possible from them'. According to the authors of *Masalah Mogok Kerdja,* while these terms were not the ones 'usually used in [a Christian] environment', Christians agree with the sentiments expressed. They then invoke Bernstein directly:

> In a company, a strike is like a **dispute between members of a household** designed to **change a number of aspects** in the relationship between the entrepreneur and the workers and **does not have the objective of destroying the basis of the relationship**.

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[167] Sjafrudin Prawiranegara, *Tindjauan Singkat Tentang Politik dan Revolusi Kita* (Jogjakarta: Badan Penerbit Indonesia Raya, 1948). Sjafrudin Prawiranegara was a prominent member of Masjumi, and Prime Minister of Indonesia in the Hatta and Natsir governments. See Cribb, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia,* 457-458.

[168] Prawiranegara, *Tindjauan Singkat Tentang Politik dan Revolusi Kita,* 7.

[169] *Masalah Mogok Kerdja* (Jakarta: Badan Penerbit Kristen, 1954). A copy of this volume was obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[170] Ibid., 22.

> Strikes break the work contract with the intention of improving **upon the existing basis of the society** [Emphasis in *Masalah Mogok Kerdja*].[171]

Likewise, not all Catholics were opposed to the right to strike. The Catholic Information Service, in its volume *Kaum Komunis dan Serikat2 Sekerdja,* called for the implementation of principles of justice and love of humankind within relationships of production, but recognised the right to strike.[172] Invoking the rhetoric of revisionism, its authors criticised the communists for interfering with the operation of unions, because, in their view, trade unions were designed to achieve higher wages, shorter working hours and firmer guarantees of work—purposes that were 'unrelated to either religion or politics'. They argued that if these 'true' purposes were fulfilled, 'the community need not be worried about the development of trade unions'. However, they saw the growth of communist party influence—a growth out of proportion to the communist membership of trade unions—as 'a big threat to the people's economy, the freedom of the populace and to truly democratic life'. The risk lay, according to the authors, when unionism and politics mix—leading to a change in union objectives. In such situations, the strike was no longer an economic tool, but a political one.[173]

Muslim authors were also split over the right to strike. Basri, for example, condemned the conflict between workers and their employers in the West, emphasising that 'Islam attempts to unite the employers and labour' on a moral basis, arguing that if such a moral basis were adopted, workers would no longer be oppressed, and conflict would be unnecessary.[174] Others promoted workplace harmony, but did not necessarily reject the right of workers to strike if employers did not fulfil their religious duty to treat workers properly. The leadership of the *Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia* (SBII, The Indonesian Islamic Labour Union) argued that so long as Muslim employers were not fulfilling their religious duty to treat workers

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[171]   Ibid., 24.
[172]   Badan Penerangan Katolik, *Kaum Komunis dan Serikat² Sekerdja*, 7-9.
[173]   Ibid., 10.
[174]   Chairoel Basri, *Menoedjoe Masjarakat Baroe (Politik, Ekonomi, Sosial)* (Medan: Poestaka Nasional), 34.

morally, Muslim trade unionists had the right to strike, on the condition that strikes were only used for economic ends.[175]

In articles in the magazine *Basis* in 1953 and 1954, Sandjaja put forward an argument that exemplified the conservative perspective on labour relations of the 1950s. It had much in common with more conservative religious positions of the time, and, indeed, with Perlman's perspective on the dangers of 'outside' involvement in the labour movement.[176] Sandjaja did not deny that workers' interests could differ from their employers' interests; however, he argued that they were not necessarily contradictory.[177] In any case, he maintained, the interests of workers and employers were best protected through 'mutual understanding and cooperation'.[178] Sandjaja called for a more civilised attitude towards the working relationship, in which workers were treated humanely by their employers and experts determined what companies could afford to pay their workers.[179] He argued that employers had a duty to evaluate their ability to pay to ensure principles of social justice were met as fully as possible. In return, workers should 'honestly weigh up economic factors and the ability of the company to pay' instead of demanding 'unnegotiable rights'. Sandjaja concluded by once more promoting mutual trust and cooperation, which he argued were the 'necessary conditions for a prosperous company and a healthy society'.[180]

These perspectives later influenced New Order rhetoric on the relationship between workers and employers and unions and parties. However, that rhetoric also drew heavily on the language of the Guided Democracy period (1959-1965), when President Sukarno sought to unify the political forces of Indonesia (Nationalism, Religion and Communism) and their mass organisations in a functional group

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[175] Jusuf Wibisono and S. Narto, "Statement P.B. S.B.I.I.," (Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia, 1951). A copy of this document was obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[176] W.T. Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh: Pertentangan atau Kerdja-Sama?," *Basis* 3, No. 3 (1953); W.T. Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh II: Pertentangan atau Kerdja Sama?," *Basis* 3, No. 4 (1954). Sandjaja was the magazine's deputy-editor. Copies of these issues of *Basis* were obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[177] Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh," 92; Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh II," 127.

[178] Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh," 92-93.

[179] Ibid.: 94-95.

[180] Sandjaja, "Madjikan dan Buruh II," 128.

system.[181] It was in this period that systematic attempts were initially made to differentiate Indonesia's *Pancasila* democracy from both liberalism and communism. At the heart of this vision was the concept of *karyawan,* a concept promoted by the military in the 1960s to replace *buruh,* a word for worker that had come to be mired in the connotations of class conflict.[182] *Karyawan,* as defined by the *Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia*, (SOKSI, The Central Organisation of Indonesian Socialist Workers) meant 'every person who gives their constructive work (*karya*) to the people'.[183] According to a SOKSI document produced in 1964, class conflict was no longer necessary in Indonesia because (invoking Marx) the Revolution has been achieved.[184] In the *karyawan* society embodied in the concept of Guided Democracy there was:

> No longer a basis for the relationship between labour and bosses…There is a differentiation of function between one *karyawan* and another; both give the fruits of their *karya* to Indonesian progress. The dividing line between workers and bosses is replaced with cooperation and unity (*bersatu-padunja*) based on collective deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah untuk mufakat*) between the *karyawan* who carry out the work and the *karyawan* who lead them.[185]

This is the language that characterised New Order industrial relations. However, as will be shown in Chapter Four, it did not account fully for the substance or rhetoric of New Order unionism, which continued to reflect the influences of revisionism.

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[181] Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*, 192, 222-225. See Chapter Four for details of the influence of this period on the New Order state.

[182] See Jacques Leclerc, "An Ideological Problem of Indonesian Trade Unionism in the Sixties: 'Karyawan' versus 'Buruh'," *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs* 6, No. 1 (1972).

[183] Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, *SOKSI Mendjawab* (Djakarta: Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, 1964), 11. SOKSI was a military initiative to balance the 'hegemony' of the PKI. It began as a labour organisation focused on the military-run plantations, but later broadened into coordinating body for a number mass organisations. Its political functions were absorbed into Sekber Golkar in 1964 (Golkar is described in some detail in Chapter Four). For SOKSI's own account of its connections to the military and to Golkar, see S. Sjamsuddin, ed., *Tri Dasawarsa SOKSI: Berjuang Menjawab Tantangan Sejarah* (Jakarta: Dep Penerangan-DPN SOKSI, 1990), 21-28. For a full account of Golkar (including SOKSI's relationship to it) see Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*.

[184] For a retrospective view on SOKSI's use of socialist language see Sjamsuddin, ed., *Tri Dasawarsa SOKSI*, 25.

[185] Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, *SOKSI Mendjawab*, 11.

Conclusion

The Indonesian labour movement has a complex 'double history' in which international theories about the nature and purpose of unions have been mobilised and modified. This chapter has examined a single strand of that history, concerning the relationship between unions and intellectuals. Within that strand, a particular debate has been identified—the debate between Lenin and the Revisionists in Europe at the turn of the century. The chapter has shown that even religious and conservative labour theorists in pre-New Order Indonesia engaged with that debate. It has not been suggested that Leninism and Revisionism were the only influences on organised labour in Indonesia before 1965. Rather, the terms of those debates define the contemporary focus of this study: the Indonesian 'institution' of labour representation and labour NGOs' relationship to that institution.

CHAPTER 4

A Victor's History

> In the past, the Indonesian labour movement was divided and difficult to unify because of ideological differences between its leaders, who emphasised the political struggle and neglected the struggle to improve the socio-economic welfare of its members…The FBSI's struggle emphasises the socio-economic struggle to improve workers' welfare, and the achievement of better working conditions and social guarantees. In doing so, FBSI is returning (*mengembalikan*) the function of the labour movement to that of labour union rather than of political organisation.[1]

In the first years of Indonesia's New Order, unions were 'renovated' in order to avoid repeating 'the mistakes of the past', when they had eschewed their socio-economic responsibilities in favour of a divisive political unionism in which 'outside' interests (primarily the interests of political parties) were prioritised over members' needs and the national interest.[2] Yet although the limits of unionism were defined by labour's place in its corporatist system of interest representation, New Order beliefs about the institution of trade unionism were not shaped by the state's corporatist impulse alone. They were also influenced by the revisionist convictions of non-communist labour activists who continued to be involved in formal trade unionism under the New Order.[3]

The strength of revisionist themes in New Order labour relations was nowhere more evident than in its labour historiography. New Order labour histories were written in support of state corporatism, but they reflected the concerns of the

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[1]   Ali Moertopo, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila Sebagai Manifestasi Falsafah Pancasila di Bidang Perburuhan," in *Hubungan Pemerintah, Pengusaha dan Buruh dalam Era Pembangunan I*, ed. Suntjojo (Jakarta: Yayasan Marga Jaya, 1980), 32-33.

[2]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*. The concern with the need to learn from past mistakes was a dominant theme in New Order historiography more generally. See for example Rachmat Witoelar, *Political Developments in Indonesia* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1989).

[3]   Hadiz has described the importance of old trade union connections within FBSI, noting that individuals were identified by their 'old' affiliations as late as 1985. The initial Central Board of FBSI was comprised largely of the leadership of non-communist unions. See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 63-68, 80, 101-102.

revisionists and their neo-revisionist successor, Perlman—concerns that outsiders necessarily subvert trade union consciousness for their own purposes, contrary to the interests of workers themselves. Intellectuals were seldom mentioned explicitly in New Order labour histories, but they were always implicitly present in repeated claims that unions were only able to 'free' themselves from the yoke of political parties and other outside interests under the New Order. These prescriptive statements about the 'true' socio-economic purpose of unions were neither new, nor unique to the archipelago. Their terms were drawn from the early twentieth century debate between Lenin and the revisionists, as translated into the specific socio-political setting of independent Indonesia.

The Corporatist Paradigm and its Revisionist Counterpoint

As Secretary-General of Golkar, Rachmat Witoelar, noted in 1989, Suharto's New Order had two priorities when it seized power in Indonesia in the late 1960s and destroyed the PKI: safeguarding the 'State Ideology' and the Constitution of 1945, which 'had been imperilled in previous years'; and 'the rebuilding of society and the overcoming of the legacy of economic chaos that was left by the previous era'.[4] The 'State Ideology' to which Witoelar referred was *Pancasila*, which the New Order regime touted as an indigenous, inalienable philosophy whose authority lay beyond the realm of mere politics. The New Order's '*Pancasila* Democracy' was described as a product of 'the history of [Indonesia's] own society—a pre-colonial, pre-independence history which is truly Indonesian'.[5] In 1967, Suharto defined *Pancasila* Democracy as:

> democracy; people's sovereignty in its spirit and integration with other basic principles. This means that exercising democratic rights must be in line with responsibility to the God Almighty in accordance with one's religion; it must highly respect humanity in accordance with human dignity; it must guarantee and strengthen

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[4] Witoelar, *Political Developments in Indonesia*, 9.

[5] Mashuri, "Pancasila Democracy," *Indonesian Quarterly* 5, No. 4 (1977): 34.

national unity; and it must lead to the realisation of social justice. It is based on the idea of family principle (*kekeluargaan*) and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*).[6]

In the words of Ali Moertopo, the chief architect of the New Order state, 'the New Order cannot be identified with *Pancasila*', rather '*Pancasila* is the fundamental norms to be carried out by the nation and the State; the New Order is the attitude of the Indonesian people in order to apply those norms correctly [sic]'.[7] Consequently, as Moertopo also noted, 'the law itself' was considered 'subordinate to the moral ideals embodied in *Pancasila*' in New Order Indonesia.[8]

The potency of *Pancasila* rhetoric lay in its justificatory potential as an unalterable, indigenous ideology. By claiming that a particular institution sprang from *Pancasila* (or other equally 'sacred' texts, such as the 1945 Constitution), the government could go to any length to protect it. This is not to suggest that the actions taken by the New Order in the name of *Pancasila* were uncontested. On one hand, as Warren noted in her discussion of local responses to *Pancasila* in a Balinese community, Indonesians did not passively accept *Pancasila*.[9] On the other, Ramage has argued, 'Critics of the regime—both from outside and within the government—[appropriated] *Pancasila* as an effective tool to question Soeharto's policies and raise sensitive issues'.[10] This observation held true in the labour sphere. Although many opponents of the government's industrial relations policy framed their criticisms very starkly, others successfully used the rhetoric of *Pancasila* to make strong statements about the need for change.[11] Yet, as Bourchier has argued, while Moertopo's aim of 'construct[ing] a single language, a single understanding of matters pertaining to

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[6]   Suharto cited in T. Mulya Lubis, *In Search of Human Rights: Legal-Political Dilemmas of Indonesia's New Order, 1966-1990* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in cooperation with SPES Foundation, 1993), 174.

[7]   Ali Moertopo, "Some Basic Considerations in 25-year Development," *The Indonesian Quarterly* 1, No. 1 (1972):4. General Ali Moertopo was the head of OPSUS, a highly influential intelligence group. Moertopo was a powerful political figure in the early years of the New Order.

[8]   Ibid., 20.

[9]   Carol Warren, *Adat and Dinas: Balinese Communities in the Indonesian State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[10] Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse in Suharto's Late New Order," 2. See also Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization': The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*, 221-228.

[11] See Chapter Five for examples of how some critics of the single, state-sanctioned union used the language of *Pancasila* to justify their objections.

social and state life'[12] was not achieved, 'Indonesian political discourse [was] profoundly affected by decades of *Pancasila*-isation' which made it very difficult 'to advocate liberal, leftist or Islamic positions except as minor modifications of the existing order'.[13]

The Pancasila State

From its inception, the New Order regime explicitly positioned development programs and their co-requisites (such as stability) as the means by which its idealised, indigenous *Pancasila* state was to be achieved.[14] Moertopo promoted a corporatist structure of interest representation as part of a 'national political strategy' to facilitate citizens' participation in activities geared towards the achievement of national development.[15] The links between development and corporatism were unambiguously shown in Moertopo's model of the corporatist state, which is reproduced in Figure 4.1.[16] The New Order thus began with a 'period of construction', in which the 'functional and professional organisations' were established by Golkar (the government's political vehicle) but had no formal links to it.[17]

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[12] Ali Moertopo, *Buruh dan Tani dalam Pembangunan* (Jakarta: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1975), 40.

[13] Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 241.

[14] According to Heryanto, the word-form *pembangunan* (development) has only been in documented use since the cultural polemics of the 1930s—the first dictionary inclusion he found of the term was in 1948. He argued that *pembangunan* did not become a key word until the New Order period, when Suharto, who was portrayed as *Bapak Pembangunan*, led an *Orde Pembangunan* whose cabinets were invariably described as *Kabinet Pembangunan.* Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development'." It should be noted, however, that Sukarno's earlier attempts at state corporatism were also linked to the concept of 'development'. See Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia.*

[15] Ali Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional* (Jakarta: Jajasan Proklamasi/Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1974), 89. For general discussions of the significance of development in New Order Indonesia, see Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development'," 8; Michael van Langenberg, "Analysing Indonesia's New Order State: A Keywords Approach," *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs* 20, No. 2 (1986); Mas'oed, "The Indonesian Economy and Political Structure During the Early Years of the New Order, 1966-1971." 188-189.

[16] Moertopo, "Some Basic Considerations in 25-year Development," 15. Figure 4.1 is adapted from Moertopo's own diagram in Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 89. Although it shows a bottom-up process, in practice the New Order state operated from the top down. For a detailed account of the sources of Moertopo's corporatist ideas, see Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia."

[17] Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 9, 68. See also David Reeve's seminal work on Golkar. Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia.*
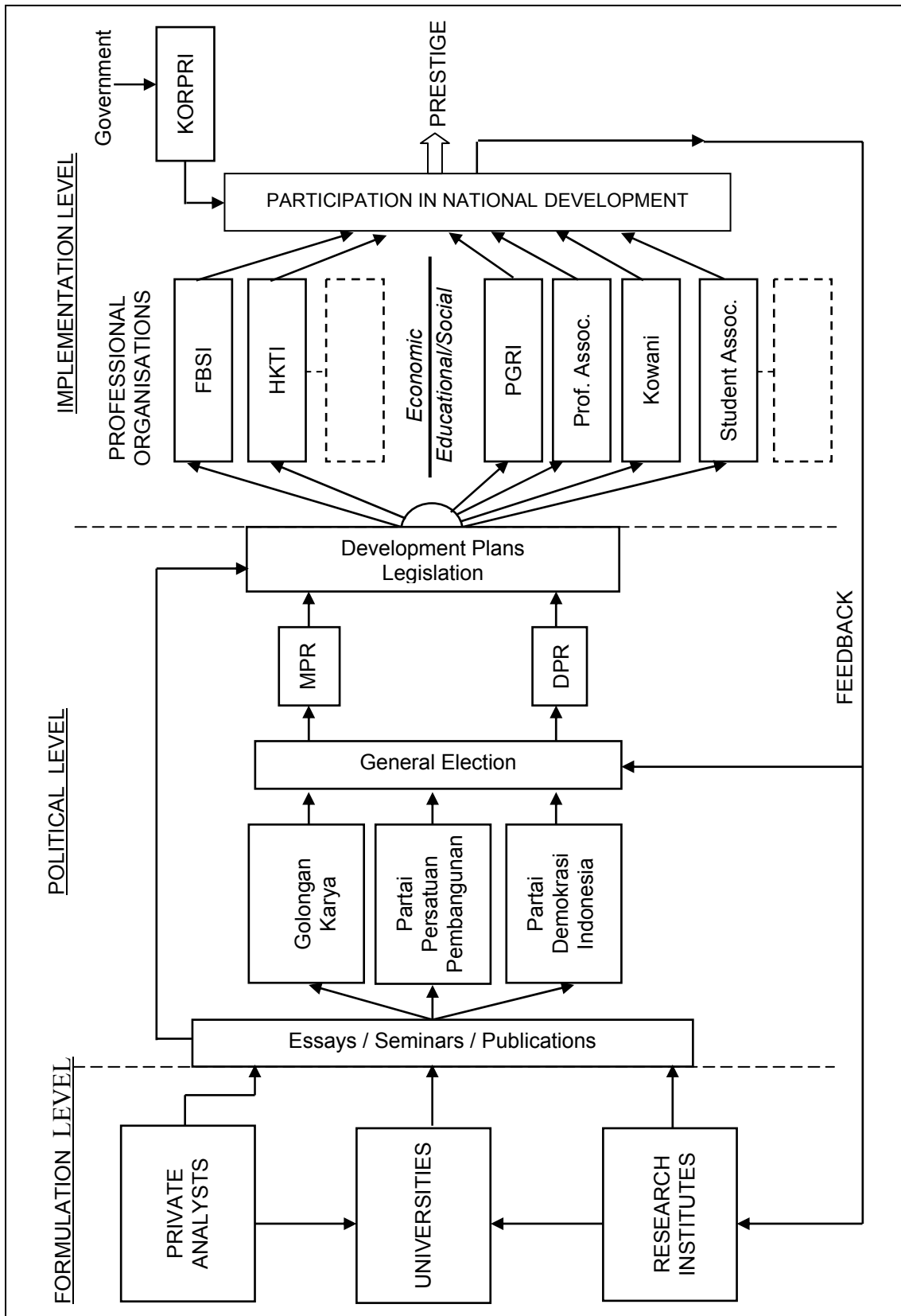
Figure 4.1 Moertopo's 'Political Mechanism Serving Development'

The corporatisation of Indonesian society was essentially completed in the period between 1971 and 1975, a period characterised by the 'politics of fusion'.[18] In these few years, the New Order regime undertook a number of sweeping political reforms. It introduced the floating mass policy, under which Indonesians were only permitted to engage politically at election time so that they could devote their energies to development, and forced non-communist political parties to amalgamate in the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI, Indonesian Democratic Party) and the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP, United Development Party).[19] It also formed single-vehicle corporatist bodies for labour, peasants, fishers, youth and women called 'functional groups', which were designed to be the 'backbone' of Indonesia's 'developing society'.[20] Moertopo argued the functional groups' structural independence was vital, because in the past, when they had been tied to political parties, there had been no differentiation (*deferensiasi*) between their political and functional struggles (*perjuangan politis dan perjuangan kekaryaan*).[21]

The New Order's efforts to shape and control interest representation were by no means novel. The New Order system owed much to ideas about functional groups developed from the mid 1950s which, in turn, had their roots in a much older stream of conservative, nationalist thought, whose best-known proponent was the Dutch-educated customary law specialist, Supomo.[22] Those ideas were given form in Sukarno's attempts to introduce Guided Democracy. Having called for the abolition of political parties in late 1956, Sukarno moved to restructure Indonesian politics along functional lines in early 1957. His vision for Guided Democracy consisted of a cooperative cabinet, based on the principle of *gotong-royong* (mutual assistance) and a national council consisting of representatives of society's *golongan karya*, or functional groups.[23] Whilst the PKI blocked the formation of the *gotong-royong* cabinet, the National Council was inaugurated on 12 July 1957. Chaired by Sukarno, it included the chiefs of staff of army, navy and air force; the police chief; the

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[18] Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*.
[19] Ibid., 323.
[20] Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 73.
[21] Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 73-76.
[22] For detailed accounts of the ideological and organisational roots of New Order corporatism, see Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*. and Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia."
[23] Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*, 115-118.

attorney general; the three deputy prime ministers; fourteen regional representatives and representatives of twenty-one functional groups spanning labour, peasants, youth, former armed revolutionaries, national entrepreneurs, artists, journalists, women, *Angkatan 45* (The Generation of 1945), religious scholars and citizens of foreign extraction.[24]

Although Sukarno had abandoned his attempts to proceed to a fuller 'golkarisation' of government by 1962, the army leadership remained strongly supportive of the functional group concept.[25] This commitment was demonstrated in the formation of a series of *Badan Kerja Sama* (cooperative bodies), including the *Badan Kerja Sama–Buruh Militer* (BKS–BUMIL, The Labour-Military Cooperative Body), formed in December 1957; in the development of the concept of *karyawan* (people who exert productive effort) which covered both military appointees to civilian positions and employees of all kinds; and in the subsequent formation of the *Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia* (SOKSI) in May 1960.[26] It was again re-enforced in October 1964, when the *Sekretariat Bersama Organisasi-Organisasi Golongan Karya Anggota Front Nasional* (Sekber Golkar, Joint Secretariat of the Functional Group Organisations of the National Front) was formed to protect the *karyawan* organisations, which had come under strong attack in that year.[27] Bourchier has noted that neither SOKSI nor Sekber Golkar was particularly strong in 1965, but the organicism they promote had a 'profound influence on the way the military restructured the political environment after it seized power in 1965-66'.[28] As he also observed, however, Moertopo's vision of the functional group system was more comprehensive than any of these earlier initiatives.[29]

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[24] Ibid., 118; Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 130. The Generation of 45 were the generation who fought for independence.

[25] Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*, 160.

[26] See Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 143. For details of the military's growing involvement in labour affairs, see Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*.

[27] For an account of subsequent attacks on SOKSI and the formation of *Sekber Golkar*, see Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*. For Moertopo's version of the formation of *Sekber Golkar* and its activities in the early New Order period, see Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*. For SOKSI's defence of its role and purpose, see Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, *SOKSI Mendjawab*. and Sjamsuddin, ed., *Tri Dasawarsa SOKSI*.

[28] See Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 145-146. After the 'attempted' coup in September 1965 and Sukarno's 'ceding' of power to Suharto on March 11 1966, the PKI was banned (12 March 1966) and the communist labour unions were crushed. Suharto's executive powers were formally acknowledged by Resolution IX of the MPRS in its 20

Moertopo's ideas were highly influential in the reorganisation of labour and the formulation of *Pancasila* Labour Relations in the early 1970s.[30] Moertopo took a strong personal interest in shaping the institutions of New Order labour corporatism, which he believed were a key part of his wider vision for an organic, developmentalist state based on *Pancasila*.[31] As Bourchier has noted, Catholic social theory, as described in the *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and later *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), was an important stimulus in the restructure because it influenced a number of Moertopo's advisors.[32] Central to Moertopo's project was the establishment of a strong, single trade union federation oriented to the 'goals and ambitions' of the nation as a whole.[33] This was achieved when an agreement to establish the *Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (FBSI, All-Indonesia Labour Federation) was signed on 20 February 1973.[34] The new union federation was to be a partner in tripartite forums and in the implementation of *Pancasila* Labour Relations. It would act both as a channel for workers' aspirations and to facilitate 'workers' participation in the tasks of the nation (*tugas-tugas nasional*)'.[35]

As Hadiz has carefully chronicled in his work on the origins of New Order industrial relations, the establishment of FBSI was the culmination of efforts by the military, government officials and unionists who had survived the transition to the

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June-5 July 1966 sitting, and he was appointed Acting President nine months later in a special session of MPRS. He was granted full Presidential status in 1968.

[29]   Ibid.

[30]   Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 88. In April 1975, the text of Moertopo's presentation at the Seminar on *Pancasila* Labour Relations in December 1974—which strongly shaped the seminar's final statement—was published as part of a volume entitled *Buruh dan Tani dalam Pembangunan*. This seminar, at which 'guiding statements' were made by the President, the Minister for Manpower and Ali Moertopo, was attended by a number of trade union figures, including Agus Sudono, Sukijat, and Sukarno. The text of the seminar decision is reproduced as an appendix in F.X. Djumialdji and W. Soedjono, *Perjanjian Perburuhan dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila* (Jakarta: Bina Aksara, 1982). Moertopo re-presented parts of his paper at a military seminar on *Pancasila* Labour Relations in 1980. See Moertopo, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila Sebagai Manifestasi Falsafah Pancasila di Bidang Perburuhan."

[31]   For a detailed description of the rhetoric of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations and its application, see Ford, "Pancasila Industrial Relations."

[32]   Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 210. Bourchier has noted that many of Moertopo's ideas were produced by the Chinese Catholic staff of CSIS, who, in turn, had studied under a missionary called Jopie Beek in the 1960s. Ibid., 203-205.

[33]   Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 10-12.

[34]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 16-19.

[35]   Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 23. These sentiments were echoed in Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 15-23.

New Order since the late 1960s.[36] The initial proposal for the 'renovation' of the labour movement was put forward at an FES-sponsored seminar in October 1971.[37] A few months later, in May 1972, a formal resolution was passed (*Ikrar Bersama, Common Resolve*), followed by the Declaration of Unity on 20 February 1973. A Committee of Six was formed to give shape to the Declaration of Unity, which specified plans to form a single union federation. Its members were Sukijat, Oetoyo Oesman, Soekarno, Sutanto Martoprasono, Agus Sudono and Rasjid Sutan Radjamas.[38] FBSI's Constitution was completed by 11 March 1973.[39] On 11 March 1974, FBSI and its 'component bodies' were formally recognised as the only legal union(s) in Indonesia.[40] The formation of FBSI laid the foundations for the formal establishment of *Pancasila* Labour Relations at the National Seminar on *Pancasila* Labour Relations held in December 1974.[41]

With the implementation of *Pancasila* Labour Relations, the government formally rejected 'foreign' models that stressed the inherently antagonistic nature of labour relations on the grounds that they were incompatible with the national

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[36] Hadiz gave a detailed account of developments in the labour field after 1966, including the formation of a number of temporary peak labour bodies and the politics surrounding the formation of FBSI. See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 59-83. A shorter version of the substance of this chapter was published as Hadiz, "State and Labour in the Early New Order." See also Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia*.

[37] Note the title of Soekarno's book on labour history: *The Renovation of the Labour Movement*.

[38] Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 18.

[39] Ibid., 21.

[40] Ibid., 29. Although the non-communist unions that had survived the post-1965 purges were never officially dissolved, in practice, with the formation of FBSI, they were reshaped into FBSI's industrial sector unions. The communist-linked *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Central Workers' Organisation) and other left-leaning unions had been crushed in the aftermath of 1965. For a summary of this period and an account of the establishment and transformation of FBSI, see Hadiz, "State and Labour in the Early New Order."

[41] Accounts of the operation of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations system written from a variety of perspectives were available. See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia;* Lambert, "Authoritarian State Unionism in New Order Indonesia"; Sukardi Rinakit, "Trade Unions and Labour Unrest," in *Indonesia: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Richard Baker, et al. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999); Hess, "Understanding Indonesian Industrial Relations in the 1990s"; Manning, "Structural Change and Industrial Relations During the Soeharto Period - an Approaching Crisis"; Billah, "Strategi Pengendalian Negara Atas Buruh." 82-183; Jennifer Grant, "The Politics of Reform: Industrial Relations in Indonesia 1990-94." (Unpublished Masters of International Studies Thesis, University of Sydney, 1995); Hikam, "The State, Grass-Roots Politics and Civil Society." 214-245; Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 75-91; Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 228-280; Sutanta, "The Impact of Industrial Relation on Workers' Welfare in Indonesia." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glamorgan, 1997), 75-124.

character.[42] Yet whilst the New Order drew heavily on the language of indigeneity in its efforts to downplay the differences between workers and their employers, Moertopo himself also adopted the rhetoric of revisionism, as indicated in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter.[43]

Its Revisionist Counterpoint

Although Moertopo's prescription for FBSI was most certainly premised on its function in a corporatist system of labour relations within an organic corporatist state, it did not preclude accommodation of the interests of the non-communist labour leaders still active at the beginning of the New Order period.[44] FBSI was described as apolitical because 'pure' unions were considered apolitical in the revisionist orthodoxy of the period. Yet whilst the rhetoric of New Order unionism focused on its socio-economic aims and its separation from Golkar, in practice, those links were strong.[45] Many in the central leadership were members of Golkar with no

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[42]   The 1974 Seminar at which *Pancasila* Labour Relations was established was attended by representatives of employers, the bureaucracy, unions and universities. Guidance (*pengarahan*) was provided by the President, Moertopo and Subroto, the Minister for Manpower, Transmigration and Cooperatives. Agus Sudono was present, whilst Soekarno, whose historical work is discussed in detail below, was a discussant at the seminar. A copy of the 1974 Seminar Resolution is included in Djumialdji and Soedjono, *Perjanjian Perburuhan dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila*. In April 1975, the text of Moertopo's presentation at the Seminar on *Pancasila* Labour Relations in December 1974 was published as part of Moertopo, *Buruh dan Tani dalam Pembangunan*.

[43]   Of particular note in this statement is the concept of 'returning' to true trade unionism, which echoes Moertopo's broader project of 'returning' to a *Pancasila* that had never existed Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 12.

[44]   Indeed, Hadiz has reported that, in the early years of the New Order (1967-1973), many labour leaders at the time were optimistic that a 'relatively independent' labor movement could be developed within the New Order framework. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 35.

[45]   For example Sutanto, the head of the Department of Manpower's Public Relations Bureau, compared the unions of the Old Order period, which 'were only used as an instrument in political parties' struggle to achieve their interests' with the New Order period, when 'the crown of the workers' struggle is the Collective Labour Agreement'. Sutanto quoted in "Humas Depnaker Tanggapi Keprihatinan LPSM Yogyakarta: Dulu, Wadah Buruh Sebagai Sarana Perjuangan Parpol," *Merdeka*, 10 October 1995. Similarly, in October 1996, Arief Soedjito, Deputy Chair of the Organisational Division of FSPSI in the Central Java branch, reminded the branch officials he was training that 'in the Declaration of 20 February 1973 it was clearly stated that SPSI's struggle is not a political struggle, but a struggle to improve workers' welfare.' If SPSI strayed from this path, he argued, it could 'trapped (*terjebak*) once more', in the patterns of the Old Order period, when workers were mobilised for political ends. See Arief Soedjito quoted in "Mogok, Perlindungan Belum Dilaksanakan," *Suara Merdeka*, 1 October 1996. See also the series of articles on Pancasila Industrial Relations written by Bomer Pasaribu in the lead-up to his appointment as head of SPSI, published as Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan

background in union affairs, including Oetojo Oesman, Sukijat and Soedarwo. Retired bureaucrats and retired members of the military were also represented at lower levels of the union.[46]

Hadiz has argued, following Reeve, that FBSI's formal independence from Golkar was a result of tensions between its predecessor (Sekber Golkar) and non-communist union leaders in the late 1960s and early 1970s over the international representation of Indonesian labour.[47] However, the separation between party and union also had a revisionist ideological dimension. Moertopo's corporatist vision was tempered by contemporary revisionist and neo-revisionist ideas about unionism—concepts supported internationally by unions in the United States of America and Western Europe and by the ILO, which promoted a system of tripartism based on neo-revisionist principles. Non-communist international labour bodies, notably the ICFTU, the AFL-CIO and the German *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung* (FES, Friedrich Ebert Foundation) were influential in Indonesia at the time when the New Order's labour regime was taking shape.[48] Within Indonesia, moderate socialist union leaders, the traditional proponents of revisionism, were involved in the restructuring of the labour

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Manusia (1)," *Harian Terbit*, 16 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (2)," *Harian Terbit*, 17 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (3)," *Harian Terbit*, 18 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (4)," *Harian Terbit*, 19 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (5)," *Harian Terbit*, 20 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (6)," *Harian Terbit*, 21 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (7)," *Harian Terbit*, 23 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (8)," *Harian Terbit*, 24 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (9)," *Harian Terbit*, 25 October 1995; Bomer Pasaribu, "HIP Dalam Upaya Memanusiakan Manusia (10)," *Harian Terbit*, 26 October 1995.

[46] Hikam, "The State, Grass-Roots Politics and Civil Society." 232-233. All of the Central Javanese SPSI district chairs Kusyuniati interviewed were bureaucrats from the Department of Manpower or members of the military. Kusyuniati also noted that the union shared offices with the government bureaucracy and employer groups. See Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 238-240. Some union leaders, including Sudono, held positions in the employer peak body at different times of their career. See Agus Sudono, ed., *Perburuhan Dari Masa ke Masa* (Jakarta: Pustaka Cidesindo, 1997), 159-161.

[47] Golkar was not officially a party until after the fall of Suharto, although it stood candidates in elections throughout the New Order period. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 72.

[48] Although their hopes for a strengthening of existing non-communist unions were considered unpalatable by the Indonesian government, the models of unionism they promoted were influential in the shaping of FBSI. Ibid., 72-74. The ICFTU suspended the memberships of GASBIINDO, KBIM, GOBSI and SARBUMUSI in 1985 (when FBSI was transformed into the unitarist SPSI) on the grounds that they no longer exist as 'bona fide national trade union centres'. See "Report of the ICFTU/APRO Delegation to Indonesia April 5 to 9, 1993," 8.

movement. More prominent, however, were the leaders of religiously-based unions, who generally supported a conservative version of revisionist rhetoric in which workers' interests were deemed to be best protected within a harmonious employment relationship predicated on Muslim or Christian morality.[49] One of the most influential proponents of revisionism in Indonesia in the early 1970s was Agus Sudono, the leader of the Muslim union federation, GASBIINDO.[50] Sudono, who chaired FBSI from the time of its formation in 1973 to its transformation into the unitarist SPSI in 1985, defined labour unions in revisionist terms:

> A trade union is a permanent, democratic organisation that is formed voluntarily from, by and for workers, to improve the protection afforded to them in their work, to improve their working conditions through collective bargaining and their life situation, and as a means of expressing workers' opinions about issues that arise in the community.[51]

Another clear indication of Sudono's revisionist leanings was his repeated insistence on the difference between political organisations' 'ideological, long-term, socio-political struggle' and unions' 'real, short-term, socio-economic struggle'.[52] Sudono reconciled his revisionist principles with Moertopo's corporatism by arguing that unions' socio-economic aims could only be achieved in the developing country context if the labour movement 'commit[ed] itself to economic development and [became] a partner in such development'.[53]

Both Moertopo and Sudono were concerned about the ongoing influence of 'outside forces', some of which were 'outside financial agents'. They shared a particular concern that dependence on financial aid gave donors a role in determining

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[49] See Chapter Three.

[50] Sudono has published a full-length account of his involvement in the labour movement. See Agus Sudono, *30 Tahun Agus Sudono Mengabdi Gerakan Buruh* (Jakarta: FBSI, 1985). For a short biographical description, see Sudono, ed., *Perburuhan Dari Masa ke Masa*, 159-161.

[51] Agus Sudono, *Sejarah Kelahiran dan Perkembangan FBSI* (Jakarta: Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, 1979), 26.

[52] Agus Sudono, *The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies: Selected Speeches of Agus Sudono* (Jakarta: Asian-American Free Labor Institute, 1977), 66; Sudono, *Sejarah Kelahiran dan Perkembangan FBSI*, 21. See also Agus Sudono, *FBSI Dahulu, Sekarang dan Yang Akan Datang* (Jakarta: FBSI, 1981); Sudono, *30 Tahun Agus Sudono Mengabdi Gerakan Buruh;* Sudono, *Pengabdian Agus Sudono;* Agus Sudono, "Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Tentang Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila," in *Perburuhan Dari Masa Ke Masa*, ed. Agus Sudono (Jakarta: Pustaka Cidesindo, 1997).

[53] See Sudono, *The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies*, 41.

organisational policy. The solution, they believed, was to develop a strong, united labour movement, which focused on workers' socio-economic needs and was free from political influence.[54] However, in contrast to the European revisionists, for Moertopo, and, to a lesser extent, Sudono, the goal of strong labour unionism was not evolution towards socialism, but rather the development of a harmonious relationship between employers and employees based on the rejection of class struggle.[55]

Constructing A Victor's History

Having introduced *Pancasila* Industrial Relations as an 'indigenous' model of labour relations in 1974, the New Order regime was anxious to create an historically continuous sense of workers' desire to be united to achieve improvements in their own economic conditions while participating in a wider, national struggle. At the same time, it wanted to differentiate itself from the previous regime, which it dubbed the 'Old Order'. New Order labour historiography achieved these aims by building a story of continuity with a purported minority of labour unionists who struggled to achieve 'pure' (economic) unionism in the colonial period and through the Sukarno years. The ambitions of members of these 'pure' unions to achieve unity were repeatedly foiled, because the majority of unions had been 'subverted' from their economic and nationalist purposes by political parties in general, and the PKI in particular. Their desire for unity, the histories claimed, was only achieved after the renovation of the labour movement under the New Order.

Writing Labour History

As New Order trade unionism was defined against history's 'lessons', it would seem logical that the systematic study of labour history would be an important part of the regime's industrial relations project. Yet, in contrast to a number of pre-New Order accounts of national history, where organised labour featured prominently, trade

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[54] See Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 10-12; Sudono, *The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies,* 42-43.

[55] Moertopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, 13-15.

unions were virtually absent from the national historiography of the New Order.[56] The extent to which labour has been written out of Indonesian history was nowhere better demonstrated than in the many volumes of *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia,* the New Order's standard official history. In Volume Five, the volume which included 59 pages on the early twentieth century nationalist movement, there were no references to workers, labour or unions in the index, and only two references to unions in the text. Although Indonesian unions historically embraced a wide range of ideologies, both these references appeared in the section on the PKI.[57] In the first, the VSTP was identified as the 'oldest trade union in Indonesia'.[58] In the second, it was noted that Semaun 'attempted to consolidate the position of the Communist Party, especially amongst workers' organisations' on returning to Indonesia.[59] In the index to Volume Six, which spanned the period from Japanese Occupation to 1977, four union organisations (one of which was the Communist SOBSI) were mentioned a total of six times, but none of the New Order trade unions were described.[60] As in Volume Five, the commentary on trade unionism in Volume Six was concentrated in the section on the PKI.[61] Here, it was noted that:

> In its efforts to gain control over labour, the PKI benefited from its status as one of the oldest, most experienced parties…*Serikat* [sic] *Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI),* the federation controlled by the Communists since 1946, was an effective

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[56] See for example R.M. Ali, *Pengantar Ilmu Sedjarah Indonesia* (Djakarta: Bhratara, 1961); Sudarjo Tjokrosisworo, *Sedjarah Kilat Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Solo: Kementerian Penerangan Dinas Provinsi Djawa-Tengah, 1948). Some other pre-New Order general histories ignored trade unions' contribution to the independence struggle and political life. See, for example, Partokoesoemo's summary of the section of the high school history curriculum dealing with the nationalist movement. His account began with the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905, but made no mention of the labour movement, despite having separate sections on universities, and the women's and youth movements associated with the nationalist movement. The PKI, along with 'other associations and parties…[with] different ideologies' were mentioned in a single paragraph. R. Alimoerni Partokoesoemo, *Riwajat Singkat Gerakan Nasional di Indonesia (1905-1950)* (Jogjakarta: 1950), 13.

[57] Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia V*, 4th ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1990), 198, 206.

[58] Ibid., 198.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia VI*, 4th ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1990), 603-617.

[61] Ibid., 366-375.

tool in labour actions. After 1961, the PKI began streamlining the SOBSI system, beginning with a three-year plan.[62]

Labour was next mentioned when *Kesatuan Buruh Marhaen* (KBM, Marhaen Workers' Union) was included in a list of PNI's mass organisations.[63] The PKI's 'failed' attempts to 'infiltrate and gain control' of the *Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* (PGRI, The Indonesian Teachers' Association) soon followed, while the subsequent formation of *PGRI Non-Vaksentral* was described in two paragraphs a few pages later.[64] A fifth reference to labour was made in a discussion of the PKI's attempt to infiltrate ABRI.[65] Finally, SOBSI was included in a list of the PKI's mass organisations.[66]

The history of the labour movement was not, then, easily located in the New Order's official national history. However, official accounts of labour or industrial relations history were routinely given in speeches, in the prefaces of collections of labour legislation, in trade union documents and in volumes on *Pancasila* Industrial Relations. These 'potted histories' contained a victor's history that demonstrated the extent to which New Order Indonesia's policy makers actively appropriated the history of trade unionism to help justify their ideological commitment to the organic, corporatist state structures of industrial relations and their rejection of 'political' unions. Consequently, New Order labour histories were largely uniform in their analysis and detail. The small variations between them depended on the level of detail they provided and on which early New Order sources they were based rather than on the time at which a particular account was written or the institutional affiliation (past or present) of the author.

The 'Old Order' histories with which these histories are compared in this chapter were also partial.[67] Like the New Order accounts, these histories were written

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[62] Ibid., 366.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 370.
[65] Ibid., 371-372.
[66] Ibid., 374.
[67] According to SOBSI's 1958 labour history, few essays or lectures were written about Indonesian labour history between 1945 and the time of publication. See Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 5. However, far more labour history was produced between 1945 and 1965 than after 1965.

to promote a particular political message about the nature of unionism and the role of political parties in labour movement organisations. The stance taken on issues depended as much on practical political imperatives as on ideological commitment, as demonstrated particularly in accounts written during the Guided Democracy period.[68] They were nevertheless considerably more detailed and varied than those written under the New Order, as demonstrated graphically in Appendix A.[69]

It should be noted here that it has been difficult to treat texts from either the pre-New Order or New Order periods systematically. The political sensitivity of labour issues under Suharto meant that many labour sources were destroyed, whilst access to those that remained is at best serendipitous because of the large proportion of materials held in private archives and the restrictive cataloguing practices of Indonesia's public institutions. While it is relatively easy to gain access to primary sources from the colonial period, Indonesia's National Archives makes only a small number of resources on labour in the Sukarno period available. Notably, the catalogues for these resources were only produced after the fall of Suharto. Even after the 1998, the archives' gatekeepers controlled these materials much more strictly than colonial documents on labour.[70] As a result of the sensitivity and limited availability of materials, the overwhelming majority of labour history theses written in Indonesian universities in recent decades have dealt with the colonial period, while Indonesian scholars who have written doctoral theses on labour history abroad in the 1990s were reluctant to focus on the Sukarno years (1945-1965).[71] Scholars of

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[68] Compare for example Sandra, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia* (Jakarta: Ministry of Labor, 1958) and Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

[69] The discussion of New Order labour historiography in this chapter is based on the sources cited in the tables included in Appendix A. Appendix B contains detailed summaries of four key texts, which should be read in conjunction with this section.

[70] McVey has made a similar observation about materials dealing with 1950s generally. See Ruth McVey, "The Case of the Disappearing Decade," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), 3.

[71] A number of undergraduate labour history theses on the colonial period have been completed at the University of Indonesia and Gadjah Mada University. At least one labour history Masters thesis was completed at Gadjah Mada, which has since been published. See Bambang Sulistyo, *Pemogokan Buruh: Sebuah Kajian Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1995). One exception to this trend of which I am aware is Max Pangemanan, "Serikat Buruh dan Politik di Indonesia (1945-1973)." (Unpublished Sarjana Politik Thesis, University of Indonesia, 1976). Published texts on labour history available during the New Order and after the fall of Suharto include Soewarsono, *Berbareng Bergerak: Sepenggal Riwayat dan Pemikiran Samaoen* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta, 2000); Bambang Sukawati, *Raja Mogok: R.M. Soerjopranoto* (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1983).

contemporary labour have only cited a narrow range of sources when compiling their historical overviews of labour before 1965.[72] These accounts generally rely heavily on secondary sources,[73] on a contemporary account first drafted by Everett Hawkins in 1957,[74] and on a small number of Indonesian sources, most notably Sandra and Tedjasukmana.[75] Another difficulty faced in the compilation of this chapter lay in the fact that few texts written in Indonesia either before or after the fall of Suharto fully acknowledged the sources from which they drew their information. Sometimes an author's choice of sources was obvious, as the structure of an earlier document was closely followed, or sections of sources used were reproduced verbatim.[76] However, the lack of attribution of sources meant that the texts used were identified by a large-scale survey of documents rather than a focused tracing of citations.

The Genealogy of Key Texts

The most influential account of labour history written in the New Order was authored by another prominent figure in early New Order industrial relations: Soekarno, the

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[72]   See for example Hikam, "The State, Grass-Roots Politics and Civil Society." 187-215; Saptari, "Rural Women to the Factories." 42-52. In Hikam's twenty-nine page survey of labour politics between 1945 and 1965, he cited Tedjasukmana twelve times and Hawkins ten times, while Ruth McVey's translation of Semaun is cited five times, SOBSI's 1960 constitution is cited twice, and Aidit and Sandra were cited once each. In Saptari's much briefer survey of state regulation of labour between 1905 and 1965, she cited Hawkins eleven times. Hadiz used a wider range of sources. He also cited Hawkins and Tedjasukmana heavily in his chapter on pre-New Order labour (making twenty-one references to Hawkins and seventeen to Tedjasukmana) but included references both to Hasibuan's 1968 dissertation and a considerable number of other primary written sources, namely works by Aidit, BKS-BUMIL, GASBIINDO, KBSI, KBM, Nasution, SOB-Pantjasila and SOBSI. Additionally, he drew on interviews he conducted with a number of government and union officials from the period in 1994-95. See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 39-58, 195-201.

[73]   Sources most often cited include Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963;* Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*. Secondary sources used most often for the colonial period were Ingleson, *In Search of Justice;* McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*.

[74]   A typescript of a revised draft of Hawkin's manuscript (dated 1959) which referred to a first draft written in 1957, is included in the Modern Indonesia Project microfilms (Modern Indonesia Project SE-3337 No.2297 Box 46). The manuscript was later published as Hawkins, "Indonesia"; Everett Hawkins, "Labour in Transition," in *Indonesia*, ed. Ruth McVey (New Haven: Yale University, 1963). The latter was reprinted in 1971 as Everett Hawkins, "Labour in Developing Countries: Indonesia," in *The Indonesian Economy:Selected Readings*, ed. Bruce Glassburner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

[75]   Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia;* Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement;* Tedjasukmana, "The Development of Labor Policy and Legislation in the Republic of Indonesia."

[76]   For example, some New Order accounts (discussed below) borrowed heavily from Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

Secretary General of the Central Committee of FBSI and a former government bureaucrat.[77] The various incarnations of his slim volume shaped much of New Order labour historiography. SPSI documents produced in 1986 and 1990, for example, contained an almost identical overview of Indonesia's labour history,[78] while similar accounts appeared in other official documents, where whole paragraphs were often reproduced verbatim.[79] Soekarno listed three major sources at the beginning of his history chapter: Sandra's *Sejarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia,* Trimurti's *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Nasional,* and a publication produced by the Natural Gas and Oil Mining Company in 1973.[80] The only other New Order account surveyed for this chapter that provided a list of sources was Simanjuntak's '*Perkembangan Organisasi Pekerja di Indonesia*'.[81] However, as the tables in Appendices A demonstrate, SPSI's 1995 account (and, consequently, Kertonegoro's 1999 account, which was heavily based on the SPSI volume) drew much of its data directly from Sandra's *Sejarah Pergerakan Buruh*

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[77] Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement;* Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila* (Bandung: Alumni, 1979).

[78] The text of KEP.04/MUSPIM 1/SPSI/XII/1986 is reproduced in Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Laporan Pertanggung-Jawaban Periode 1985-1990* (Jakarta: DPP-SPSI, 1990), 112-117. The Indonesian Workers' Doctrine is included in Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, "Rancangan Keputusan Musyawarah Nasional III Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia Nomor: Kep/Munas III/SPSI/1990 Tentang Doktrin Pekerja Indonesia," (Bogor: Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, 1990).

[79] See for example Government of Indonesia, *Himpunan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Ketenagakerjaan Departemen Tenaga Kerja R.I. dan Sejarah Perkembangan SPSI: Tahun 1994/1995--Governmental Regulation Collections on Labour, the Department of Manpower RI. and the History of SPSI Development [sic]* (Jakarta: YKKPI, 1994), 489-495; Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Musyawarah Nasional III Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia: Rancangan Keputusan tentang Doktrin Pekerja Indonesia* (Bogor: Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, 1990), 3-5.

[80] Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila*, 1.

[81] Simanjuntak drew on Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Hasil Munas Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia 1990* (Jakarta: Departemen Tenaga Kerja, 1992); Sudono, *FBSI Dahulu, Sekarang dan Yang Akan Datang;* Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila;* Payaman Simanjuntak, "Perkembangan Hubungan Industrial di Indonesia," *Manageman Bina Darma* 45 (1994); "The Development of Trade Unionism in Indonesia," *Indoline Newsletter* 1995. The government's submission to the US Office of the Trade Representative (which is not included in Appendices A and B) relied heavily on its own documents, including the 1985 version of its handbook on industrial relations, and on a 1962 version of Hawkins, "Indonesia." See Government of Indonesia, *Indonesian Government GSP Submission in Response to the Petition of June 2, 1992 and October 16, 1992*.

Indonesia and from Trimurti's 1975 lecture.[82] It should be noted here that Sandra, who had earlier written the spirited defence of vanguardist Leninism described in Chapter Three, wrote this relatively conservative history of unionism in 1961. He, like many other writers in the Guided Democracy period, appears to have been influenced by the political climate of the time—an influence that was particularly obvious in the later chapters of the second part of this volume.[83]

The table in Appendix A is a graphic comparative representation of eighteen labour histories written after Independence. The table provides a useful way to analyse trends in labour historiography. In some cases, it helps identify what sources a particular author used. In others, it highlights the links between ideology and historiography. The accounts compared are divided into four groups: accounts written by non-Indonesians, individual and institutional accounts written between 1945 and 1965, transitional accounts, and accounts written under the New Order. One text from each of the three Indonesian-authored groups is summarised in detail in Appendix B.[84]

The first section of the table in Appendix A includes works by Ingleson and Hawkins, who both wrote about Indonesian labour in their capacity as academics. Ingleson's history of unionism between 1908 and 1926 (written in 1986) is the most widely cited source on that period.[85] As noted earlier, Hawkins' short account (published in 1963 and again in 1971) has also been very influential.[86] The second group of accounts includes influential Indonesian-authored sources written before 1965, along with two institutional labour histories. Tedjasukmana's 1958 essay and Sandra's account of 1961 were the contemporaneous Indonesian-authored sources most often used in accounts of labour in the post-independence period written after

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[82]   Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka* (Jakarta: DPP-SPSI, 1995); Sentanoe Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja (Trade Unionism): Studi Kasus Indonesia dan Negara-Negara Industri* (Jakarta: Yayasan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia, 1999); Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia.*

[83]   See Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 115-154.

[84]   The following discussion is based on the information in Appendices A and B and a number of other texts from the 1945-1965 and post-1965 periods.

[85]   Ingleson, *In Search of Justice.*

[86]   Hawkins, "Indonesia"; Hawkins, "Labour in Transition"; Hawkins, "Labour in Developing Countries."

1965.[87] Tedjasukmana was the head of the Indonesian Labour Party and Minister for Labour in the Sukiman Cabinet (1951-52). His 1958 monograph was published during his PhD candidacy at Cornell University in the United States of America.[88] Sandra was associated with SOBSI. His 1961 volume was published as a study text for adult education centres. The volume, which has been widely quoted in academic studies of the Indonesian labour movement, was significantly different from the 1958 version of the same text.[89] The final individually-authored pre-1965 account included in the table is Aidit's 1952 history of the labour movement to 1926.[90] This account influenced both Sandra's 1958 volume and SOBSI's most lengthy history, which was also published in 1958.[91] The institutional histories included in this section were published by SOBSI, the union federation associated with the PKI, and GASBIINDO, the Muslim union federation with which Sudono was affiliated.

The third group of studies includes two transitional accounts written in the early New Order period. Hasibuan's doctoral thesis, written in 1968, presented a conservative case for the reconstruction of the labour movement.[92] In contrast, Trimurti's 1975 account, which attempted to reconcile her own left-labourist position with the rhetoric of the New Order nevertheless has more in common with pre-1965 accounts than with other New Order histories.[93] The final group of studies contains the 'potted histories' of the New Order. The first is Soekarno's *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement,* the text that defined the boundaries of New Order labour historiography.[94] The next four sources are institutional accounts. The first SPSI account, published in 1986, drew heavily on Soekarno.[95] The second, published

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[87] Sandra, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia;* Tedjasukmana, *The Political Character of the Indonesian Trade Union Movement*.

[88] Tedjasukmana, "The Development of Labor Policy and Legislation in the Republic of Indonesia."

[89] Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia*; Sandra, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

[90] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

[91] Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.

[92] Hasibuan, "Political Unionism and Economic Development in Indonesia."

[93] Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional*. Trimurti's lecture is also summarised in Appendix B.

[94] Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*. Soekarno's text is also described in Appendix B.

[95] The text of KEP.04/MUSPIM 1/SPSI/XII/1986, which includes this potted history, is reproduced in Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Laporan Pertanggung-Jawaban Periode 1985-1990*, 112-117.

in 1995, used Sandra's 1961 volume and Trimurti's account of 1975.[96] The Government of Indonesia's bilingual collection of labour regulations and labour history, published in 1994, relied directly on Soekarno, while the Department of Manpower's 1997 account supplemented the events identified by Soekarno with details of the unions that survived 1965.[97] Department of Manpower officials wrote the final three accounts. Simanjuntak's 1998 account was a direct translation of the Department of Manpower's 1997 account.[98] Shamad's 1995 account, which was later translated into English, gave details of most of the events mentioned by Soekarno, but also included a number of references to strikes.[99] The final labour history, written by Kertonegoro in 1999, was almost identical to SPSI's history of 1995.[100]

Rewriting Labour History

A systematic comparison of these texts revealed a significant pattern of 'rewriting' in New Order labour historiography. Authors of Old Order accounts ignored some events that did not suit their partisan purposes. However, they generally promoted their particular version of events through their analysis rather than by omission. In contrast, the 'potted histories' of the New Order period actively censored events that did not support the narrative themes of the New Order (See Appendix A).[101]

A close reading of New Order accounts of the colonial period shows their shared narrative of the labour movement's genesis in the nationalist movement. This narrative was supported in their listing of unions. While a number of New Order accounts included details of Dutch unions formed before 1910—which were not

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[96] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*.

[97] Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Manpower, 1997); Government of Indonesia, *Himpunan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Ketenagakerjaan Departemen Tenaga Kerja R.I. dan Sejarah Perkembangan SPSI*.

[98] Payaman Simanjuntak, "Perkembangan Organisasi Pekerja di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pusat Studi Indonesia* 9, No. 1 (1998). Simanjuntak may have authored the Department of Manpower account.

[99] Yunus Shamad, *Hubungan Industrial di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bina Sumber Daya Manusia, 1995); Yunus Shamad, *Industrial Relations in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bina Sumber Daya Manusia, 1997). Compare these accounts with Yunus Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," *Tripartit Nasional* 32 (1992).

[100] Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja*.

[101] For example, New Order accounts highlighted SOBSI's affiliation with the World Federation of Trade Unions, but failed to mention the links of a number of Muslim unions to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

included in Soekarno's account—almost none of the Dutch unions formed after this date were listed, even though they were described in detail by Sandra, their major alternative source. These accounts listed a number of other influential unions formed in the late colonial period, but did not discuss the political affiliations of individual unions. Instead, they concentrated on the communists' role in the failure of the PPKB in 1919. With the exception of SPSI's 1995 account and Kertonegoro's 1999 adaptation of it, none of the New Order accounts mentioned strikes before 1925.[102] A number of New Order accounts followed Soekarno's lead and omitted the 1927-1945 period altogether. Accounts that referred to that period (primarily SPSI's 1995 account and Kertonegoro) drew directly on Sandra. They noted the communist connections of SKBI and the subsequent formation of the socio-economically focused *Persatuan Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri* (PVPN, Federation of Civil Servants' Unions) and its rival, the *Persatuan Serikat Sekerja Indonesia* (PSSI, Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions); the loosening of government restrictions on unionism in 1940 and the PVPN's subsequent promotion of private sector unionism, resulting in the formation of *Gabungan Serikat-Serikat Sekerdja Partikelir Indonesia* (GASPI, Association of Indonesian Private Sector Unions).

The New Order historiography of the post-independence period was even more uniform. It dealt with the formation of the BBI and its subsequent split between the Indonesian Labour Party and GASBI, but not the subsequent split in GASBI, which would have contradicted the New Order's assertion that socio-economically focused unions were free from political ties. It also emphasised the negative effects of SOBSI's communist affiliations and the 'liberalisation' of union registration under Ministerial Regulation No.90/1955, before noting approvingly the formation of BKS–BUMIL; the government-sponsored attempt to form OPPI which, it was argued, was foiled by SOBSI; and the subsequent formation of *Sekretariat Bersama Perjuangan Buruh Pelaksana Trikora* (SEKBER BURUH, the Joint Secretariat of the Workers Struggle for the Return of West Irian). Some accounts noted SOBSI's involvement in the events of 1965, whilst most commented on the banning of communist organisations in the same year. Whilst Soekarno's account made no mention of the formation of individual unions or union federations, SPSI and

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[102]   Shamad described strikes leading up to the Communist rebellion of 1926-27.

Kertonegoro listed the bulk of those who survived the events of 1965. A number of other accounts mentioned a small number of these unions, most notably the *Partai Murba*-linked *Gabungan Serikat Buruh Revolusioner Indonesia* (GASBRI, Federation of Indonesian Revolutionary Labour Unions),[103] *Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia* (SBII, Indonesian Islamic Labour Union) and *Sarikat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia* (SARBUMUSI, Indonesian Muslim Workers' Union). However, SOBSI was the only union abolished after 1965 that was listed.

The patterns of New Order labour historiography demonstrate a conscious rewriting of labour history in support of a single vehicle of labour representation. That historiography concentrated on the political nature of Indonesian labour unions and their subsequent failure to promote their members' interests. It highlighted failed attempts at unification and the threats that communism and liberalism posed to Indonesia in order to promote a non-political form of unionism based on a neo-revisionist reading of unions' purpose and the indigenous philosophy of *Pancasila.*

The Themes of New Order Labour Historiography

The themes of New Order Labour Historiography reflected these concerns. According to New Order labour historians, the inherently political nature of Indonesia's labour movement was a product of its early ties to the nationalist movement and its exposure to 'outside influences' both domestically and abroad. The potted histories argued that unions were caught between liberalism and communism, and were unable to achieve unity because of their links to political parties before the New Order returned Indonesia to *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution. These factors distracted unions from their 'true' (socio-economic) purpose, which meant that members' interests—and the national interest—were neglected. FBSI was portrayed as the product of careful consideration of the past, the subsequent learning of 'history's lessons' and the 'pure and consistent' implementation of *Pancasila*, the ideology said to embody the 'national personality' and culture of Indonesia. Its foundation in *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution meant 'there [was] no reason to doubt FBSI's desire and determination' to

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[103] The 'Revolutionary' ambitions of this federation were masked in the accounts, as only union acronyms were used.

implement *Pancasila* and the Constitution in 'all aspects of its organisational life' in contrast to the 'old days' when it was believed that:

> Workers and employers did not just have different interests, they were in conflict. As they were oriented towards the theory of class struggle, workers, as the proletarian class, had to struggle to protect and maintain their interests in the face of the entrepreneurs as the capitalist class. Conversely, the employers had to protect and defend their interests in the face of the workers. Consequently, the relationship between the workers and the employers (entrepreneurs) were mutually confrontational and contradictory.[104]

When political parties and other labour intellectuals were eliminated under the New Order, trade unions were 'freed' to unify and resume their rightful place as defenders of workers' socio-economic interests and national well-being.

The indigenist, corporatist emphasis on the historical impulse towards unification and the revisionist theme of socio-economically based unionism were both evident in New Order labour historiography, which was dominated by a narrative of discontinuity. On the one hand, it emphasised the repeated failures to unite the politically divided union movement of the late colonial period (1908-1945) and Sukarno's Presidency (1945-1965). On the other, it heralded the establishment of a single union federation focused on national development and the socio-economic interests of workers in 1973. When describing the development of labour in the colonial period, New Order texts adopted a dual, sometimes contradictory narrative: they emphasised the subordination of the labour movement to the nationalist movement as a whole (incorporating Communism, Nationalism and Islam), whilst seeking to establish a dichotomy between the desire for unity amongst socio-economically oriented unions and the divisive influence of the communists.[105] New Order accounts continued to emphasise the dangers of politicisation and its effects on attempts to achieve unity within the labour movement in their representations of unionism in the period between 1945 and 1965. Again, they contained a dual narrative about this period. On one hand, they continued to argue that a minority of

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[104] Moertopo, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila Sebagai Manifestasi Falsafah Pancasila di Bidang Perburuhan," 33-34.

[105] As Ingleson has shown, the revolutionary communist and revisionist Muslim unions of the period all pursued both political and socio-economic ends. See Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*.

'pure' trade unions, with the support of the military and later the government, kept hopes of unification alive, if unrealised. On the other, they condemned all unions for falling under the influence of political parties.

Divided by Politics

According to the New Order accounts, the cumulative effects of the labour movement's origin in the nationalist movement and its susceptibility to outside influences and ideologies meant that the 'cherished' desire of labour to unite, which had existed since the 'very beginning', was repeatedly frustrated by the political ambition of the leadership and the interests of the political parties with which deviant unions were aligned. This was the only New Order theme with which pre-New Order accounts at least partly agreed. In accounts written before 1965, the communists and non-communists alike claimed credit for unificatory efforts. For example, Aidit presented long lists of communist-initiated attempts to unify, while GASBIINDO maintained that, 'it was only with the careful preparations' of Suryopranoto and Sosrokardono—'both from SI [*Sarekat Islam*]'—that the PPKB was formed in 1920.[106] Communists and non-communists blamed each other, or the colonial government, for the failure of such efforts.[107]

In his doctoral thesis, Hasibuan argued that all unions were political in the 1910s and early 1920s, and that the 'only difference between a revolutionary and non-revolutionary union [was] in the method adopted to change the status quo'. Leaders of radical unions such as the VSTP 'believed in revolution and revolutionary methods of furthering not only the unions' cause but also the nationalist cause in general'. *Sarekat Islam*, on the other hand, 'believed in evolutionary methods in furthering its cause'. At the root of this difference was a more essential divide, which reflected 'the divergent political philosophies of their parent organisations'. It was this divide that caused the split in *Persatuan Pergerakan Kaum Buruh,* (PPKB,

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[106]   Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 39; Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 37-41; Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 31.
[107]   Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 48; Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO,* 31.

Workers' Movement Union), described by Hasibuan as 'a real blow to the labor movement'.[108]

In New Order accounts written after 1973, failure to unify was also blamed on all politicised unions. However, unlike Hasibuan, New Order authors asserted that a few trade unions had remained true to the vision of economic trade unionism throughout labour's turbulent history. These 'true' unions were most visible in descriptions of the splits of 1920 and 1945, and, of course, after 1966.[109] The New Order accounts argued that unions established by *Sarekat Islam* were divided because the Marxist trade unions, under the leadership of Semaun, left the umbrella group.[110] Likewise, they claimed that *Barisan Buruh Indonesia* (BBI, Indonesian Labour Front), the national labour front formed immediately after Independence, was subsequently split by the supporters of political unionism.[111] Specific criticisms were also aimed at SOBSI for its involvement in the 1948 communist uprising at Madiun—a link that was seldom emphasised in pre-New Order accounts. In some New Order accounts, SOBSI's involvement in the Madiun Affair was directly juxtaposed with its alleged involvement in the events of 1965.[112] They claimed that

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[108]   Hasibuan, "Political Unionism and Economic Development in Indonesia." 19-22.

[109]   The *Barisan Buruh Indonesia* (BBI, Indonesian Labour Front) was a particular focus. Shamad, for example, argued that its unifying function was destroyed 'because one group, who wanted to be active in politics, formed the Indonesian Labour Party (PBI), while another group established the Amalgamated Trade Unions of Indonesia (GASBI), which was only active in the socio-economic field' Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," 20. This interpretation is echoed in Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 2-3; Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja;* Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 14.

[110]   See for example Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," 20.

[111]   Soekarno's formulation of the 1945 split is reproduced verbatim or almost verbatim in all New Order labour histories examined in this chapter.

[112]   See for example Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia;* Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja;* Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, "Rancangan Keputusan Musyawarah Nasional III Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia Nomor: Kep/Munas III/SPSI/1990 Tentang Doktrin Pekerja Indonesia"; Simanjuntak, "Perkembangan Organisasi Pekerja di Indonesia." Almost exactly the same description of the Madiun Affair appeared without an immediate reference to 1965 in a number of other accounts, although in most of these, too, the link was ultimately made between 1948 and 1965. See Government of Indonesia, *Himpunan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Ketenagakerjaan Departemen Tenaga Kerja R.I. dan Sejarah Perkembangan SPSI: Tahun 1994/1995;* Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka;* Shamad, *Hubungan Industrial di Indonesia;* Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement;* Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila;* Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, "Doktrin Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SPSI): Giri Sapta Wiwara Praja (23 Desember 1986)," in *Laporan Pertanggung-Jawaban Periode 1985-1990* (Jakarta: Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, 1990).

when the government 'suggested' that *Organisasi Persatuan Pekerdja Indonesia,* (OPPI, United Indonesian Workers' Organisation) be formed during the Guided Democracy period, the suggestion was well received by the majority of the labour movement but was undermined by 'SOBSI/PKI'.[113] In 1965, Shamad explained, 'history repeated itself with the PKI's 30 September Revolt, when SOBSI once more was the main supporter'.[114] The continued politicisation of the labour movement meant, according to New Order authors, that attempts made by trade unions to unite could only succeed after the birth of the New Order and the subsequent simplification of the socio political structure.[115] The political re-organisation of the early 1970s was predictably interpreted as demonstrating—in line with New Order ideology—that 'trade unions were no longer tied to or dependent on political parties; they were free to determine their own basis, objectives and policy'.[116] This new freedom was 'used by the leaders of the unions to realise the unification of all Indonesia's workers…[after they] met for consultations and reached a consensus'.[117]

The Child of the Nationalist Movement

Most labour histories written between 1945 and 1965 identified the formation of the *Staatspoorbond* (SS Bond, Railway Workers' Union) in 1905 as the beginning of the labour movement. As was the case with most aspects of pre-New Order labour history, there was a range of interpretations of the significance of 1905. Communist writers emphasised the working class' position at the forefront of the Indonesian revolution, claiming that 'only after the workers had begun to organise themselves in 1905, the aristocratic intellectuals organised themselves in 1908 (Boedi Oetomo) and

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[113] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 18-19. The failed OPPI initiative featured prominently in all New Order accounts.

[114] Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," 20.

[115] Sofiati Mukadi, "The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies," *Indoline Newsletter* 1, No. 12 (1992): 7.

[116] Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja*, 16-17.

[117] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 21. A second, less prominent stream in New Order accounts of division highlights the problems of having more than one trade union in a workplace. This, according to Batubara, 'made it difficult for them to work together'. This resulted in competition between them and a 'failure to fight for their members [sic] interests'. Batubara, *Manpower Problems and Policy in Indonesia*, 76-77. Simanjuntak agreed, arguing that history 'shows that many existing workers' unions in a company will only make themselves weak…[and] their interest could not be fulfilled' Payaman Simanjuntak, *Issues in Industrial Relations in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Manpower, 1992), 12-13..

the merchants in 1911 (Sarekat Dagang Islam)'.[118] In contrast, an article in the Labour Ministry's bulletin *Tindjauan Masalaah Perburuhan* associated the formation of the SS Bond in 1905 with the Japanese victory over Russia (part of the 'Eastern awakening').[119] There were some exceptions to the general acceptance of 1905 as the year in which the Indonesian labour movement began. Sandra's 1961 volume identified 1908 as the true start of the organised labour movement, as did Sentot, who emphasised unions' political nature in an account that has more in common with New Order histories than with the majority of pre-New Order accounts.[120] Semaun, on the other hand, nominated 1917, when the VSTP 'was transformed…into an Indonesian union' as the beginning of the indigenous labour movement. However, it is apparent that Semaun was primarily interested in the 'proletarian' credentials of particular unions rather than the labour movement as a whole.[121]

Conversely, the overwhelming majority of New Order labour histories located the beginning of the indigenous unionism after the formation of the conservative nationalist organisation, *Boedi Oetomo*, in 1908 in order to emphasise its chronologically and functionally derivative nature.[122] Unions, Sudono said, had been 'established in Indonesia merely to strengthen the national independence movement'—unlike the trade unions in Europe and 'other developed countries', which 'from their very beginnings, were fighting for improved living, working, and

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[118] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 37; Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 33-34; Serikat Buruh Gula, *Lahir dan Perkembangan S.B.G.* (Surabaja: Serikat Buruh Gula, 1956), 5. See also Sandra, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia;* "The Indonesian Trade Union," *The Voice of Free Indonesia* 16, No. 11 May (1946): 3. A copy of the latter was obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[119] Chronos, "Gerakan Buruh dalam Waktu Pendjadjahan," *Tindjauan Masaalah Perburuhan* 1, No. 4 (1948). Trimurti favoured this interpretation. Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional*. A copy of the article by Chronos was obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[120] Sandra, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia;* Sentot, "The Labour Movement in Indonesia," *The Voice of Free Indonesia* 1 (1945). A copy of this article was obtained from the collection of Jan Elliott.

[121] Semaun, "The Indonesian Movement in the Netherlands Indies," *Indonesia* 1, No. April (1966): 59.

[122] Ingleson identified 1908 as the beginning of the Indonesian labour movement, but argued that unions were not 'merely appendages of the wider nationalist movement'. Rather, he emphasised that many workers later involved in the nationalist movement had their 'first experience in a modern organization' when they served on the local executive of a labour union was their, and many were later drawn into nationalist activities through their prior involvement in a labour union. Ingleson, *In Search of Justice*, 4-5.

social conditions'.[123] Sudono related the political character of the Indonesian labour movement to Indonesia's economic structure; specifically, the state's position as the majority employer and its refusal to allow its employees to negotiate collective labour agreements. This, he argued, left unions with little opportunity to become involved in collective bargaining—their 'most important function'—and no incentive to concentrate on socio-economic issues.[124] Shamad also noted the subordinate position of industrial relations history to the history of the national struggle,[125] arguing explicitly in a later work that a truly significant national workers' movement (*mempunyai bobot*) only began after the national awakening in 1908.[126] Sofiati Mukadi echoed these sentiments, noting the emergence of trade unions 'along with' the nationalist movement.[127] Likewise, the Department of Manpower quickly subordinated the significance of trade unions—which it maintained had 'existed since the beginning of Dutch colonialism'—to the formation of nationalist organisations such as Boedi Oetomo, Serikat Dagang Islam, the PKI and the PNI.[128] While Kertonegoro began with a list of unions established by the Dutch, which gave indigenous workers 'the idea of establishing their own indigenous unions', he too, soon shifted to the 'birth' of Boedi Oetomo and Sarekat Islam, whose establishment, he argued, had 'a strong influence on the growth of the trade union movement'.[129]

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[123] Sudono, *The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies*, 42-43.

[124] Ibid., 43. In contrast, Semaun maintained in 1921 that 'purely political strikes have never yet occurred' and that while the strikes of 1916-1921 were influenced by the 'the unbearably arbitrary behaviour of the Dutch factory administrators', and exhibited 'a national-political character', they were all primarily economic. See Semaun, "The Indonesian Movement in the Netherlands Indies."

[125] Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," 19.

[126] Shamad, *Hubungan Industrial di Indonesia*.

[127] Deputy Secretary General of SPSI. See Mukadi, "The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies," 7.

[128] Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*.

[129] The foreword to Kertonegoro's 1999 account was written by Fahmi Idris, the first of a series of Ministers for Manpower in three years after the fall of Suharto. Kertonegoro clearly had time to consider his manuscript after the fall of Suharto, because his historical overview includes a section entitled "*Era Reformasi*", which accounted for just less than one-tenth of the entire chapter. Most of the section on *Reformasi* dealt with the reasons for Suharto's resignation (the term used is *berhentinya*) and political reform, including the birth of some 120 new political parties by the end of 1998. Developments noted which pertain strictly to labour include the passing of ILO Convention No.87 and the growth of trade unions (fourteen of which were registered with the Department of Manpower by the end of 1998). No comments were made about the potential politicisation of these unions. See Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja (Trade Unionism)*.

The majority of pre-New Order authors were supportive of the trade unions' involvement in the nationalist movement in the colonial and early post-colonial period, although the revisionist Sjahrir was more cautious, arguing that Indonesia's unions had run the risk of being submerged in, or dependent on the nationalist movement, and neglecting the elimination of capitalism by devoting too much energy to the nationalist cause.[130] Hadi made a stronger claim reminiscent of the revisionist themes in New Order accounts—that unions were 'the foot soldiers (*tentara pembantu*) of the political parties in the colonial period, and must now 'be directed towards the improvement of the livelihoods of its members'.[131] In contrast, there was some tension in New Order interpretations of the relationship between the labour and nationalist movements in the New Order documents. On one hand, links between the nationalist and labour movements were interpreted as a disadvantage. Simanjuntak, for example, argued that political unionism and the neglect of the socio-economic purpose of trade unions were direct legacies of labour's involvement in the independence struggle.[132] Sudono and Shamad concurred.[133] On the other hand, however, most New Order labour historians emphasised labour's positive involvement in the nationalist struggle (when unions 'held hands' with the nationalist forces) as a precursor to FBSI's willingness to share the burdens of development during the New Order period.[134]

Caught Between Liberalism and Communism

New Order accounts echoed the rhetoric of Guided Democracy on the subject of foreign influence.[135] Although opponents' ideologies (and the manner in which those

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[130] Sjahrir, *Pergerakan Sekerdja*, 23-25.
[131] Hadi, *Sarikat Buruh*, x.
[132] Simanjuntak was another very prominent Department of Manpower bureaucrat, who, for part of his career, headed the Industrial Relations division. Simanjuntak, *Issues in Industrial Relations in Indonesia*, 12-13.
[133] Shamad, *Industrial Relations in Indonesia;* Sudono, *The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies.*
[134] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka;* Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila.*
[135] See the description of the SOKSI's position in the final section of Chapter Three. Although the links between the structures of Guided Democracy and New Order Indonesia were downplayed, a number of the New Order histories surveyed for this chapter dealt with the Guided Democracy period and the early years of the New Order before FBSI was formed in the same section.

ideologies arrived in Indonesia) were sometimes the subject of discussion in earlier pre-New Order accounts, little negative comment was made about the influence of foreign ideologies in general. In contrast, New Order labour histories rejected all foreign influence. They argued that unions were almost irrevocably scarred by 'free-fight' liberalism and the international cancer of communism, at a time when labour relations 'was based on liberal democracy and the class struggle of Lenin and Marx' which were 'not in line with the *Pancasila* spirit and environment or the national character'.[136]

Claims about the indigeneity of the New Order's system were presented as the answer to Indonesia's industrial relations problems all through the New Order accounts surveyed for this study, because '*Pancasila* Industrial Relations is adopted from ancient Indonesian soil and culture'.[137] Unions were 'susceptible to foreign political, economic and ideological influences' which '[could] be traced in the way of thinking, in the pattern of analysis and in the approach to industrial relations problems'.[138] Cosmas Batubara (the Minister for Manpower in the late 1980s and early 1990s) concurred, declaring that *Pancasila* Industrial Relations had corrected the 'wide liberalism of the past which [had] led to contradictions, and problems within an enterprise or company'.[139] Shamad blamed Semaun, who introduced 'industrial relations based on class struggle' in addition to the 'liberal' system already in operation, for the politicisation of Indonesian unions. He too, gave details about the problems of an industrial relations system 'based upon Liberalism as well as Marxism', noting the 'increasingly important role' of the Communist party,[140] and

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[136] Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional, *Analisa dan Evaluasi Hukum Tidak Tertulis Tentang Hukum Kebiasaan di Bidang Hukum Perburuhan Sejak Tahun 1945*, 112-13.

[137] Putro Sumantono, "Participation of Workers/Employees through Industrial Relations based on Pancasila," (Jakarta: APINDO, 1984).

[138] S. Hardjomiguno, "Pancasila as a New Approach to Industrial Relations," in *Innovative Approaches to Industrial Relations in ASEAN (The Collected Papers of the ASEAN Symposium on Innovative Approaches to Industrial Relations, Pattaya, 4-8 November 1985)* (Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1985), 26-27.

[139] Batubara, *Manpower Problems and Policy in Indonesia*, 76-77.

[140] Shamad, *Industrial Relations in Indonesia*. Criticisms of SOBSI often revolved around its involvement in various communist uprisings—a link that is seldom emphasised in pre-New Order accounts. See, for example, Shamad, who claims that 'SOBSI was the main supporter (*pendukung utama*) of the Madiun Revolt of 1948'. Its spectre, having 'emerged again,' grew as the PKI gained influence under Guided Democracy. Finally, 'history repeated itself with the PKI's 30th September Revolt, when SOBSI once more was the main supporter'. Shamad, "Sejarah Lahirnya Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," 20. Similar statements appear in Kertonegoro. Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja* and Sukarno MPA, *Pembaharuan Gerakan Buruh di*

the 'antagonistic and confrontational practices of industrial relations' not only amongst communist unions, but 'also by other workers' unions with a view to maintaining their prestige in the eyes of their members' during Guided Democracy, despite the reinstatement of the 1945 Constitution.[141] Sukijat, a member of the FBSI executive who had formerly been a government bureaucrat, used much more colourful language to describe the negative effects of foreign ideology. In the past unions had been, he declared, 'devoured by the penetrative Marxist doctrine which infiltrated parts of the body of the Indonesian workers and, led by SOBSI/PKI, succeeded in dominating the Indonesian labour movement'.[142]

Susceptible to Outside Influences

From the beginning of the twentieth century, many of the union leaders simultaneously held executive positions in political organisations or parties. In the labour histories of the Old Order, the strength of the labour movement's political connections between 1945 and 1965 were always acknowledged, although interpretations of them differed. While PKI accounts emphasised and applauded the links between the Party and the unions, a range of other interpretations were given. For example, in 1946, an article in *The Voice of Free Indonesia* canvassed both the benefits of trade union cooperation with political parties and the negative impact of struggles for political leadership on the labour movement.[143] GASBIINDO observed that even those unions who claimed to be independent had been influenced by the political streams (Nationalism, Islam and Marxism) of the time. However, it did not

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Indonesia dan Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila, 3. In a Department of Manpower account, the PKI was simply listed along with other parties in section on the colonial period. However, SOBSI was quickly established as an enemy in the post-colonial section because of its affiliation to the PKI and its involvement in the both the Madiun Affair and the 'the abortive coup movement of the 30th of September 1965'. Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 2.

[141] Shamad, *Industrial Relations in Indonesia*.

[142] Sukijat, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila sebagai Wahana Ketenangan dan Stabilitas Sosial Ekonomi untuk Pembangunan Nasional," in *Hubungan Pemerintah, Pengusaha dan Buruh dalam Era Pembangunan I*, ed. Suntjojo (Jakarta: Yayasan Marga Jaya, 1980), 48. This text was reproduced in Sudono, ed., *Perburuhan Dari Masa ke Masa*. Sumantono makes a similar claim in Sumantono, "Participation of Workers/Employees through Industrial Relations based on Pancasila."

[143] "The Indonesian Trade Union," 4.

suggest these influences were particularly damaging.[144] The PBKA, on the other hand, emphasised its own on-going commitment to non-political trade unionism—maintaining that, since the beginning, it has always 'operated in the socio-economic field to improve the lot of its members and workers generally', and has not sought to be involved in the affairs of state or be 'controlled or dominated by a particular Political Party's ideology'.[145] Perhaps the strongest critique of the involvement of outsiders in the union leadership was made in Hasibuan's transitional account. Hasibuan argued that depoliticisation of unions was 'a greater and more complex problem than just educating union leaders about the inconsistency of political unionism with economic development or union interest'. He maintained that the situation demanded government regulations requiring that 'In no case should it be allowed that outsiders hold leadership positions in union or federation'.[146]

Despite inconsistencies in its own practices, New Order labour rhetoric and the labour histories written during the period unanimously condemned unions' subordination to political parties.[147] New Order authors' stance on the relationship between political parties (institutional outsiders) and trade unions was most plainly stated in their accounts of the period between 1949 and 1965 (the 'liberal' and Guided Democracy periods). According to SPSI, and to other authors of the New Order accounts examined here, the union movement became committed to the political path between 1949-1959. New Order accounts attribute union politicisation in part to the passing of Ministerial Decision No.90/1955—a regulation not mentioned in any of the Old Order accounts described here—which made it 'too

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144   Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 36.
145   Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api, "Laporan Kerdja 3 Tahun, Nopember 1955 sampai achir 1958 untuk Kongres ke V," Ie-9.
146   Hasibuan, "Political Unionism and Economic Development in Indonesia." 346.
147   Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 2-3; Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja*, 13-14; Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 15; Mukadi, "The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies," 7; Cosmas Batubara, "Yang Terpenting Membangun Sistem," *Prisma* 21, No.3 (1992):71-72. The term *onderbouw* was in common use before the New Order, but assumed a far more pejorative sense during the New Order. According to Anderson, this was quite common in the period after 1957, during which a new vocabulary was established, but older words also acquired 'a 'satanic' reversed meaning'. Anderson, "The Languages of Indonesian Politics," 106. The last chapter of Soekarno's *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement* demonstrated that the government's position on the exclusion of intellectuals from the union was highly contested at the beginning of the New Order. See Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*.

easy' to form unions.[148] They did so in order to juxtapose Old Order liberalism (as well as communism) with New Order anti-communism and anti-liberal corporatism. 'History shows', claimed Simanjuntak, that unions 'were often very weak to organise and to struggle for their own interest due to the commitment with one of the political parties' [sic].[149] It was not until they were 'freed from the domination of political parties' by the New Order that they were able 'to determine their own basis, objectives and policies'.[150]

Neglectful of Members' Interests and the National Interest

Many pre-New Order accounts emphasised the importance of the economic struggle within the necessarily dual economic and political objectives of Indonesian trade unionism. Although communist accounts emphasised the political aspects of strikes, they almost always included lists of economic demands—usually before any political comment.[151] Non-communist unions also highlighted the historical socio-economic achievements of Indonesia's colonial movement.[152] In contrast, the majority of New Order authors were silent on the economic credentials of the trade unions. Instead, they emphasised unions' historical neglect of the 'socio economic interest' of workers.[153] Political trade unionism left unions 'too weak to fight for the interests of their members',[154] leaving 'the main objective of improving the welfare of workers and of their families' unattended.[155] The national interest was also deemed to have suffered through politicisation of the trade union struggle, because:

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[148] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 15.

[149] Simanjuntak, *Issues in Industrial Relations in Indonesia*, 12-13.

[150] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 21.

[151] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 52-54; Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, "General Report of the Central Bureau of SOBSI Delivered at the SOBSI National Conference September 28, 1952," (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, 1952), 7-9.

[152] Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 26.

[153] Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*, 15; Simanjuntak, *Issues in Industrial Relations in Indonesia*, 12-13; Mukadi, "The Indonesian Trade Union Movement and its Policies," 7; Batubara, "Yang Terpenting Membangun Sistem," 71-72.

[154] Batubara, *Manpower Problems and Policy in Indonesia*, 76-77.

[155] Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 2-3.

> Development and the economic life of the Indonesian People was greatly influenced by the patterns of struggle of the Marxist workers, who consciously caused contradictions in the life of the Indonesian people and strove to create a chaotic situation in the economic field in support of the political struggle of the communists.[156]

According to New Order accounts the formation of FBSI brought a renewed commitment to 'workers' socio-economic struggle' in a way that did not 'exclusively serve the interests of their own group'. This commitment was possible because unionists made the interests of national development their own.[157]

Conclusion

In Moertopo's master plan, unions and other functional groups were charged with the task of ensuring development could be achieved, not as oppositional associations that placed the interests of their members over that of the society as a whole. Yet the events and documents surrounding the formation of the FBSI suggest that the tenets of revisionism were still influential. The comparative analysis of New Order labour histories and histories written between 1945 and 1965 in this chapter showed that New Order labour history was a 'victor's history' written to support the New Order's corporatist system of labour relations, but it also confirmed the ongoing influence of revisionism. The economic interests of workers were not denied in this historiography. They were subordinated, however, to the national interest in the New Order's program to renovate the labour movement. NGOs' position in the labour movement in subsequent decades was defined against the results of that renovation.

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[156] Sukijat, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila sebagai Wahana Ketenangan dan Stabilitas Sosial Ekonomi untuk Pembangunan Nasional," 48.

[157] Ali Moertopo, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila Sebagai Manifestasi Falsafah Pancasila di Bidang Perburuhan," Ibid; Payaman Simanjuntak, "Manpower Problems and Government Policies," in *Indonesia Assessment 1993: Labour: Sharing in the Benefits of Growth?*, ed. Chris Manning and Joan Hardjono (Canberra: Research School for Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1993); Sukijat, "Hubungan Perburuhan Pancasila sebagai Wahana Ketenangan dan Stabilitas Sosial Ekonomi untuk Pembangunan Nasional," 48.

CHAPTER 5

No Place for Outsiders

Unions had a double identity in New Order labour rhetoric. On one hand, they were deemed to be 'by, for and of' workers in the revisionist tradition. On the other, they were part of an organic, corporatist whole. The relative strength of these corporatist and revisionist elements shifted throughout the New Order period in response to the changing fortunes of particular individuals in the government, the bureaucracy, the military and the union; changes in the international political climate and Indonesia's exposure to the world economy; and the strength of domestic opposition.[1] However, there remained no place for outsiders in the organisation of labour. This chapter outlines the limits of corporatism and analyses official statements about organised opposition to its labour policy in order to demonstrate the links between official labour discourse and the position of labour NGOs in New Order Indonesia.

The Limits of New Order Labour Corporatism

As noted in the previous chapter, the accommodation of revisionist principles within the New Order's corporatist system of labour relations was achieved by a series of compromises in the initial formulation of New Order labour policy. Moertopo tempered his corporatist vision by recognising workers' collective right to pursue their own socio-economic interests. Conversely, the non-communist union leaders who survived the 1965 purges acceded to the effective dissolution of their unions and the promotion of national development as a union objective. These compromises meant that a number of important contradictions persisted in the definition of FBSI's constituency, the duties of unions and workers, and the involvement of non-worker

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[1] For a tabular overview of labour developments from 1965-1995, see Chris Manning, *Indonesian Labour in Transition: An East Asian Success Story?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 204-205. For a detailed account of unionism during the New Order period, see Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 59-109, 157-182.

outsiders in the labour movement. These contradictions influenced both the operation of FBSI and the terms in which opposition to FBSI was expressed.

Shifts in the balance between corporatist and revisionist themes over time were reflected in FBSI's rhetoric and structure and practice. Initially, revisionist influences were quite strong.[2] The corporatist elements in New Order labour policy were most exclusionary in the early-mid 1980s during Admiral Sudomo's tenure as Minister for Manpower; labour corporatism reached its peak in 1985 when Sudomo replaced the FBSI with the SPSI—a single, unitary trade union.[3] The restructure caused considerable friction within the SPSI between those who supported it, including Imam Soedarwo, and those who did not, including Agus Sudono.[4] Ultimately, Sudono (who had chaired FBSI since its inception) was replaced by Soedarwo. Some other unionists left to pursue alternative avenues of labour organising. These included Saut Aritonang, one of the founders of SBM-SK, and Tarmono, who, with support from Haruno and others who remained in SPSI, established YBM.[5]

The trend towards exclusionary corporatism was partially reversed from the late 1980s with the appointment of Cosmas Batubara as Minister for Manpower.[6]

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[2] Hadiz reported that many labour leaders at the time were optimistic that a 'relatively independent' labour movement could be developed within the New Order framework. See Hadiz, "State and Labour in the Early New Order," 35.

[3] FBSI originally had twenty-two member 'industrial unions' (*Serikat Buruh Lapangan Pekerjaan*), however the teachers' union—the only section of FBSI that represented government employees—left shortly after FBSI was formed. The twenty-one member unions that remained represented the following sectors: agricultural and plantation workers; oil gas and mining; cigarettes and tobacco; food and beverages; textiles and clothing; forestry; printing and publishing; pharmacy and chemicals; metals and ceramics; machine and equipment assembly; rubber and leather; electronics; construction; commerce, banking and insurance; tourism; maritime workers; seafarers; inland transportation; river, lake and ferry transportation; air transportation; and health. These were replaced by nine departments within the new body. They were: agriculture and plantations; metals, electronics and machines; textiles and garments; tourism, food and beverages; pharmacy and health; chemicals, energy and mining; trade, banking and insurance; construction and forestry; and, finally, transportation. See Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 5-7.

[4] Batubara, "Yang Terpenting Membangun Sistem," 71-72.

[5] Recall that YBM is one of the NGOs surveyed for this study.

[6] Cosmas Batubara, a former student activist, was Minister for Manpower between 1986 and 1993. He was replaced by Abdul Latief, a businessman who owned the famous *Sarinah* department store in Jakarta. Latief occupied the Ministry until mid-March 1993, when he was replaced just months before the fall of Suharto by Theo Sambuaga after a public uproar over the revelation that money from the *Jamsostek* program had been used to bribe members of the DPR to pass Manpower Law No.25/1997. Investigations into Latief's role continued into the Wahid presidency, when he was officially accused of misconduct. See for example "Abdul Latief Resmi Tersangka Kasus Jamsostek," *Suara Merdeka*, 27 November 1999; "Diperiksa 8,5 Jam, Latif Tak

Batubara and his successor, Abdul Latief, had quite different views on unions' role within *Pancasila* Industrial Relations. However, their desire for Indonesia to be seen as a supporter of workers' rights and a full, participating member of the ILO, combined with threats to Indonesia's trade rights in the United States of America, encouraged both to adopt a more moderate approach to trade unionism than that of Sudomo.[7] The regime's commitment to a single union formally ended in 1993, when SPSI was again restructured as a federation of industrial unions.[8] A year later, under Ministerial Regulation No.01/MEN/1994, enterprise unions were allowed in workplaces where no SPSI unit existed.[9] Yet despite these apparently significant policy shifts, the government continued to deny workers' rights to form alternative unions beyond the factory, and assert a narrow, economistic definition of unionism. SPSI remained the only union permitted to participate in the tripartite committees and mechanisms that lay at the heart of *Pancasila* industrial Relations—including the Disputes Resolution Committee, the National Tripartite Cooperative Committee and the National Wage Council.[10] It was not until after Suharto's resignation in May

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Ngaku," *Surya*, 2 December 1999; "Jejak Abdul Latief di UU Tenaga Kerja," *Media Indonesia*, 23 December 1999.

[7] As Saut Aritonang noted, labour was firmly in the international spotlight in the early 1990s. See "Sekjen SBM, Saut H. Aritonang: 'Masalah Buruh Bukan Lagi Milik Indonesia'," *Barata*, Week 4 February 1994.

[8] Of particular importance were the United States' GSP reviews. Batubara denied that international pressure encouraged the restructure. He argued that the ongoing tension within SPSI was a more important factor in the decision to refederate SPSI. Batubara, "Yang Terpenting Membangun Sistem," 71-72.

[9] SPSI's nine departments were transformed into 14 autonomous sectors, namely Construction and Public Works; Woodworking and Forestry; Trade, Banking and Insurance; Publishing and Printing; Tourism; Food, Beverages and Cigarettes; Chemical, Energy and Mining; Metals, Electronics and Machinery; Textiles and Leather; Transportation; Seamen; Agriculture and Horticulture; Pharmacy and Health. The Department of Manpower suggested the decision to implement the change was made in 1990 at the SPSI five-year national convention and only 'reaffirmed' in 1993-94 to dispel the impression that the change was made in response to pressure from the United States of America over the GSP issue. See Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 7-8.

[10] As in corporatist industrial relations arrangements generally, representatives from SPSI, the government and the state-sponsored peak employer body sat on each of these committees. Tripartitism was the basic tenet of the International Labour Organisation's preferred model of industrial relations. It was also a feature of corporatist systems of industrial relations. 'Tripartite' is an adjective which refers to three parties—in language of industrial relations, it refers to employers, workers/unions and the state. Similarly, bipartite (two parties) refers to employers and workers or their unions. *Pancasila* Industrial Relations incorporate both bipartite mechanisms (including communications forums and collective labour agreements) and tripartite dispute resolution committees and other mechanisms at both local and central level. For a detailed description of these mechanisms, see Ford, "Testing the Limits of Corporatism."

1998 that legislative barriers to the operation of alternative trade unions—the cornerstone of New Order industrial relations policy—were significantly lowered.

Defining the Worker

The tension between the New Order's organic definition of 'worker' and its industrial definition of 'labour union' caused inconsistencies in the official union's rhetoric and practice. From the beginning of the New Order period, there was a fundamental contradiction between the regime's organicist conception of 'work' and 'worker', and its narrow definition of the constituency of FBSI. New Order rhetoric went to great lengths to avoid differentiation between different classes of people who contributed to the wellbeing of the organic state. Yet, at the same time, FBSI's scope was limited to private sector waged workers in mostly blue-collar occupations.

As noted in earlier chapters, the conscious attempt to impose the concept of *karyawan* (a classless notion, meaning any person who performed *karya*, or productive work of any kind) began during the Guided Democracy period, when it was promoted as a sign that the Leninist Revolution had been achieved in Indonesia.[11] The campaign was continued with little success during the early years of the New Order, when *karyawan* was often used interchangeably with *buruh*. The differences between *buruh, pekerja* and *karyawan* (the three most commonly used words to describe 'workers' in the modern Indonesian language) were described in a dictionary of 'development politics' published in 1970 as follows:

> *Buruh* are people who work with their *physical power* to receive WAGES, which are their primary source of income…*Pekerdja* is [a term for] someone who does something, regardless of whether it requires physical exertion (*buruh*) or other skills, such as a clerk or a doctor. *Karyawan* is a more polite term for every person who does positive and productive work [capitalisation and emphasis in the original].[12]

In the same year, Moertopo signalled the New Order's intentions to eliminate *buruh* from language and social reality, declaring that 'workers and employers must go; only one class will remain, that of the *karyawan*, executing or formulating

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[11] Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, *SOKSI Mendjawab*.

[12] A.A. Hakim et al., *Kamus Politik Pembangunan* (Djakarta: Kanisius, 1970), 16.

directives'.[13] Yet Moertopo himself was inconsistent. In the text of his address to the 1974 Seminar on Industrial Relations, for example, *karyawan, pekerja* and *buruh* were all used.[14]

Attempts to impose *karyawan* continued until 1985. For example, Iman Soepomo (a labour law academic based at the University of Indonesia) felt compelled to justify his continued use of the term *buruh* in a volume published in 1976. He explained that *buruh* was a 'precise' term which allows labour law to be formulated unambiguously. He contrasted *buruh* to *pekerja,* whose meaning 'is very broad, namely every person who performs work, both in an employment relationship as well as outside an employment relationship' and *karyawan,* which refers to 'every person who performs *karya*' (purposeful activity which includes, but is not limited to, waged work).[15] In a 1980 encyclopaedia of Indonesia, the entry for *karyawan* directed the reader to *buruh*—a strong indication of lack of general acceptance for *karyawan*.[16] The entry for *buruh* confirmed the currency of *buruh* and the artificiality of the *karyawan* concept:

> *Buruh* Legal: every person who works for an employer and receives wages. In everyday usage, we differentiate between *buruh kantor*, or *karyawan* who work in offices; *buruh kasar,* or *karyawan* who work with their physical strength (in the past called *kuli, unskilled labor* [English in the original]); *buruh trampil,* workers who have skills, such as artisans, typists; etc.[17]

When FBSI was restructured in 1985, the attempt to eliminate class connotations in the language of labour took a new turn. The formation of the new organisation, called *Serikat **Pekerja** Seluruh Indonesia*,[18] heralded the formal official rejection of *buruh*. According to the National Tripartite Institute's official Guidebook on Industrial Relations, *pekerja* replaced *buruh* for the following reasons:

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[13]   Cited in Leclerc, "An Ideological Problem of Indonesian Trade Unionism in the Sixties," 77.
[14]   Moertopo, *Buruh dan Tani dalam Pembangunan.*
[15]   Iman Soepomo, *Pengantar Hukum Perburuhan* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1976), 31-32. For an explanation of the etymology of *buruh* and *karyawan,* see Leclerc, "An Ideological Problem of Indonesian Trade Unionism in the Sixties."
[16]   *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, Vol. 3 (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru-Van Hove, 1980).
[17]   Ibid., Vol. 1, 557.
[18]   Recall that FBSI is an abbreviation for *Federasi **Buruh** Seluruh Indonesia.*

1. The term *buruh*, which is actually only an ordinary technical term that refers to labour working for other people for wages, has developed…some unhelpful connotations:
   a. The existence of the word *buruh* means there is a word *'majikan'* [employer/boss] implying that an unequal relationship exists between *buruh* and *majikan* and that there is a polarisation [of society] into two classes with different interests.
   b. On hearing the word *buruh* one imagines that they are a group of workers from the lower classes who work only manually (*dengan ototnya* lit. with their muscles). Consequently, those who work not only manually, such as those employed in administration, are reluctant to be called *buruh*.
   c. Under the influence of Marxism, *buruh* were considered a class that is always exploited by the employers/bosses. *Buruh* are also considered a class that always strive to destroy the employers/bosses in their struggle.
2. The socialisation of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations requires the development of a familial atmosphere, mutual cooperation and consultation in a company. The use of the word *buruh*, which has negative connotations, does not encourage the development of a familial atmosphere, mutual cooperation and consultation in a company. Consequently, the term *buruh* must be replaced and a term must be found that reflects the spirit of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.
3. It is not an easy task to find a new term that meets these requirements. Consequently, we must return to the 1945 Constitution, our basic guide. In the 1945 Constitution in the explanation of Article Two, the following is stated:

'what are meant by groups are bodies such as cooperatives, *serikat pekerja* (workers' unions) and other collective bodies'.

It is clear here that the 1945 Constitution uses the term '*pekerja*' to mean *buruh*. Consequently, it has been agreed that the word '*Pekerja*' be used as a replacement for the word '*Buruh*' because it has a strong legal basis.[19]

Unlike *karyawan, pekerja* quickly became accepted as the official term for workers, although its use was largely confined to government bureaucrats and union administrators.[20] The government continued to encourage the use of *pekerja*, and emphasise its difference from *buruh*, throughout the New Order period.[21] In later

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[19] *Pedoman Pelaksanaan Hubungan Industrial Pancasila* (Jakarta: Yayasan Tripartit Nasional, 1987), 45. See also the 1988 National Encyclopedia, which defined a number of different *buruh (buruh tani, buruh borongan, buruh harian, buruh lepas, buruh tetap)* but then noted, 'Because *buruh* is often interpreted as simply a factor of production, a social problem arose, so that legal protection was required for wages, work security and other conditions so that workers are considered as human beings. Consequently, in Indonesia, the term *buruh* has been replaced with the term *"pekerja"*.' See *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia*, Vol. 3 (Jakarta: Cipta Adi Pustaka, 1988), 568. For a critical Indonesian-language discussion of *buruh/pekerja,* see Hasan, "Sarekat Buruh Dan Perjuangannya," *Jurnal Demokrasi* 3 (1994).

[20] This dichotomy was very clear in newspaper articles examined in the preparation of this thesis. Only articles citing official sources regularly used *pekerja*. The remainder generally used *buruh*.

[21] *Karyawan* was also used in some circumstances, as described below.

years, *pekerja* began to absorb some of the meanings originally invested in *karyawan.* In 1996, on the occasion of the celebration of Indonesian Workers' Day, for example, President Suharto described the 'great difference' between *buruh* and *pekerja.* His speech was reported in the Department of Manpower newsletter as follows:

> '*Buruh*' work simply to get wages from another person, without becoming spiritually involved in their work (*terlibat secara ruhaniah*). Besides that, the term '*buruh*' has connotations of being opposed to employer (*majikan*). '*Buruh*' also has connotations of just carrying out orders as a tool in the production process (*sebagai alat dalam berproduksi*).
> In contrast to *buruh, pekerja* have a spiritual link with, and strong professional pride in, their work, in its planning, execution, supervision and control…Furthermore, *pekerja* can develop a career…because the group of *pekerja* is not limited to those who execute tasks, but includes [professional] staff and directors and company boards, which link together to work to achieve results.[22]

In practice, however, *pekerja* was primarily used to describe the performers rather than the planners of work.[23] Ironically, *karyawan* eventually became part of the popular lexicon, but its meaning narrowed to become a euphemism for blue-collar workers and the lower ranks of the white-collar workforce.[24] The ongoing distinction between work of the head and work of the hand contradicted the government's rhetoric about the classless *Pancasila* society. Conversely, it emphasised the strong divisions between classes in Indonesia—divisions which affected the relationships between blue-collar factory workers and middle-class labour NGO activists.

Workers' Obligations and Interests

The changing balance between workers' interests and their duties to society was perhaps the best illustration of the tensions between the corporatist and revisionist

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[22] "Kemitraan Dalam Hubungan Industrial," *Majalah Tenaga Kerja* 28 (1996): 8.

[23] On the divide between the conception and execution of work, see Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 124-126.

[24] In Ministerial Decision No. Kep-78/Men/2001 on Amendments to Several Articles in Ministerial Decision No. Kep.150/Men/2001, which was implemented in May 2001 (although later rescinded), it was decided to amend references to *pekerja* to read *pekerja/buruh* and references to *serikat pekerja* to *serikat pekerja/serikat buruh* in recognition of the widespread use of *buruh*. See SMERU, "Industrial Relations in Jabotabek, Bandung, and Surabaya during the Freedom to Organize Era," (Jakarta: SMERU, 2002), 96.

elements in *Pancasila* Industrial Relations. Like the conflict between *buruh* and *karyawan*, the uneasy marriage of the revisionist right to strike and the corporatist insistence that unions were a partner of management rather than an organisation of workers created internal consistencies within the rhetoric and practice of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.

At the time FBSI was established, workers' interests were firmly embedded in the documents in its charter, although its promotion of those interests was constrained by the political imperatives of security and national development. In contrast, at the height of New Order labour corporatism, government rhetoric no longer recognised the discrete interests of labour and capital. Instead, it was argued—borrowing the language of Catholic corporatism—that all work was a 'service to God, to our fellow humankind, nation and state', and employees were not merely 'factors of production', but 'individual people with dignity and value'. Employers and employees had 'the same interest' in the 'progress of the company' because, with that progress, 'the welfare of all parties [could] be improved'. Strikes and lockouts were 'not compatible' with *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, and 'disagreements' were to be 'solved using deliberation to reach a consensus conducted according to the family principle'.[25]

The debate about whether SPSI should be primarily a corporatist institution acting in the interests of the state or a revisionist institution acting for workers' interests within a parliamentary democracy was most clearly expressed in relation to strike actions and labour demonstrations. Kammen observed that two apparently contradictory arguments were used by New Order officials to explain strikes. On one hand, strikes were often described as the result of a breakdown in the labour relationship or the unstable mentality of the workers. On the other, they were attributed to organised conspiracy and subversion. Kammen argued that both these explanations served to deny workers' discontent: the former rejected conscious intent, while the latter displaced agency to outsiders.[26] This argument holds true for the periods when the corporatist impulse was at its strongest, and for particular

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[25] *Pedoman Pelaksanaan Hubungan Industrial Pancasila* (Jakarta: Dirjen Bina Hubungan Ketenagakerjaan dan Pengawasan Norma Kerja, Depnaker, 1993), 12-13. For a fuller explication of the principles of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations than the one I have offered here, see Ford, "Pancasila Industrial Relations."

[26] Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 254-259.

figures, including Sudomo and Suharto, who blamed strikes on companies for failing to treat workers properly, on SPSI for not adequately representing workers within the *Pancasila* Industrial Relations system, and on third parties who claimed to act for (*mengatasnamakan*) workers.[27]

Strikes were effectively banned in the Sudomo years, and, as late as 1995, Suharto told SPSI delegates that striking was not an appropriate course of action.[28] However, acceptance of the right to strike, along with the revisionist emphasis on workers' agency (and hence the possibility that workers' interests were not identical to those of employers), again became part of official rhetoric when Batubara became Minister for Manpower in 1986. Batubara defined the boundaries of an acceptable strike in classic revisionist terms. In 1991, he stated that a legitimate strike was one 'held purely and spontaneously by workers themselves, without any interference from other parties (*pihak lain*)'.[29] Imam Soedarwo made a similar statement to

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[27] See "Pak Harto: Pengusaha Harus Lindungi Tenaga Kerja," *Surya*, 4 May 1994; "Presiden Soeharto Menilai: Pengusaha Masih Abaikan Kepentingan Tenaga Kerja," *Jayakarta*, 4 May 1994; "Presiden: Pemogokan Bukan Jalan yang Terbaik," *Kompas*, 16 November 1995; "SPSI Needs Strong Leadership: Soeharto," *Jakarta Post*, 16 November 1995. Suharto's statements on companies' failure to do their duty in 1994 were accompanied by a flurry of similar accusations from a wide range of sources. See for example "30 Perusahaan akan Segera Diajukan ke Pengadilan," *Kompas*, 26 May 1994; "32 Perusahaan Pelanggar UMR Diajukan ke Pengadilan," *Harian Terbit*, 21 September 1994; "Abaikan Jamsostek: 240 Perusahaan Diajukan ke Pengadilan," *Harian Terbit*, 27 April 1994; "Ada Pengusaha Abaikan Pengadaan Sarana Ibadah," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 24 May 1994; "Buntut Pelanggaran UU No 3 Oleh 222 Perusahaan: SPSI Bekasi Desak Depnaker Bertindak Tegas," *Merdeka*, 21 July 1994; "Hanya Didenda Rp100.000: Hukuman Pelanggar UMR Terlalu Ringan," *Jayakarta* 1994; "Kakandepnaker Jatim: Jelas Melanggar PT Arg Pekerjakan Wanita Larut Malam," *Harian Terbit*, 4 July 1994; "Megawati: Pengusaha Tak Penuhi UMR Harus Ditindak," *Surya*, 4 May 1994; "Pelanggaran Norma-Norma Ketenagakerjaan Ditindak," *Merdeka*, 27 October 1994; "Pengadilan Pengusaha Pelanggar UMR Wajar, Hukumannya Perlu Diperberat," *Suara Merdeka*, 3 June 1994; "Pengusaha Banyak Langgar Aturan Ketenagakerjaan: Saatnya Terapkan Hukuman Kurungan," *Surya*, 29 April 1994; "Pengusaha Harus Dipaksa Patuhi UMR," *Republika*, 3 August 1994; "'Pengusaha Jangan Macam-Macam'," *Suara Merdeka*, 29 April 1994; "Pengusaha Sering Buat Suasana Tak Manusiawi: Aksi Unjuk Rasa Lahan Empuk untuk Ditunggangi," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 October 1994; "PT Hutan Domas Raya Lecehkan UMR dan Jam Kerja," *Barata*, Week 1 June 1994. Official statements on companies' shortcomings continued in the final years of the Suharto era. See for example "Untuk Menekan Laju Aksi Mogok Pekerja: Pengusaha Bandel Tak akan Ditolerir," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 19 July 1996; "FSPSI Belum Tingkatkan Kesejahteraan," *Kompas*, 21 April 1997.

[28] "Presiden: Pemogokan Bukan Jalan yang Terbaik."

[29] Roso Setyono, "Menuntut THR Merupakan Salah Satu Penyebab Terjadinya Pemogokan," *Suara Pembaruan*, 23 April 1991. Such strikes were different, Batubara argued, 'from workers' demonstrations of the early 1980s, which were interfered with (*dicampuri*) by other parties for personal or group interests'. In fact Batubara explicitly condemned non-worker involvement in the strike, because 'the involvement of these outsiders (*unsur luar ini*) damages (*memperburuk*) the relationship between employers and workers.' Cosmas Batubara quoted in "Mennaker:

journalists in that year, arguing that 'what must be considered by all parties is how to ensure that demonstrations or strikes are orderly, not influenced by outside parties, but well organised (*diorganisir rapi*) by SPSI'.[30] Like Batubara, Soedarwo argued that most strikes at that time were 'economic in nature, or bread-and-butter issues (*tuntutan perut*), not political'. These were 'classical' (*klasik*) strikes, which he explained involved 'normative demands (*tuntutan normatif*), like wages, hours of work, overtime and other welfare issues'.[31] Even the military softened its stance on strikes under scrutiny from the United States in 1993-1994.[32] In 1993, Military Commander Hendro Priyono was reported as saying that demonstrations could be tolerated (*ditolerir*) as long as they were held purely to demand improved wages.[33] In practice, the military's tolerance was extremely limited: strike actions were regularly greeted by military repression and a return to the rhetoric of Admiral Sudomo about strikes' incompatibility with *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.[34]

Although strikes became generally acceptable as long as they were 'normative' and only involved SPSI,[35] the government's corporatist emphasis on the shared interests of employers and employees continued. Even during the rapid growth of industrial unrest in the early-mid 1990s, the harmonious nature of the employee-employer relationship under *Pancasila* Industrial Relations was constantly

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Petugas Datang Kalau Unjuk Rasa Buruh Ganggu Ketertiban Umum," *Kompas*, 16 October 1991.

[30] Imam Soedarwo quoted in "Sorotan," *Suara Pembaruan*, 22 August 1991.

[31] Imam Soedarwo quoted in Imran Hasibuan, "Imam Soedarwo: 'Masih Klasik, Belum Politis'," *Forum Keadilan,* 10 December 1992. During the *Gadjah Tunggal* strikes of 1991, Batubara and Soedarwo were quoted as saying that strikes are positive because they show increasing awareness amongst workers, and demonstrate 'to the world' that Indonesia allowed its workers to strike. See "Hak Universal Pekerja," *Suara Pembaruan*, 22 August 1991.

[32] For a broad view of military policy towards civil society during this period, see Jun Honna, "The Military and Democratisation in Indonesia: The Developing Civil-Military Discourse During the Late Suharto Era." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Australian National University, 1999).

[33] Hendro Priyono quoted in "Unjuk Rasa Dapat Ditolerir Sepanjang Tuntut Soal Upah," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 11 August 1993. In the same speech, he emphasised that demonstrations run by outsiders (*pihak ketiga*) for their own ends (*ditunggangi*) were forbidden because they were not run by the official organisation that had been agreed upon (*organisasi resmi yang telah disepakati*).

[34] See for example, ABRI's stance on the public transport strike of September 1994, reported in "Pangab: Tidak Ada Toleransi Pada Pemogok," *Merdeka*, 8 September 1994.

[35] This development coincided with Minister for Manpower Batubara's campaign for a leadership position within the International Labour Organisation. Some years later Latief indicated that he agreed with Batubara's position on the limits of acceptable strike action. See "Menaker: Pekerja Jangan Terpancing Mogok Politis," *Waspada*, 8 April 1997.

emphasised in official statements to the press.[36] For example, on the twenty-fourth anniversary of the formation of SPSI, Latief told his audience that:

> Unions are part of the infrastructure of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations. They are not designed for confrontation, but to assist management as a partner in running the company, which, in turn, helps improve the welfare of workers and their families.[37]

The same formulation was used by Suwarto (then Director-General of Industrial Relations and Labour Standards), at the opening of a training workshop for factory-level unions two days later on 24 February 1997.[38] The government's simultaneous emphasis on a conflict-free partnership between unions and management and recognition of the right to strike (in a limited form) brought with it strong echoes of tensions between Moertopo's organic emphasis on unions as functional group organisations and the revisionists' recognition of the right to strike when *Pancasila* Industrial Relations was first proposed.

The Limits of Politicisation

Another contradiction in New Order rhetoric that reflected the co-existence of corporatist and revisionist ideas about unions was the government's stance on outsiders. Figures such as Suharto and Sudomo rejected the involvement of non-worker outsiders in labour unions and strikes in their defence of workplace harmony and denial of workers' interests. The idea of the 'non-worker outsider' had no logical place in the all-embracing organic corporatist concept of *karyawan* (and later *pekerja*), which made no distinction between the performers of manual and mental work. The theoretical roots of the New Order's position on non-worker outsiders did not lie in the corporatist concept of functional groups: they lay in the revisionist

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[36] See for example a statement by Thoga M. Sitorus (head of the North Sumatran Regional Disputes Resolution Committee) on non-confrontational nature of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations reported in "Pengusaha dan Pekerja Adalah Mitra Kerja," *Waspada*, 24 June 1996.

[37] Abdul Latief quoted in "Menaker: Serikat Pekerja Mitra Perusahaan," *Waspada*, 22 February 1997.

[38] Suwarto quoted in "Serikat Pekerja Bukan untuk Konfrontasi," *Merdeka*, 24 February 1997. See also Latief's statement two months later when the parliament's consideration of RUUK was postponed, reported in "Penyampaian RUU Ketenagakerjaan Minta Ditunda," *Republika*, 10 April 1997.

premise that unions should be independent from their political allies, and should pursue workers' socio-economic rather than political interests. It is plausible, then, that the government could promote bureaucratic and military intervention in FBSI at the same time as it condemned activist 'outsiders' for 'interfering' in workers' affairs.

The major theme in the government's rhetoric about outsiders was the threat of politicisation. In 1997, at the launch of Sudono's edited volume, *Perburuhan dari Masa ke Masa,* businessman Sofyan Wanandi brought the themes of history, the politicisation of unions, *Pancasila* Industrial Relations and the effectiveness of SPSI together in a succinct statement of the concerns surrounding labour relations at the end of the New Order period.[39] Having identified the relationship between employers and workers as 'one of mutual need' and SPSI's importance as the representative of the workers, Wanandi commented:

> So why is the union always in a weak position? Because of the New Order government's trauma (*traumatik*) about the Old Order period. Unions were then often used as tools in the interests of political parties. So it is not surprising that the government has given unions such a very small role.[40]

SPSI officials expressed their concerns about politicisation publicly for very different reasons. Some used the rhetoric of workers' interests to condemn labour activists outside SPSI. For example, in 1995 (the year Indonesia's first fifty years of independence were celebrated), Bomer Pasaribu[41] and Imam Soedarwo[42] 'urged all parties interested in the welfare of workers to reject every attempt at exploitation and manipulation made in the name of workers for goals outside the *Pancasila* Industrial

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[39]   Sudono, ed., *Perburuhan Dari Masa ke Masa.*

[40]   Sofyan Wanandi quoted in "FSPSI Belum Tingkatkan Kesejahteraan." Wanandi went on to comment that 'what we have to ask now after thirty years is whether unions' role will remain that way'. Some years earlier, he was quoted as saying that 'Many businesspeople still feel traumatised that labour unions are political tools as they were in the Old Order period.' Wanandi quoted in "Banyak Masalah Buruh Tak Dikuasai SPSI," *Kompas*, 6 December 1991.

[41]   Bomer Pasaribu was Secretary-General of SPSI from 1990 to 1995. He was appointed General Chair of SPSI in 1996. He was also Deputy Secretary-General of Golkar, and briefly Minister for Manpower under President Wahid.

[42]   Imam Soedarwo was General Chair of SPSI from 1990-1995. He had previously been a member of the *Kesatuan Buruh Kerakyatan Indonesia* (KBKI), and was a founding member of the FBSI Central Board in 1973.

Relations system, especially those that treat workers simply as a political commodity (*komoditas politik*).'[43] Others, however, began to use the concepts of 'pure' and 'effective' unionism to promote increased independence for SPSI after it was restructured as a federation in 1993. By doing so, they demonstrated how the rhetoric of 'by, of and for the workers' could be mobilised against government interference in SPSI.[44] Saralen Purba (then an official in the SPSI's Forestry Department) publicly argued that democratisation was required for the proper functioning of SPSI. In order to achieve this, he 'hoped' the '*dropping*', or insertion, of officials from third parties (*pihak ketiga*) into the SPSI leadership could be avoided in the formation of sector unions.[45] Wilhelmus Bhoka—one of SPSI's most vocal internal critics—put his revisionist position unequivocally:

> With SPSI's return to a federation, we hope that this institution for the representation of workers can be democratic and independent. This means SPSI is not affiliated to any political organisation, and is free from interference from outside parties (*pihak luar*) in carrying out its task of fighting for the rights and interests of its members.[46]

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[43]   "SPSI Minta HIP Dijadikan Hukum Besi Pembangunan," *Business News*, 26 August 1995. In an earlier article Soedarwo was reported to have commented that 'It must be emphasised that SPSI is an organisation that belongs to the workers, not to political parties or other political forces.' See "Sekjen SPSI: Perlu Reformasi Politik Ketenagakerjaan Nasional," *Kompas*, 13 May 1994.

[44]   "SPSI Gaya Baru: Kerelaan Pengusaha Kunci Utama," *Suara Merdeka*, 13 September 1993.

[45]   "DPP SPSI Tidak Lagi Wadah Tunggal Pekerja," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 7 September 1993. Not all officials agreed. Some SPSI representatives told an ICFTU delegation that the involvement of retired military personnel in the union was not a cause for concern because army personnel who retire at fifty-five naturally seek to be involved in other activities—including union organising. See "Report of the ICFTU/APRO Delegation to Indonesia April 5 to 9, 1993," 6. When Muchtar Pakpahan of SBSI criticised the 'dropping' of Golkar officials into SPSI in the following year, Djoko Daulat (a member of SPSI's central board) was reported to have commented that it was quite reasonable (*wajar-wajar saja*) if a number of SPSI officials came from Golkar, because Golkar was the largest social-political organisation at this time. Pakpahan was very specific, noting that officials were being 'dropped' (*didrop*) into SPSI from 'certain political forces' (*kekuatan politik tertentu*). In his response, Djoko pointed out that there were also members of PDI and PPP in the executive, and noted the strong influence of PDI figures, including Abdurrachman Wahid, in SBSI. See "Depnaker Terima Ketua Umum SBSI: Muchtar Tetap Kritik SPSI," *Media Indonesia*, 4 March 1994. Pakpahan told other reporters that 'SPSI was only established as a political instrument' and that SBSI 'was determined to straighten up (*meluruskan*) the declaration of 1973', which in no way forbade a pluralist system of trade unions. See "Depnaker Tidak Pernah Mengundang Muchtar Pakpahan untuk Audiensi," *Jayakarta*, 5 March 1994; "ILO Pertanyakan Permenaker No.01/1994," *Barata*, Week 2 March 1994.

[46]   Wilhelmus Bhoka quoted in "SPSI Dikembalikan ke Bentuk Federasi," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 7 September 1993. Bhoka enjoyed considerable support from Cosmas Batubara.

Bhoka later urged the government to purge SPSI's leadership of politicians, noting that almost all the central and sectoral executive officers came from SOKSI and Kosgoro.[47] That Bhoka's antipathy was to Golkar's corporatist political intervention in SPSI—rather than to labourist politics—was demonstrated in the immediate post-Suharto period. Within days of Suharto's resignation, Bhoka, Soedarwo and Trimurti, amongst others, formed the *Partai Pekerja Indonesia* (PPI, The Indonesian Workers' Party), one of four labour parties to eventually contest the June 1999 election.[48]

Voices for reform within SPSI became considerably louder after a strike by Dita Sari's PPBI in Surabaya in July 1996.[49] Marzuki Achmad argued SPSI must be independent if it was 'to become a gorilla in its own habitat'.[50] Achmad openly noted that there were 'officials in SPSI who are only looking for money by colluding with the Department of Manpower and business to oppress workers'. This, he said, had been 'going on for years. Indeed, it has become an open secret. Everyone knows, from workers themselves, to businesspeople, the government, NGOs, students and the community generally'.[51] In another example, in the lead-up to the 1997 election,

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[47] Imam Soedarwo had a background in Kosgoro, whilst Bomer Pasaribu came from SOKSI. See "All Indonesian Workers Union to be Led by Presidium," *Jakarta Post*, 18 November 1995; "Government Urged to Rid SPSI of Politicians," *Jakarta Post*, 11 November 1995. For more comments on politicisation of FSPSI, see for example "Jakarta Hopes SPSI More Representative," *Jakarta Post*, 4 September 1995; "FSPSI Tentang UUK: Jangan Politisir Kepentingan Pekerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 23 September 1997.

[48] See "Labor Party to Elect Board Members Next Week," *Jakarta Post*, 29 May 1998. Bomer Pasaribu's reaction to the formation of PPI, which was reported in the same article, was expressed in familiar themes. He expressed concern that PPI would be exploited as a vehicle for its founders' political interests, thus recreating the conditions of the Old Order era, when workers 'were used as political targets in general elections and then they were left behind'. Bhoka died before the election was held. The other parties were the SBSI-affiliated *Partai Buruh Nasional* (PBN, National Labour Party); the *Partai Solidaritas Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (PSPSI, The All-Indonesia Workers' Solidarity Party) and the *Partai Solidaritas Pekerja* (PSP, Workers' Solidarity Party). None of these parties succeeded in winning a seat in the DPR. PBN, the most successful, received a mere 0.08% of the vote. See Ford, "Continuity and Change in Indonesian Labour Relations in the Habibie Interregnum."

[49] Brief details of this strike, and other major events between 1990 and 1998 are provided in the second section of this chapter.

[50] Achmad replaced Bomer Pasaribu as General Chair of DPP FSPSI in early 1997. His political affiliations were a matter for public comment. An article published earlier in 1997 pointed out that he was head of Golkar's labour department and the General Chair of FSPSI, and asked which organisation he represented when speaking about labour issues. See "Peduli Pada Pekerja," *Merdeka*, 5 July 1997.

[51] Marzuki Achmad quoted in "Ketua Umum DPP F-SPSI Marzuki Achmad: 'SPSI Ingin Jadi "Gorila" di Habitatnya," *Barata*, Week 3/4 November 1996. Achmad later complained about Article 28 (2) of RUUK, in which unions were defined as being formed 'by and for workers', but

SPSI officials argued that while political parties should pay attention to workers' needs, politicians should not use workers as commodities (*barang dagangan*) or for the sake of 'political rhetoric'.[52]

It is apparent from these public statements of discontent from within the body of the SPSI that the anti-outsider rhetoric, which characterised discussions of unionism throughout the entire New Order, was not predicated entirely on a corporatist antipathy to labour activism outside SPSI. SPSI's historical links with the revisionists of the Sukarno period continued to strongly influence debates about the true purpose of unionism and union practice. As is demonstrated in the remainder of this chapter, these debates also influenced the contours of state and union opposition to the non-worker outsiders who sought to provide workers with alternative sources of knowledge, inspiration and organisational resources in the late New Order period.

No Place for Outsiders

Official attitudes towards labour NGOs, student groups and alternative unions were both varied and nuanced in the New Order Indonesia. On one hand, pressure from international sources and support for NGOs within some sections of the government and the bureaucracy meant that a considerable effort was made to co-opt labour NGOs in a non-organisational capacity.[53] On the other, the government rejected NGO's involvement in grassroots labour organising because NGOs were outsiders who had no place in the New Order's economistic definition of a trade union. There were two major themes in government rhetoric about non-workers' involvement in labour issues. The first is best characterised as 'hostile accommodation'— recognition that although NGOs 'interfered' in labour issues, they did not directly challenge the government's one-union policy and, like other NGOs, had strong

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not 'from' them. He argued that it was important to include 'from' in order to ensure that 'the employer or other parties who wish to form unions' were not successful. See "Mengapa FSPSI Unjuk Gigi," *Republika*, 30 June 1997.

[52] Banu Astono and Gunawan Tjahja, "Nasib Pekerja Jangan Hanya Dijadikan Retorika Politik," *Republika*, 15 May 1997.

[53] See "Depnaker-LSM Akui Kondisi Buruh Memprihatinkan," *Media Indonesia*, 7 November 1991.

support from the international community.[54] The second concerned the conflation of alternative unions, radical student groups and labour NGOs on the grounds they were formed and run by non-workers for political reasons.[55]

Hostile Accommodation

Labour NGOs were granted partial acceptance from the government in their capacity as educators and commentators, but grassroots labour NGOs' efforts to organise workers were firmly rejected. The New Order was happy for NGOs to 'assist' with, or even comment on, manpower issues as long as they did not attempt to replace SPSI or undertake tasks for which SPSI had responsibility.[56] The government's ambivalence was reflected in an English-language volume produced by the Department of Manpower towards the end of the New Order period. Although labour NGOs were not the subject of a specific section of the report, brief references to them in the document demonstrated the government's inconsistent attitude towards their involvement in labour. At one point, the authors criticised 'interference by NGOs and legal aid institutions in companies' internal affairs, particularly in the relationship between employers and workers'.[57] Yet fewer than ten pages later, they stated that the Department 'supports and motivates FSPSI and NGOs to conduct education for the labour union's cadres'.[58]

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[54] My fieldwork interviews confirmed Kusyuniati's observation that the stated aims of labour NGOs often did not reflect their true aims, because of government pressure to be a 'partner' in the development process. See Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 312.

[55] See Chapter Two. According to Sutanto Suwarno (alias Sutanta), a Department of Manpower official who completed a PhD on *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, 'In 1993, the government recognised [SBM-SK and SBSI] as being mass organisations, but having nothing to do with trade unionism'. A page later, however, he claimed that the 'New Order government recognise[d] [SBSI] as an NGO dealing with welfare programmes'. See Sutanto Suwarno, "The Development of the Indonesian Industrial Relations System," in *Labour Relations in Asia and Europe: Exchanging Experiences and Perspectives, 26-27 October 1998, The Hague, The Netherlands* (The Hague: Asia Europe Foundation/Nordic Insititute of Asian Studies/International Institute for Asian Studies, 1998), 5-6; Sutanta, "The Impact of Industrial Relation on Workers' Welfare in Indonesia."

[56] Imam Soedarwo (General Chair of SPSI) shared this view, arguing that 'Even if many NGOs or solidarity groups that choose to work on (*garap*) manpower issues emerge, that is not a problem. But they cannot handle industrial disputes [because that is] SPSI's job.' Imam Soedarwo quoted in "SPSI Sebagai Wadah Tunggal Kurang Sesuai dengan Realitas," *Kompas*, 3 August 1993.

[57] Department of Manpower, *The Rights [sic] to Organise in Indonesia*, 18.

[58] Ibid., 27.

As noted in Chapter Two, while NGOs were involved in labour from at least the late 1970s, they came to prominence after they very publicly lobbied against military involvement in the Gadjah Tunggal strikes in 1991. NGOs' involvement in strikes and campaigns about a range of labour issues kept them firmly in the public eye for the remainder of the New Order period. However, the activities of the alternative unions and radical student groups, rather than NGO activism, preoccupied government policy-makers in the final decade of the New Order period. Most prominent amongst these were the Medan Riots of 1994[59] and a number of strikes involving Dita Sari's PPBI (the third alternative union of the period).[60] Of particular note were the Great River Industries and Surabaya strikes of 1995 (after which Dita Sari was jailed) and, finally, the 'July Affair' of 1996, when the headquarters of PDI-*Perjuangan* were stormed and the PRD and the PPBI was destroyed.[61]

As labour NGOs were often conflated with these more radical opponents of the New Order's labour regime, government attitudes towards them fluctuated with its attitudes towards those more militant groups. However, labour NGOs enjoyed some protection from government repression because they were part of the broader NGO community.[62] The strength of NGOs generally was demonstrated by the government's legislative and extra-legislative attempts to mediate their influence

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[59] See for example "Dirut PT STAP Tewas Dikeroyok: Aksi Unjuk Rasa di Medan Makin Brutal," *Merdeka*, 16 April 1994; "Kronologi Unjuk Rasa Medan," *Republika*, 16 April 1994; "Medan Rusuh: Ruko dan Mobil Dirusak, Seorang Tewas," *Republika*, 16 April 1994; "Menaker: Penggerak Unjuk Rasa Pekerja di Medan Harus Diadili," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 April 1994; "Mengaku Dikoordinasi SBSI: 20.000 Buruh Demo di Medan," *Republika*, 15 April 1994; "Pak Harto: Tindak Demonstran Perusak," *Surya*, 18 April 1994; "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif," *Suara Merdeka*, 23 April 1994; "Presiden: Adili Perusuh Medan," *Harian Terbit*, 26 April 1994; "Terbesar Selama 25 Tahun: Unjuk Rasa Buruh Melanda Medan," *Merdeka*, 15 April 1994.

[60] For a detailed account of the *Partai Rakyat Demokratik* (PRD, The People's Democratic Party), including PPBI, see *Jakarta Crackdown*, 94-127.

[61] The Medan strikes are described briefly in Chapter Two. Great River Industries (GRI) manufactured garments in West Java for the domestic and export markets. In July 1995, between 7,000 and 12,000 GRI workers went on strike to demand the minimum wage. PPBI were involved in the strike and organised demonstrations to the parliament. The Surabaya strikes of the same year involved more than 10,000 workers from fifteen factories. Dita Sari was subsequently jailed for six years on charges of inciting violence. See Ibid. On 27 July 1997, the PDI headquarters in Jakarta were stormed and struggles broke out between the military and PDI supporters. A group of NGOs (including a number of labour NGOs) and the PRD were also targeted. For a chronology of the 27 July Affair, see "Kronologi Peristiwa 27 Juli 1996," *Tempo Interaktif*, 10 August 1996. For a scholarly account, see Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule: The Case of Indonesia." 240-265.

[62] See for example "Depnaker dan LSM Sama-Sama Prihatin atas Kondisi Perburuhan," *Kompas*, 6 November 1991.

from the mid 1980s to the fall of Suharto.[63] NGOs were subject to regulation under legislation promulgated in 1985, which obliged all social organisations to register with the relevant government department and join an umbrella organisation analogous to other extant 'functional groups'. In theory, the law in question (Law No.8/1985) provided for the suspension or dissolution of any NGO undertaking activities that threatened national security, receiving overseas aid without government clearance, or assisting foreign parties to the detriment of the national interest. However, although surveillance of NGOs increased during this time, Law No.8/1985 was never fully implemented.[64] There was, nonetheless, significant evidence of ongoing accommodation from both labour NGOs and the government.[65] One indicator of that accommodation was NGOs' general willingness to use the terms LSM (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*, community self-help organisation) and LPSM (*Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat*, Organisation for the Development of Community Self-Reliance). LSM and LPSM first emerged at a seminar conducted by Bina Desa in 1978. They were officially recognised when the government referred to NGOs in the environmental Law of 1982 (Law No.4/1982),[66] and adopted at the first national meeting of Indonesian NGOs in 1983.[67] These terms were promoted as an indigenous alternative to *ornop* (*organisasi non-pemerintah,* the literal translation of NGO), which was seen to have 'anti-government

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[63]   Lubis, *In Search of Human Rights*.

[64]   Ibid., 213-230. Eldridge suggested that rivalry between government departments meant that UU Ormas was not as effective as it might have been. See Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia*, 186. In 1992, the government made another attempt to limit NGOs' resources by banning Dutch funding. See Adam Schwarz, "NGOs Knocked: Jakarta Extends Ban on Netherlands Aid (Non-Governmental Organizations)," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 155, No. 19 (1992). In 1994, a Presidential Decree on NGOs was suggested. See for example "Pengaturan LSM Lewat Keppres Kurang Tepat," *Kompas*, 26 September 1994. In 2002, a further attempt was made to regulate NGOs when a draft law regulating foundations (y*ayasan*)—the legal form generally adopted by NGOs—was introduced into parliament.

[65]   NGOs' willingness to accept the strictures government placed upon them lessened considerably in the early-mid 1990s.

[66]   Saragih, *Membedah Perut LSM*, 11; Ibrahim, "Perkembangan LSM dan Pembangunan di Indonesia," 151; S.M. Yogie, "Pengarahan Menteri Dalam Negeri Tentang LSM Sebagai Mitra Pemerintah dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat pada Diskusi Terpadu Bulanan Seri III Golkar," in *Semiloka Refleksi Peran ORNOP Sumatera Utara untuk Memperbesar Partisipasi Rakyat Dalam Pembangunan, Medan 16-18 Februari 1995* (1995), 10.

[67]   Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 57-58.

connotations'.[68] Some individuals and organisations had long resisted the use of LSM/LPSM; however, most labour NGOs were prepared to use these terms.[69]

Government rhetoric about relations with NGOs varied both over time and between individual Ministers and bureaucrats.[70] For example, in 1990, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Yogie S. Memet, issued Ministerial Instruction Number 8/1990 About Guidelines for the Guidance of Community Self Help Organisations. Although the Instruction was designed to better control NGOs in the wake of the *Kedung Ombo* dam case, the rhetoric with which the Minister described the purpose of the Instruction was conciliatory.[71] In a speech that introduced the Instruction, the Minister described the guidelines as an initiative that would increase communication between regional governments and NGOs, and not control or limit NGOs' activities.[72] NGOs were, he said, organisations that work with 'marginal' people,

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[68]   Saragih, *Membedah Perut LSM*, 8; Ibrahim, "Perkembangan LSM dan Pembangunan di Indonesia," 151; Mary Johnson, "Non-Government Organisations at the Crossroads in Indonesia," in *Indonesian Economic Development: Approaches, Technology, Small-Scale Textiles, Urban Infrastructure and NGOs*, ed. R.C. Rice (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Monash University, 1990), 79; Billah, Busyairi, and Aly, "Laporan Kunjungan Dialog tentang Visi, Masalah dan Paradigma Ornop di Indonesia serta Upaya untuk Mengatasinya," 4. Ibrahim reported that, contrary to government rhetoric, LSM was a translation of the English 'self-help organisation' rather than an indigenous term. Ibrahim, "Perkembangan LSM dan Pembangunan di Indonesia."

[69]   See for example Ahmad Mahmudi, "Untitled," in *Studi Tentang LSM/ORNOP: Laporan Pertemuan Refleksi Aktivis ORNOP Ciawi, 15-17 Juni 1993* (Bandung: Indico de Unie, 1993); Bonnie Setiawan, "Organisasi Non-Pemerintah dan Masyarakat Sipil," *Prisma* 25, No.7 (1996); George Aditjondro, "Tergusurnya ORNOP oleh LSM," *Suara Merdeka*, 4 January 1993. See also Billah, Busyairi, and Aly, "Ornop Mencari Format Baru: Laporan Pertemuan Cisarua-Bogor Tanggal 18-19 Juni 1993."

[70]   The ambivalence of NGO-state relations is well documented internationally. See for example Ernesto Garilao, "Indigenous NGOs as Strategic Institutions: Managing the Relationship with Government and Resource Agencies," *World Development* 15, Supplement (1987); Malhotra, "NGOs Without Aid: Beyond the Global Soup Kitchen." For early commentary on NGO-government relations in Indonesia, see Johnson, "Non-Government Organisations at the Crossroads in Indonesia."

[71]   Refer to the Introduction where the *Kedung Ombo* case is described briefly.

[72]   In Yogie's speech, he highlighted the introduction of Law No. 4/1982 but did not mention Law No. 5/1985. See Yogie, "Pengarahan Menteri Dalam Negeri Tentang LSM Sebagai Mitra Pemerintah dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat pada Diskusi Terpadu Bulanan Seri III Golkar," 7-8, 10. For further statements about cooperation, see Direktorat Jenderal Sosial Politik Departemen Dalam Negeri, "Konsep Bahasan Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Lembaga Kemasyarakatan" (paper presented at the Forum Komunikasi dan Konsultasi Antara Pemerintah dan Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM), Cisarua, West Java, Indonesia, 10-11 February 1994). and J.B. Sumarlin, "The Importance of Government-NGO Cooperation in National Development," in *Participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the National Development Process in Indonesia: A Seminar Report* (Jakarta: Office of the Minister of State for Population and the Environment, Government of Indonesia in Cooperation with the World Bank and the Ford Foundation, 1985).

who acted as the government's 'colleagues' (*mitra kerja*), undertaking activities that complement government programs.[73] Likewise, in 1995, the Department Manpower's Director of Supervision of Work Norms claimed that the Department 'always makes contact with the press and with NGOs'.[74] Other members of the government and the military took a very different rhetorical approach. In the early 1990s, NGOs were described as 'agitators' by Saiful Sulun, the Deputy head of the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (DPR, Indonesia's lower house of parliament), and were accused of being 'the long hand of subversion' by Admiral Sudomo.[75] Government suspicion of NGOs reached new heights in the wake of the PDI/PRD affair of 27 July 1996, when NGOs were described as a vehicle of renewed communist activity.[76] In one example, Major-General Suwarno Adwijoyo, an assistant to the Head of the Armed Forces' Social-Political Staff, told the audience at a seminar held in early August 1996 that the PKI had 'begun to inject its communist understandings into a number of social organisations including political parties and NGOs'.[77]

The attitudes of successive Ministers for Manpower, Department of Manpower officials and the military towards labour NGOs, more specifically, were essentially cyclical. They regularly relaxed under international pressure on Indonesia to liberalise labour policy, but became harsher when labour NGOs took advantage of their relatively protected position. The first serious attempts to accommodate labour NGOs in the 1990s came in the wake of the Gadjah Tunggal strikes, when Minister Batubara made overtures to labour NGOs in an attempt to develop a cooperative relationship. Simultaneously, however, he warned them that 'It is expected that

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[73]   Yogie, "Pengarahan Menteri Dalam Negeri Tentang LSM Sebagai Mitra Pemerintah dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat pada Diskusi Terpadu Bulanan Seri III Golkar," 10-11. Eldridge gave a detailed accounts of individuals in the government and the bureaucracy who were supportive of NGOs in Eldridge, *Non-Government Organisations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia*.

[74]   "Amrinal B (Direktur Pengawasan Norma Kerja Depnaker: Depnaker Harus Selalu Membela Pekerja," *Republika*, 5 June 1995.

[75]   Ahmed Soeriawidjaja et al., "Bangkitnya Sebuah Alternatif," *Tempo*, 4 May 1991, 19-22.

[76]   After the 27 July Affair, alternative unions and labour NGOs were targeted along with the PRD, albeit to a lesser extent. For official reactions to 27 July, see for example "Menaker Abdul Latief: Unjuk Rasa Pekerja Didalangi Pakpahan," *Suara Merdeka*, 8 August 1996; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut," *Kompas*, 7 August 1996; "Workers Asked to Beware of Infiltration," *Jakarta Post*, 9 August 1996; Editorial, "Perlu Kerja Keras untuk Ciptakan Kondisi Pekerja Tak Mudah Dihasut," *Kompas*, 10 August 1996.

[77]   'Political Democratisation', *Kompas Online,* 5 August 1996 http://www.kompas.com/9608/05/ POLITIK/pjo.htm.

NGOs do not take on the function of SPSI, the channelling of workers' aspirations. Instead, they should work to ensure that SPSI can function properly.'[78] On the same occasion (a meeting organised by YLBHI to encourage dialogue between the Minister and NGO representatives), Batubara suggested that YLBHI should act as a coordinator for NGOs involved in labour affairs. He also offered to open a hotline to his office so that labour NGOs could contact him directly.[79]

When Payaman Simanjuntak (then Director-General of Industrial Relations and Labour Standards in the Department of Manpower) met with NGOs separately not long afterwards, he was far less accommodating on the question of NGO involvement with labour. In the presence of the NGOs, he warned that 'reality shows that the involvement of [NGOs or legal aid organisations] actually makes problems more complicated and weakens the existing mechanisms and system'.[80] He urged workers to go first to their union (SPSI), and if that failed, to contact him directly through Box 555.[81] In that meeting, an activist from ISJ rejected Simanjuntak's accusations that NGOs were trying to usurp the position of SPSI. The activist argued that 'NGOs have no intention whatsoever of worsening labour conditions…NGOs don't want to take over the function of SPSI, but make use of the gaps left by SPSI's weaknesses'.[82] Simanjuntak's comments sparked considerable further reaction from labour NGOs, and other meetings were set up to discuss the relationship between labour NGOs and the Department of Manpower. Simanjuntak was then forced to moderate his approach and take steps to implement Batubara's plan for a hotline for labour NGOs. These moves, which were reported in an article entitled 'The Department of Manpower and NGOs Both Concerned about Labour Conditions',

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[78]   Cosmas Batubara quoted in "Mennaker: Petugas Datang Kalau Unjuk Rasa Buruh Ganggu Ketertiban Umum."

[79]   Cosmas Batubara quoted in Ibid. For an NGO perspective on this meeting, see "LSM Ikut Membantu Masalah Perburuhan." See also Toriq Hadad, Leila Chudori, and Sri Indrayati, "Buruh dan LSM: Hotline yang Tak Cengeng," *Tempo*, 26 October 1991, 42.

[80]   Payaman Simanjuntak quoted in "Jangan Undang LSM atau LBH untuk Selesaikan Perselisihan," *Kompas*, 31 October 1991.

[81]   Box 555 was a Department of Manpower initiative to try to attempt to divert workers from alternative channels for organisation. Workers were supposed to send their complaints to a post office box so that they would reach Simanjuntak directly rather than being lost in the bureaucracy.

[82]   "Depnaker dan LSM Sama-Sama Prihatin atas Kondisi Perburuhan." See also comments from Tarmono, director of *Yayasan Buruh Membangun,* in "Menggugat Keberadaan SPSI," *Barata*, Week 1 May 1994. and "Mantan Ketua DPD SPSI Jatim: Kepemimpinan Soedaryanto Gagal," *Surya*, 8 November 1995.

were accompanied by a softening of his stance on the involvement of NGOs in labour issues. Workers, Simanjuntak now said, could ask for help from NGOs when they would not be otherwise represented—a situation he believed would be limited to cases where arbitration had failed and the plaintiffs were forced to go to court.[83]

Batubara himself was not always consistent in his position. At the end of 1991, he was again quoted on the subject of NGOs' involvement in labour issues. This time, he adopted a less accommodating tone:

> I am concerned if workers' cases involve other parties (*pihak lain*). They [workers] already have their channels, like SPSI. It cannot be accepted (*dibenarkan*) if [workers'] issues with the company are brought to other parties because that just widens (*memperlebar*) the problem.[84]

Abdul Latief was considerably less sympathetic to NGOs' involvement in labour than his predecessor had been. In 1993, for example, he claimed that 'The labor condition [sic] in Indonesia is in disorder because too many non-governmental organizations are now being drawn in to interfere in labor affairs'.[85] However, Latief, too, was forced to acknowledge labour NGOs' contribution. In the same month, he conceded that 'all sectors of society, including non-governmental organisations concerned with labor matters, should take a more active role in helping the government to cope with the low quality of human resources, the unfavourable waging system and unemployment'.[86] Like Batubara, he argued that NGOs' role should be restricted to helping and advocacy—that they should not seek to take on the functions of the official union.[87]

In the eyes of these officials, labour NGO activists' intellectual contribution in their capacity as public advocates of workers' rights was far less controversial than their involvement in grassroots organising and public demonstrations. Activists who contributed lengthy opinion pieces to the daily press were usually identified as a

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[83] Simanjuntak maintained that dispute resolution was a bipartite process, in which neither NGOs nor the Department of Manpower should interfere. See "Depnaker-LSM Akui Kondisi Buruh Memprihatinkan."

[84] Cosmas Batubara quoted in "Menaker akan Seret ke Pengadilan Perusahaan yang Ingkari Aturan," *Kompas*, 23 December 1991.

[85] "Latief: Workers Free to Organise," *Jakarta Post*, 3 September 1993.

[86] "Latief Condemns Exploiting Workers for Political Ends," *Jakarta Post*, 18 September 1993.

[87] "Latief: Workers Free to Organise."

representative of their particular NGO. Some NGO activists even had a regular column in a major daily newspaper, for example, Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara's 'legal notes' in *Kompas*. Issues addressed by activists in articles in the daily press ranged from child labour to labour politics.[88] The *Problema* newspaper clipping service from the period 1991-1998 included contributions from Mulyana Kusumah (YLBHI), Hendardi (YLBHI) Arief Djati (Arek Surabaya) and Dwi Saptura (LBH Semarang) on labour politics;[89] A.H.G. Nusantara (ELSAM), Teten Masduki (YLBHI), Arief Djati (Arek Surabaya) and Munir (LBH Surabaya) on Marsinah;[90] and Hendardi (YLBHI) on strikes, *Pancasila* Industrial Relations and regional minimum wages.[91] Teten Masduki (YLBHI) also contributed pieces on wages and the draft labour law;[92] Sri Wiyanti Eddyono from LBH APIK wrote on the impact of the crisis;[93] whilst Ahmad Sofian (LAAI) published at least one piece entitled 'Labour Issues Now and in the Future'.[94]

The range and political sensitivity of the subjects NGO activists wrote about, and the frequency with which they published articles occupying half a page or more in broadsheet newspapers, may at first seem surprising in light of the government's hostile attitude towards NGOs' involvement in labour organising. In fact, it reflected

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[88] Academics also wrote a number of opinion pieces on labour issues in the 1990s. See for example Muhammad Hikam, "Unjuk Rasa," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 3 June 1996; Laode Ida, "Unjuk Rasa Pekerja, Gugatan Multi Dimensi," *Jayakarta*, 9 March 1994; Z Masahe, "Realitas Hubungan Industrial Pancasila," *Suara Merdeka*, 6 May 1994; Smita Notosusanto, "Diplomasi dalam Menangani GSP," *Kompas*, 16 August 1993; Heru Nugroho, "Sumbangan Pikiran untuk RUU Ketenagakerjaan," *Kompas*, 19 June 1997; Budi Rajab, "Kebijaksanaan Pembangunan dan Masalah Ketenagakerjaan," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 12 June 1996; Kastorius Sinaga, "Fenomena Baru Pembahasan RUU Naker," *Kompas*, 21 April 1997.

[89] Arief Djati, "Buruh dan Partai Politik," *Surya*, 21 June 1994; Hendardi, "Aksi Buruh dan Paradoksal Politik," *Surya*, 7 May 1994; Mulyana Kusumah, "Realitas Politik Perburuhan Kita," *Media Indonesia*, 14 December 1993; Dwi Saputra, "Persoalan Mogok dan Kesejahteraan Buruh," *Suara Merdeka, 15 April*, 15 April 1997.

[90] See Arief Djati, "Mistifikasi Marsinah dan Buruh Indonesia," *Surya*, 20 December 1993; Teten Masduki, "Memahami Tragedi Marsinah," *Kompas*, 26 May 1995; Munir, "Para Tersangka Kasus Marsinah: Keadilan yang Rentan," *Surya*, 1 March 1994; Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, "Peradilan Perkara Pembunuhan Aktivis Buruh Marsinah," *Kompas*, 8 May 1995.

[91] Hendardi, "Mengatasi Pemogokan dalam Kerangka HIP," *Suara Merdeka*, 23 April 1994; Hendardi, "Buruh dan Mahasiswa," *Surya*, 2 November 1995; Hendardi, "Menguak Tabir Kematian Marsinah," *Harian Terbit*, 18 May 1995; Hendardi, "UMR, Katup Pengaman, dan Kedaluwarsa." Other pieces appeared on the minimum wage. See for example Arief Djati, "Upah Buruh dan Kejahatan Pengupahan," *Surya*, 2 March 1994.

[92] Teten Masduki, "Beberapa Catatan Tentang RUU Pokok Ketenagakerjaan," *Media Indonesia*, 22 November 1995; Masduki, "Upah dan Biaya Birokrasi."

[93] Sri Wiyanti Eddyono, "Buruh, PHK, dan BBM Naik," *Merdeka*, 6 May 1998.

[94] Ahmad Sofian, "Persoalan Buruh Kini dan ke Depan (Refleksi Hari Buruh Sedunia)," *Waspada*, 9 September 1996.

the deep ambivalence in the bureaucracy and the executive towards labour NGOs, particularly after the GSP inquiries of the 1993-94. The boundaries of acceptable labour activism also affected newspaper coverage of labour NGOs' activities. Articles about labour NGOs generally focused on their research and advocacy functions. YLBHI and ELSAM were cited most regularly; they were mentioned in articles on issues including labour legislation, wages, unfair dismissal, rising unemployment, SBSI, Marsinah, the Medan Riots and the single-union policy.[95] In other examples, the research and seminars conducted by Akatiga, Yasanti and LBH Surabaya were reported, as were the opinions of Lapera and LBH APIK on the draft labour law and LBH APIK, and of Yakoma and YBM in relation to women workers.[96] Articles which described grassroots labour NGOs and legal aid NGOs

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[95] See for example "Marsinah Dinominasikan Dapat Yap Thiam Hien Award," *Kompas*, 9 November 1993; "Perubahan Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia Dari Unitaris: Federasi Tidak Selesaikan Masalah," *Media Indonesia*, 11 September 1993; "Yayasan LBH tentang Ancaman Pencabutan GSP: Jangan Korbankan Buruh," *Jayakarta*, 13 August 1993; "Kasus Pembunuhan Marsinah: Pembela Mendesak Kapolri agar Lasmini dan Susianawati Disidik," *Kompas*, 5 May 1994; "Hendardi (Direktur Program Khusus dan Komunikasi YLBHI): Perbaikannya Tidak Mendasar, Masih Tambal Sulam," *Republika*, 5 June 1995; "Putusan MA Perkuat Temuan LBH: Polri Bentuk Tim Marsinah," *Media Indonesia*, 11 May 1995; "Permen 03/1996 Diprediksi Bakal Melahirkan Fenomena PHK yang Lebih Luas," *Business News*, 24 May 1996; "UMR Naik, Tetap Harus Main Sulap"; "Kontroversi RUU Ketenagakerjaan Dibahas Seminar Internasional: Harus Dihindari Kemungkinan Jadi Alat Eksploitasi Tenaga Kerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 22 August 1997; "Pembahasan RUU Naker Ditunda Setelah Pemilu," *Kompas*, 10 April 1997; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan: Mundur Selangkah, Sebelum Bertanding," *Republika*, 14 April 1997; "RUUK Sebuah Kodifikasi Hukum Perburuhan?," *Republika*, 23 June 1997; "Teten Masduki (Ketua Pembahas Permasalahan Perburuhan YLBHI): Dapatkah Pak Latief Memberantas Kolusi," *Suara Merdeka*, 6 July 1997. ELSAM was often mentioned in articles that refer to YLBHI, particularly in the early-mid 1990s. See also "MA Diminta Menguji Materiel SK Mennaker"; "Trimoelja Soerjadi: Saya Memperjuangkan 'Misi Suci'," *Kompas*, 26 March 1994; "Klausula Buruh: Pertarungan Kepentingan Ekonomi," *Barata*, Week 2 May 1996; "PHK HongkongBank Tak Sah, Harus Batal demi Hukum," *Kompas*, 3 May 1996; "Terkatung-Katung, Nasib 189 Karyawan HongkongBank," *Kompas*, 18 July 1996; Pujihandi, "Kehidupan Pekerja Wanita Pabrik di Surabaya: 'Sering Pimpinan Mengajak Gituan. Kalau Ditolak Takut PHK'," *Surya*, 1 August 1994.

[96] "Sisi-Sisi Persoalan Seputar Buruh," *Kompas*, 23 December 1993; "Sampelnya Tidak Mewakili Jatim: 'Hasil Penelitian UMR Diskreditkan Pemerintah'," *Media Indonesia*, 20 September 1994; "Dari Lokakarya SP LEM SPSI: Perlu Rumusan Pendidikan," *Barata*, Week 2 October 1995; "Wakil Kelompok Buruh di Dewan Pengupahan Harus Diperbanyak," *Kompas*, 5 April 1995; "Manpower Bill Unclear on Women's Leave Rights," 11 August 1997; "Pekerja Sering Terima Masalah Sebagai Nasib," *Suara Merdeka*, 10 July 1997; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Lebih Memihak Kepentingan Modal daripada Buruh," *Suara Merdeka*, 2 April 1997; "7.000 Buruh di Jatim Kena PHK," *Kompas*, 10 February 1998; "Economic Crisis Hits More Female Workers with Layoffs," *Jakarta Post*, 4 May 1998; Adolf Bano, "Sikap Pemerintah dan Pengusaha Masih 'Setali Tiga Uang'," *Surya*, 16 July 1995; Editorial, "Pelanggaran Terhadap Upah Buruh Mengganggu Stabilitas Pembangunan," *Merdeka*, 24 September 1994; Dedi Haryadi, "Adaptasi Buruh terhadap Buruknya Kondisi Kerja," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 July 1997; Hieronymus Budi Santoso,

almost always focused on their 'helping' function. In an early reference, Sisbikum, LBH Jakarta and Yasanti were described as 'NGOs active in labour'.[97] YBM's work with SPSI on union education was frequently reported in *Barata*, along with its community programs for workers and its opinions on collective labour agreements, wages and SPSI's weaknesses.[98] Legal aid provided by YLBHI's regional affiliates and YFAS was also frequently reported.[99] In contrast, very few articles directly mentioned labour NGOs in an organising capacity. One article described a case in which workers from Bogor were '*diantar*' (accompanied, taken) to the DPR by Sisbikum and LBH Ampera in order to stage a protest.[100] Another mentioned LBH Surabaya's involvement in a demonstration in Jombang, East Java, where students, Muslims and NGO activists protesting about violence against workers from CV Maska Perkasa.[101] In a less direct statement about the organising role of labour

"Persoalan Upah Minimum dan Nasib Buruh," *Kompas*, 16 April 1994; Hieronymus Budi Santoso, "Keprihatinan SPSI dan Politik Pengupahan," *Kompas*, 20 February 1995.

[97] Putut Trihusodo, "Yang Terjebak Peraturan," *Tempo*, 8 June 1991.

[98] Accounts of YBM's activities appeared almost exclusively in *Barata*. See for example "Diterimanya Sektor Industri Sebagai Serikat Pekerja: SPSI Hasil Munas III/1990 Otomatis Bubar," *Barata*, Week 1 October 1993; "Pendidikan Keserikatan Tenagakerjaan DPP-SPSI Sektor LEM di Solo: Buruh Kontrak dan Harian Lepas Tantangan Baru SPSI," *Barata*, Week 3 May 1993; "Tuntut Hak, Ratusan Buruh PT AIG diPHK: Diberi Pesangon Setengah Bulan Upah Tapi 'Disunat' DPC SPSI," *Barata*, Week 4 September 1993; "Menggugat Keberadaan SPSI"; "Ratusan Buruh PT. Kencana Indah Garmindo, Mogok: Jamsostek Dilaksanakan Secara Bertahap," *Barata*, Week 2 September 1994; "Dari Lokakarya SP LEM SPSI: Perlu Rumusan Pendidikan"; "Apapun Alasannya, UMR Mesti Berjalan"; "PT. CFI PHK Karyawan Semaunya," *Barata*, Week 2 August 1996.

[99] See for example "Karyawan di-PHK Mengadu ke LBH," *Kompas*, 21 May 1991; "Korban PHK Pabrik Kecap Mengadu ke LBH: Uho dkk Menuntut Keadilan," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 12 January 1991; "300 Pekerja di-PHK Lakukan Unjuk Rasa," *Pos Kota*, 15 September 1993; "LBH Minta PHK Massal Akibat Mogok Ditinjau," *Kompas*, 3 May 1993; "Private Company Manager Accused of Slander by LBH," *Jakarta Post*, 15 October 1993; "Bekas Karyawan PT Gamya ke LBH," *Kompas*, 19 August 1994; "Dharma Manunggal Akhirnya Bayar Upah Buruh Rp 11 Juta," *Surya*, 25 January 1994; "MA Kabulkan Gugatan 22 Buruh Korban PHK Sepihak," *Kompas*, 16 July 1994; "Pekerja Borongan PT Jersindo Lewat LBH Gugat P4P ke PTTUN," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 October 1994; "Diadukan ke LBH: PT Pos Bandung PHK Karyawannya Sepihak," *Barata*, Week 1 March 1996; "Legal Aid Office Sees Rise in Workers' Awareness"; "Pangdam Perlu Jernihkan Kasus 16 Buruh Cimahi," *Republika*, 26 June 1996; "Aparat Hendaknya Tinjau Tindak Penekanan di Luar Hukum: LBH Kecam Penyelesaian Kasus Pekerja PT FJDS," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 13 May 1997; "Menyongsong Pengesahan RUU Ketenagakerjaan: Mungkinkah Mogok Buruh Harus Memberitahu Perusahaan," *Surya*, 15 September 1997; "Buruh Karoseri Mengadu ke LBH," *Suara Merdeka*, 10 March 1998.

[100] "Menuntut THR: Ratusan Buruh Gelar Kemah di Kantor Depnaker Surabaya," *Kompas*, 27 February 1995.

[101] Many articles in this category are referenced in this chapter and in Chapter Two according to the issues they relate to (for example the death of Marsinah, or the passing of labour legislation). See also "ABRI Tidak Pernah Terlibat Kasus Sengketa Perburuhan," *Media Indonesia*, 2 November 1995; "Ada Upaya Munculkan SARA dalam Unjuk Rasa Buruh di Jombang," *Surya*, 22 October 1995; "Jombang Diwarnai Unjuk Rasa," *Kompas*, 21 October 1995; "Soal Buruh CV MP:

NGOs in 1996, it was reported that workers who were *binaan* (those guided by) YBM and PMK participated in a university study into discrimination against women.[102] In another oblique reference, a series of articles referred to the cancelling of performances by the Sisbikum-sponsored *Teater Buruh* (Workers' Theatre) in Jakarta and later in Solo in 1995.[103]

As labour NGOs became more entrenched, some officials began to differentiate between NGOs rather than condemning them or praising them as a homogenous group. For example, when Apon Suryana, (the head of Department of Manpower Office in Bandung) 'appeal[ed] to workers to not be easily influenced by certain parties who appeared to want to protect the interests of workers, even though behind that they used them for certain purposes and interests',[104] he added that not all NGOs were 'bad', citing LBH Bandung's cooperative relationship with the Department. A small number of officials were even prepared to publicly recognise the link between SPSI's weakness and the rapid growth in labour activism outside official channels. In 1991, for example, the Deputy Governor of West Java noted that 'the public perception of the limitations of SPSI's handling of [labour] issues pushes third parties, such as legal aid organisations, NGOs, [SBM-SK] and other organisations to take advantage of the situation and conditions of workers'.[105]

Pangdam Brawijaya akan Tuntut YLBHI," *Harian Terbit*, 31 October 1995; "Tentang Kasus Kombang: YLBHI Tidak Mengada-ada," *Kompas*, 1 November 1995; "Buntut Unjuk Rasa di Jombang: Dapat Dipastikan Tiga Mahasiswa Akan Dipanggil Sebagai Tersangka," *Kompas*, 8 January 1996; Editorial, "Penyelesaian Kasus Jombang," *Media Indonesia*, 2 November 1995.

[102] "Di Setiap Perusahaan Terjadi: Diskriminasi Terhadap Pekerja Wanita," *Barata*, Week 2 October 1996.

[103] See for example "Banyak yang Sesalkan Pelarangan Pentas Teater Buruh Indonesia," *Suara Merdeka*, 26 September 1995; "'Senandung Terpuruk Dari Balik Tembok Pabrik' Dilarang di Solo," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 September 1995; "Teater Buruh: Sebuah Kesenian untuk Meringankan Beban," *Kompas*, 15 October 1995. For more details on workers' theatre, see Bodden, "Workers' Theatre and Theatre about Workers in 1990s Indonesia."

[104] "Apon Imbau Pekerja agar Tidak Mudah Terpengaruh: Kepatuhan Pengusaha Hindari Pihak Ketiga," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 31 October 1994. Similar statements had been made by the head of Labour Standards in the Department of Manpower's East Java Office earlier in the month. See "Strikes Drop Drastically in E. Jakarta," *Jakarta Post*, 25 October 1994. In Bandung, these sentiments were supported by the Chairs of the West Java branches of Apindo and SPSI a few days later. See "Di Bandung, Diduga Ada LBH Hasut Buruh Pabrik," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2 November 1994.

[105] See "Perhatikan HIP dan Perlindungan Kerja: Keadaan Paksa Pekerja Terima Persyaratan Kurang Manusiawai," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2 December 1991. These accusations were common also in later years. See for example "Abdul Latief: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Bukan Tanggung Jawab Menaker," *Harian Terbit*, 4 May 1994; "Dirjen Sospol tentang SBSI dan Kasus Medan: 'Muchtar Pakpahan Siapa Sih Dia?'" *Jayakarta*, 2 May 1994; "Mantan Ketua DPD SPSI Jatim: Kepempimpinan Soedaryanto Gagal."

Around the same time Wilhelmus Bhoka acknowledged that 'Of the thousands of labor disputes that have occurred in this country in the past, only 1 per cent to 2 per cent have been mediated by SPSI, whilst the majority were handled by NGOs'.[106] In 1994, a military spokesperson told FSPSI to 'open its eyes' to the reasons why workers approached NGOs.[107] Some years later, after Dita Sari's arrest, Latief argued that if FSPSI were stronger, workers would not be so 'easily incited by operatives (*oknum*) who represent workers in name, but really only seek to realise their own interests.[108] In 1997, Soetrisno S. Adisewejo, the Coordinator of the Central Disputes Resolution Committee, told a forum in Surabaya that local laws which banned NGOs from giving workers advice contravened Law No.12/1964. SPSI, he added, should ask itself why workers were going elsewhere.[109]

Although ABRI adopted a punitive approach when labour issues were perceived to threaten stability, it also publicly recognised differences between particular NGOs and alternative unions towards the end of the New Order period. In an article entitled 'ABRI Will More Strictly Supervise the Implementation of Regional Minimum Wages', for example, Suwarno Adijoyo, Head of ABRI's Information Centre, asked the people of Indonesia to differentiate carefully between NGOs that were trying to empower the community and those that were only seeking to empower themselves. The latter, he said, 'spread seeds of hatred by focusing on issues of rich and poor, race and religion and are involved in destructive actions'. He concluded by saying that ABRI would only accept community organisations (*ormas*) if they were useful to the community and did not get involved in practical politics.[110] Syamsul Maarif, Commander of the Bhaskara Jaya Military District—like officials in the Department of Manpower—differentiated between 'good' NGOs, and 'bad' NGOs. Maarif cited Arek Surabaya, which ran workers' training, made workers aware of their rights and provided motivation for them, as an example of a 'good'

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[106] Wilhelmus Bhoka quoted in "Government Urged to Rid SPSI of Politicians." SPSI's failures were, of course, also used by NGO activists to justify their involvement in labour issues.

[107] "F-ABRI Minta SPSI Buka Mata," *Jayakarta*, 25 April 1994.

[108] "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut."For another report of Latief's position on this matter a year later, see "Menaker: Pekerja Jangan Terpancing Mogok Politis." For a discussion of the popular use of *oknum*, see Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 259-260.

[109] "LBH Miliki Kesempatan Berikan Advokasi Kepada Tenaga Kerja," *Suara Pembaruan*, 2 June 1997.

[110] Suwarno Adijoyo quoted in "Kapuspen: 'Agar Aksi Mogok Pekerja Dapat Dikurangi': ABRI akan Lebih Ketat Awasi Pelaksanaan UMR."

NGO. He contrasted Arek with PRD, a 'bad' NGO, which 'used workers for their own purposes' and 'openly admitted being behind' the Surabaya strikes.[111] However, these cases remained the exception rather than the rule. More common were blanket statements in which NGOs or 'those organisations that call themselves legal aid institutes (LBH)' were criticised for being negative 'outside influences'.[112]

The One-Union Policy and the Exclusion of Non-Workers

As noted in Chapter Two, one of the most prominent features of officials' attitudes towards NGOs and alternative unions in the early 1990s was their failure to differentiate between SBM-SK, SBSI and PPBI—the alternative unions aspiring to a mass-based worker membership—and labour NGOs, particularly those involved in grassroots organising. The government dismissed claims made by SBM-SK and SBSI, and later PPBI, on two grounds. First, it argued that there was no room for them, because Indonesia already had a single vehicle (*wadah tunggal*) for workers. Second, they were rejected because they were not established by workers. Their inability to register meant that these alternative unions, like labour NGOs themselves, were located outside the formal structures of labour representation. Consequently, they were excluded from workplace organising, collective bargaining and the tripartite institutions of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations—the cornerstones of the economic model of unionism promoted by the New Order government, and by international organisations such as the ILO and the ICFTU.

Sudomo's single union policy was first seriously challenged in 1990 by the establishment of SBM-SK, and again in 1992 when SBSI was formed. Although Batubara was reluctant to ban SBM-SK outright, the government's commitment to a single union was still firm in the early 1990s. During preparations for the eighteenth anniversary of the formation of FBSI, President Suharto reminded workers that

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[111] Hadi Mustafa, "Meningkatkan Kesadaran ala Pekerja," *Republika*, 12 August 1996. Even some NGO and alternative union activists sought to publicly distance themselves from more radical groups. In one such case, after Great River Industries strike, Aritonang commented that 'the methods with which PPBI and SMID defended the workers from PT GRI (Great River industries) in Bogor were a step backward' because they were too militant. See "Tampilnya LSM Membela Buruh Karena Konstelasi Politik Belum Fair," *Barata*, Week 4 July 1995. Sri Wiyanti Eddyono (LBH APIK) also distanced herself from the actions of organisations 'like the PKI and the PRD'. See Eddyono, "Buruh, PHK, dan BBM Naik."

[112] Imam Soedarwo quoted in "Sebagai Tindakan 'Liar'?," *Suara Pembaruan*, 22 August 1991.

'there is no need to create a new labour organisation outside the All-Indonesia Workers' Union'. Suharto accepted SPSI's suggestion that the anniversary be designated Indonesian Workers' Day, 'because 20 February 1973 has historical value as the moment when the Declaration of the Oneness of Indonesian Workers (*pekerja*) was ignited (*dicetuskan*), after the period of workers' disarray before the G30S/PKI'.[113]

Despite Batubara's attempts to revive the image of Indonesian unionism and build cooperative links with labour NGOs, he, too, invoked the communist spectre when stating his support for the one-union policy and his rejection of SBM-SK. He argued that 'If there are many unions, as HJC Princen desires…there will many quarrels between them, and [unions] will ultimately return to the period before G30S-PKI'.[114] Likewise, after SBSI was formed, Payaman Simanjuntak argued that 'SBSI is not a union because it was not established by workers, but by observers (*pemerhati*) of manpower issues (*ketenagakerjaan*).'[115] He emphasised that the Department was not forbidding alternative unions, just unions formed by non-workers:

> If it is said that there are many people who are not satisfied with SPSI, I ask which ones? Is it true that those who are not satisfied are workers? As I see it, those who are not satisfied with SPSI are not workers, and have never been workers…If the people who want to establish [a union] are not workers, whether they be NGOs or lawyers or individual NGO activists, the government will think hard and ask: 'What do they want? What are their motives?'[116]

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[113] "Presiden: Tidak Perlu Membentuk Organisasi Buruh Selain SPSI," *Wawasan*, 20 February 1991. G30S/PKI (*Gerakan 30 September/Partai Komunis Indonesia,* 30 September Movement/ Indonesian Communist Party) was the acronym for the attempted coup of 1965.

[114] "Seperti Memegang Burung (Interview with Cosmas Batubara)," *Tempo*, 8 June 1991. After a leadership split paralysed SBM-SK, Saut Aritonang reportedly told an ICFTU delegation that in early 1992, Batubara (then-Minister for Manpower) advised him to concentrate on workers' education and offered him a job in *the Yayasan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*, having observed that the government would not recognise SBM-SK as an independent trade union. "Report of the ICFTU/APRO Delegation to Indonesia April 5 to 9, 1993," 16.

[115] Payaman Simanjuntak quoted in "SBSI Tidak Dapat Disebut Sebagai Serikat Pekerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 4 August 1993. See also Major General Soetoyo N.K., the Director General of Social-Politics in the Department of Internal Affairs, quoted in "Dirjen Sospol tentang SBSI dan Kasus Medan: 'Muchtar Pakpahan Siapa Sih Dia?'".

[116] Payaman Simanjuntak quoted in "Dirjen Binawas Dr Payaman Simanjuntak: 'Asal Buruh, Boleh Saja Bentuk Serikat Pekerja di Luar SPSI'," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 6 August 1993.

Notably, the ICFTU's 1993 delegation to Indonesia concurred with the government's assessment of SBSI, concluding:

> The SBSI is essentially composed of a group of lawyers, who are carrying out some education and labour advocacy in select areas…The operations of the SBSI [are] ephemeral, apparently [serving] the interests of various political and social forces within the country, and dubious international agencies.[117]

Latief made a similar statement after the announcement of the re-federation of SPSI. He argued that 'freedom of association is fully guaranteed in Indonesia but the government would not recognize trade unions which are not set up by workers'.[118] A week later, at the inauguration of nine sectoral unions affiliated to newly re-federated SPSI, Latief again told journalists that 'The government will not recognise [SBSI and SBM-SK] because they were established by individuals with political interests and not by workers'.[119] In 1994, in an article bearing the headline, 'Minister for Manpower, Abdul Latief: "No Compromises with SBSI and LBH"', Latief was again reported as saying that whilst the weaknesses in SPSI encouraged the emergence of other 'manpower observers' like SBSI and LBH, the Department of Manpower would not compromise with them because 'SBSI is an illegal organisation and LBH is a group of out-of-work law graduates'.[120] In the wake of the Medan riots, Soesilo Soedarmo (Coordinating Minister for Politics and Stability) and Feisal Tanjung (Commander of the Armed Forces) reinforced the government's refusal to recognise SBSI. They were reported separately as saying SBSI was a NGO not a union;

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[117]   "Report of the ICFTU/APRO Delegation to Indonesia April 5 to 9, 1993," 7.

[118]   "Latief: Workers Free to Organise."

[119]   Abdul Latief quoted in "Govt Says No to Two Labor Organisations," *Jakarta Post*, 8 September 1993. See also "Mennaker Abdul Latief: SPSI Gaya Baru Diharapkan Lebih Menguntungkan Pekerja," *Kompas*, 9 September 1993. In response to accusations such as these, Muchtar Pakpahan rejected the government's evaluation of SBSI rather than the framework in which that evaluation was made. Rather than arguing for a wider form of trade unionism, he insisted that SBSI was a 'pure' labour union set up by workers. See "Labor Union to Sue Police for Banning Congress," *Jakarta Post*, 5 October 1993.

[120]   "Menaker, Abdul Latief: 'Tidak Ada Kompromi dengan SBSI dan LBH'," *Barata*, Week 4 July 1994. For statements from other government and military spokespeople in a similar vein, see also "Depnaker Tidak Mengakui Keberadaan SBSI," *Merdeka*, 9 August 1994; "Pangdam Berhak Menolak Audiensi Pengurus SBSI," *Suara Merdeka*, 6 August 1994.

therefore it had no right to become directly involved in a workers' demonstration.[121] The government maintained its stance on alternative unions and NGOs throughout the New Order period. In an English-language Department of Foreign Affairs document published in 1997, it was stated that:

> The controversial SBSI or Indonesian Prosperity Labor Association was formed in April 1992 by certain elements from political, human rights and legal aid organizations. This association has not been able to legally prove that it was established by workers or their representatives at the company level. Moreover, the association has not been able to prove that its objective is to pursue collective labor agreements. From its inception, it has been shown that SBSI is concerned far more with political than with labor issues. Therefore, if the SBSI will continue as an association, it should be categorized as a non-governmental organization (NGO) rather than as a trade union.[122]

The Department of Foreign Affairs argued, that as a NGO, 'SBSI may still organize programs related to labor issues, such as workers' education programs or legal aid for trade unions, but it should not duplicate or take away the roles and functions of trade unions.'[123] PPBI was also described as a NGO, despite its firm protestations to the contrary.[124]

Accusations about the manipulation of workers by NGOs and alternative unions were most strident when addressing their participation in strikes. After the Gadjah Tunggal strikes of 1991, SPSI Chair, Imam Soedarwo observed:

> What we need to be careful about are strikes that are instigated (*digerakkan*) by outsiders (*pihak luar*) and not organised (*diorganisir*) by SPSI. There are instigators (*penggerak*) from this NGO and that NGO, from this legal aid organisation and that legal aid organisation. There are also those who call themselves labour unions outside

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[121] "Menko Polkam: Masalah SBSI Diselesaikan Bertahap," *Kompas*, 29 April 1994; "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif"; "Rakor Polkam Haruskan Kasus Medan Dilokalisasi," *Republika*, 19 April 1994.

[122] Department of Foreign Affairs, *A Commitment to Improving the Rights of Workers* (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1997 [cited 21 August 2001]); available from http://www.dfa-deplu.go.id/english2/workers032498.htm.

[123] Ibid.

[124] "Workers' Demands Met After 4-Day Strike," *Jakarta Post*, 11 November 1994; "Aksi Berlanjut, Ribuan Buruh PT GRI ke DPR," *Kompas* 1995.

SPSI. If they are involved, the strike in question is not legitimate…This is what must be guarded against.[125]

Other commentary on the strikes took a similar vein. Bambang Wirahyono, the SPSI's Secretary for Education, argued that 'in this case, there is a possibility that other parties (*pihak lain*) have guided (*mengarahkan*) the workers to act in this way'.[126] Sudomo (then Coordinating Minister for Politics and Stability) said the government would act decisively against the 'parties who incited and intimidated [workers] so that a strike would occur in the companies of the PT Gadjah Tunggal Group'. He accused those parties of being '*pahlawan kesiangan*' (heroes who arrived too late) who 'threatened national stability'.[127] In December of the same year, it was reported that the military was tracking down (*melacak*) the people thought to have manipulated (*menunggangi*) the strikes of the last few months for their own purposes and profit. According to Military Commander Major General Harseno, 'it has been found that a number of demonstrations have been exploited by people, both those acting in their own name or in the name of organisations that protect the interests of the people'. The examples he gave of this were the Gadjah Tunggal strike and SBM-SK's planned demonstration before the ILO.[128]

Statements about politicisation became more vociferous in the wake of the Medan riots of 1994. After the riots, Latief was reported as saying there were third parties (*pihak ketiga*), who were unhappy about the good relationship between employers and employees, incited workers to strike in order to increase their own popularity (*mencari popularitas diri sendiri*).[129] Minister for Defence and Security, Edi Sudrajat, commented that in Medan that 'Many people were brought together at the same time in the same place, then infused (*diisi*) with demands for wage rises,

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[125]   Imam Soedarwo, Chair of the SPSI Central Committee quoted in Setyono, "Menuntut THR Merupakan Salah Satu Penyebab Terjadinya Pemogokan."

[126]   "Korban PHK Pabrik Kecap Mengadu ke LBH: Uho dkk Menuntut Keadilan." In addition to the threat posed by outsiders, Kammen identifies a number of other tropes in the official discourse about strikes. See Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 254-289.

[127]   "Pemerintah Akan Tindak 'Penghasut' Pemogokan 11.000 Buruh di Tangerang," *Harian Terbit*, 22 August 1991; "Ribuan Karyawan Gajah Tunggal Ramai-Ramai ke DPRD," *Merdeka*, 22 August 1991.

[128]   Major General Harseno quoted in "Kodam Jaya Sedang Lacak Penunggang Unjuk Rasa," *Kompas*, 14 December 1991.

[129]   Abdul Latief quoted in "Pangab: Tak Bisa Ditolerir: Medan Agak Tenang, Unjuk Rasa Merembet ke Siantar," *Merdeka*, 18 April 1994.

then mobilised. That's the PKI way.'[130] Feisal Tanjung, Military Commander Major General A. Pranowo, and ABRI's General Head of Staff Lieutenant-General H.B.L. Mantiri drew analogies between the destruction and unrest in Medan and methods used by the PKI .[131] In the immediate aftermath of the riots, Pranowo was reported to have said they proved that the workers' movement was no longer 'pure' because 'outside forces' (*pihak-pihak luar*) with 'certain purposes and objectives' (*maksud dan tujuan tertentu*) had been involved.[132] In a similar vein, Latief later argued that the riots were not his responsibility because they had not been 'not purely from workers' aspirations'.[133]

There was another surge in media coverage of the one union policy and the negative influence of outsiders as PPBI became increasingly active. After the Great River Industries strike of 1995, Latief justified military involvement by saying the government had to act after discovering a third party, which had been 'fanning' (*mengipas-ngipasi*) the strike.[134] Suwarto, the Director-General of Industrial Relations, responded by telling journalists that 'there are strong indications of political elements at play here. There are people who used those workers for their own political interests'.[135] A year later, after the PPBI-led strike in East Java, nine 'non-workers' who came from 'outside the factory environment' were reported as being under suspicion for 'masterminding' the strike. The Head of the East Java Regional Body for the Coordination of National Stability, Major General Imam

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[130] "Menko Polkam: Masalah SBSI Diselesaikan Bertahap." Liberalism was also invoked, although much less commonly, in criticisms of outside involvement in the labour movement. Latief, for example, was quoted as saying in 1993 that '[i]t should be admitted that a small group of workers and certain people in society have been influenced by liberal ways in fighting for their interests'. See "Most Labor Strikes in Indonesia Carried Out Illegally: Official," *Jakarta Post*, 25 September 1993.

[131] Hendardi, "Aksi Buruh dan Paradoksal Politik."

[132] The 'outside forces' to be questioned included activists from 'SBSI and other NGOs'. See "Yang Abaikan Hak Buruh Akan Ditutup."

[133] "Abdul Latief: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Bukan Tanggung Jawab Menaker." Feisal Tanjung went further, making accusations that 'those behind that demonstration were born into ex-PKI families...And we know that the director and scenario [sic] behind the Medan demonstrations were members of SBSI'—a theory repeated by Hartono, the Head of ABRI's Socio-Political Section, some weeks later. See "Mencari Kambing Hitam Kasus Medan."

[134] "Presiden Soal Pemogokan di GRI: Jangan Ada Buruh yang Terkena PHK," *Media Indonesia*, 26 July 1995.

[135] Suwarto's comments were reported in an article entitled, 'NGOs Accused of Masterminding Worker Strikes'. See "NGOs Accused of Masterminding Worker Strikes," *Jakarta Post*, 22 July 1995. See also "Para Pekerja PT GRI ke Depnaker: Dirjen Binawas Suwarto Menjamin Tak Akan Ada PHK," *Merdeka*, 25 July 1995; "Ribuan Pekerja PT. GRI Mogok: Menuntut Kepentingan," *Barata*, Week 1 July 1995.

Utomo, condemned the outsiders, saying that 'thousands of workers who just want to do their work properly were forced to demonstrate or strike'. ABRI, he said, was planning to hold 'dialogues' with the workers to spread the message that workers should resist being 'influenced by talk from outside because if they go on strike and their factory is bankrupted, they will suffer as well'.[136] The 27 July Affair saw a further spate of official statements about unionism. President Suharto encouraged workers to focus on a national consolidation so that they would not be easily influenced by incitement from 'third parties' who claimed to act for workers.[137] In September 1996, Regional Military Commander Major-General Sutiyoso echoed Suharto's words when he told thousands of workers to be careful of 'irresponsible parties' who use workers for their own ends.[138]

Condemnation of the Outsider

The language used to describe the involvement of NGOs, radical student groups and alternative unions in labour issues generally—and in strikes in particular—is instructive.[139] The government, bureaucrats, the military and some SPSI officials used a wide range of negative terms to describe non-worker labour activists, heavy with references to the threat of communism and the illegitimacy of non-worker involvement in the labour movement. The first group of terms referred to the groups' non-worker status. It included 'outsiders' (*unsur luar* or *pihak luar*), 'other parties', 'certain parties', 'other people' or 'certain operatives' (*pihak lain, pihak tertentu, orang tertentu*, or *oknum tertentu*), and 'third parties' (*pihak ketiga*).[140] Sometimes,

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[136] Imam Utomo quoted in "Lima Orang Lainnya Masih Diburu: Ditangkap 4 Otak Unjuk Rasa 15 Pabrik," *Surya*, 2 June 1996. See also "Empat Oknum Dalangi Unjuk Rasa di Surabaya," *Kompas*, 3 June 1996; "Unjuk Rasa di Surabaya Bermuatan Politis," *Waspada*, 11 July 1996. When Dita Sari and Coen Husein Pontoh were subsequently arrested, Lieutenant M. Sofwat Hadi, the police spokesperson, said 'We had to detain them because we have strong evidence they masterminded the labour demonstration' M. Sofwat Hadi quoted in "Students Arrested for Inciting Labor Protests," *Jakarta Post*, 11 July 1996.

[137] See also "Prasyarat bagi Konsolidasi Pekerja Indonesia," *Suara Merdeka*, 29 August 1996.

[138] "Pangdam: Aksi Pekerja bisa Dimanfaatkan Tujuan Lain," *Merdeka*, 18 September 1996. In his/her commentary on Suharto's statement, the author of this article noted the ease with which workers are manipulated is related to the absence of a proper channel for their interests.

[139] See also Kammen, "A Time to Strike." 257.

[140] "Kodam Jaya Sedang Lacak Penunggang Unjuk Rasa"; "Korban PHK Pabrik Kecap Mengadu ke LBH: Uho dkk Menuntut Keadilan"; "Menaker akan Seret ke Pengadilan Perusahaan yang Ingkari Aturan"; "Mennaker: Petugas Datang Kalau Unjuk Rasa Buruh Ganggu Ketertiban Umum"; "Pemerintah Akan Tindak 'Penghasut' Pemogokan 11.000 Buruh di Tangerang";

they were even referred to as 'formless' organisations (*organisasi tanpa bentuk*)[141]—
a term which was commonly used to describe communists in the New Order period.
The second group of terms referred to their actions. They were accused of
'interfering' (*campur tangan* or *mencampuri*)[142] or 'intervening' (*mengintervensi*)[143]
in the employer-employee relationship. They 'incited' or 'drew in' (*menghasut* or
memancing),[144] 'mobilised' (*menggerakkan*),[145] 'influenced' (*mempengaruhi*),[146]
'infiltrated' (*menyusupi*)[147] and 'intimidated' (*melakukan intimidasi*)[148] workers in

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"Perhatikan HIP dan Perlindungan Kerja: Keadaan Paksa Pekerja Terima Persyaratan Kurang Manusiawi"; "Sebagai Tindakan 'Liar'?"; "SPSI Dikembalikan ke Bentuk Federasi"; "Unjuk Rasa Dapat Ditolerir Sepanjang Tuntut Soal Upah"; "Apon Imbau Pekerja agar Tidak Mudah Terpengaruh: Kepatuhan Pengusaha Hindari Pihak Ketiga"; "Menggugat Keberadaan SPSI"; "Pangab: Tak Bisa Ditolerir: Medan Agak Tenang, Unjuk Rasa Merembet ke Siantar"; "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif"; "Rakor Polkam Haruskan Kasus Medan Dilokalisasi"; "Ada Upaya Munculkan SARA dalam Unjuk Rasa Buruh di Jombang"; "Buruh GRI Kembali Bekerja: Menaker Tepati Janjinya," *Harian Terbit*, 26 July 1995; "Menaker: Biarkan Serikat Pekerja Tumbuh Dari Bawah," *Merdeka*, 3 October 1995; "Presiden Soal Pemogokan di GRI: Jangan Ada Buruh yang Terkena PHK"; "Lima Orang Lainnya Masih Diburu: Ditangkap 4 Otak Unjuk Rasa 15 Pabrik"; "Pangdam: Aksi Pekerja bisa Dimanfaatkan Tujuan Lain"; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut"; "Prasyarat bagi Konsolidasi Pekerja Indonesia"; "Wawancara Dengan Pangdam III/Siliwangi, Mayjen TNI Tayo Tarmadi: Jika Murni, Unjuk Rasa Positif," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 3 June 1996; "Menaker Abdul Latief: Jangan Hanya Bisa Ngomong di Koran," *Republika*, 23 June 1997; "Mennaker Abdul Latief: Pemerintah Tak Batasi Kebebasan Pekerja untuk Berserikat," *Kompas*, 27 June 1997; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Diajukan ke DPR: PHK Diserahkan Pihak Bersengketa," *Suara Merdeka*, 17 June 1997; Editorial, "Bakorstanas Ikut Campur Masalah Pekerja," *Harian Terbit*, 13 May 1994; Ghufron Hasyim, "Upaya Mendongkrak Kesejahteraan Pekerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 August 1994; Setyono, "Menuntut THR Merupakan Salah Satu Penyebab Terjadinya Pemogokan."

[141] Tambah Sudjio, "Ketua DPD-SPSI Jateng: OTB Selalu Mengincar Kerawanan Pekerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 20 October 1995.

[142] "Depnaker-LSM Akui Kondisi Buruh Memprihatinkan"; "Mennaker: Petugas Datang Kalau Unjuk Rasa Buruh Ganggu Ketertiban Umum"; "SPSI Dikembalikan ke Bentuk Federasi"; "SPSI Gaya Baru: Kerelaan Pengusaha Kunci Utama"; "Wawancara Dengan Pangdam III/Siliwangi, Mayjen TNI Tayo Tarmadi: Jika Murni, Unjuk Rasa Positif"; Setyono, "Menuntut THR Merupakan Salah Satu Penyebab Terjadinya Pemogokan."

[143] "Mennaker Abdul Latief: Pemerintah Tak Batasi Kebebasan Pekerja untuk Berserikat."

[144] "Ribuan Karyawan Gajah Tunggal Ramai-Ramai ke DPRD"; "Pangab: Tak Bisa Ditolerir: Medan Agak Tenang, Unjuk Rasa Merembet ke Siantar"; "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif"; "Poltabes Periksa Lagi Muchtar Pakpahan," *Suara Merdeka*, 18 April 1994; "Buruh GRI Kembali Bekerja: Menaker Tepati Janjinya"; "Disesalkan, Penangkapan Para Buruh PT GRI," *Media Indonesia*, 21 July 1995; "Ribuan Pekerja PT. GRI Mogok: Menuntut Kepentingan"; "Pangdam: Aksi Pekerja bisa Dimanfaatkan Tujuan Lain"; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut"; "Menaker: Pekerja Jangan Terpancing Mogok Politis"; Editorial, "Watak Nasional dan Internasional Buruh," *Harian Merdeka*, 13 May 1994.

[145] "Sebagai Tindakan 'Liar'?"; "Kasus Medan: LBH Diduga Terlibat"; "Pangab: Tak Bisa Ditolerir: Medan Agak Tenang, Unjuk Rasa Merembet ke Siantar"; "SBSI Akui Mengorganisasikan Pemogokan Buruh di Medan"; "Penggerak Unjuk Rasa Dipanggil Polwil Bogor," *Media Indonesia*, 21 November 1995; Kian Gie Kwik, "Masalah Buruh," *Kompas*, 10 May 1994.

[146] "Sebagai Tindakan 'Liar'?."

[147] "Pangdam: Aksi Pekerja bisa Dimanfaatkan Tujuan Lain"; "Humas Bakorstanas: Unjuk Rasa Buruh Menjurus Aksi Brutal," *Republika*, 1 May 1997.

[148] "Ribuan Karyawan Gajah Tunggal Ramai-Ramai ke DPRD."

order to make them go on strike. They 'used', 'exploited' and 'manipulated' (*memperalat, memakai, menggunakan, memanfaatkan, mengeksploitasi, memanipulasikan*) [149] or 'rode' (*menunggangi*) [150] those workers as 'political tools' or 'political commodities' (*alat politik* or *komoditi politik*) to further their own 'political interests' (*kepentingan politik*).[151] Their 'subversive' (*subversif*)[152] actions were considered to 'threaten national stability' (*mengganggu/mengancam stabilitas nasional*)[153]—and, therefore, *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution.

The constant use of terms such as 'outsider' and 'third party' to describe non-worker involvement in the labour movement elicited strong responses amongst NGO activists and academics, some of which were published in the daily press.[154] Even journalists sometimes criticised the language in which strikes were described. For example, one editorial in *Merdeka* argued that while some demonstrations were

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[149] "Perhatikan HIP dan Perlindungan Kerja: Keadaan Paksa Pekerja Terima Persyaratan Kurang Manusiawai"; "Menaker Minta Gerakan Pekerja Tidak 'Dipolitisir'," *Media Indonesia*, 18 September 1993; "Unjuk Rasa Dapat Ditolerir Sepanjang Tuntut Soal Upah"; "Apon Imbau Pekerja agar Tidak Mudah Terpengaruh: Kepatuhan Pengusaha Hindari Pihak Ketiga"; "Di Bandung, Diduga Ada LBH Hasut Buruh Pabrik"; "Menaker: Biarkan Serikat Pekerja Tumbuh Dari Bawah"; "Ribuan Pekerja PT. GRI Mogok: Menuntut Kepentingan"; "Pangdam: Aksi Pekerja bisa Dimanfaatkan Tujuan Lain"; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut"; "Menaker Abdul Latief: Jangan Hanya Bisa Ngomong di Koran"; "Mennaker Abdul Latief: Pemerintah Tak Batasi Kebebasan Pekerja untuk Berserikat"; "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Diajukan ke DPR: PHK Diserahkan Pihak Bersengketa."

[150] "Kodam Jaya Sedang Lacak Penunggang Unjuk Rasa"; "Unjuk Rasa Dapat Ditolerir Sepanjang Tuntut Soal Upah"; "Rakor Polkam Haruskan Kasus Medan Dilokalisasi"; "Unjuk Rasa di Medan Mulai Reda, 24 Orang Ditahan," *Kompas*, 19 April 1994; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut"; Mustafa, "Meningkatkan Kesadaran ala Pekerja"; "Prasyarat bagi Konsolidasi Pekerja Indonesia"; "Humas Bakorstanas: Unjuk Rasa Buruh Menjurus Aksi Brutal"; "Menaker Abdul Latief: Jangan Hanya Bisa Ngomong di Koran."

[151] "Banyak Masalah Buruh Tak Dikuasai SPSI"; "Menaker Minta Gerakan Pekerja Tidak 'Dipolitisir'"; "Mennaker Abdul Latief: SPSI Gaya Baru Diharapkan Lebih Menguntungkan Pekerja"; "Pemogokan Sarinah Diotaki Pihak Ketiga," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 17 June 1993; "Depnaker Terima Ketua Umum SBSI: Muchtar Tetap Kritik SPSI"; "Pangab: Tak Bisa Ditolerir: Medan Agak Tenang, Unjuk Rasa Merembet ke Siantar"; "SPSI Minta HIP Dijadikan Hukum Besi Pembangunan"; "Menaker Abdul Latief: Jangan Hanya Bisa Ngomong di Koran"; Soemarno, "Buruh antara Potensi Politik versus Konflik," *Jayakarta*, 27 April 1994.

[152] "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif." Two days later, Latief's support for Feisal Tanjung's description of SBSI as *subversif* was reported. See "Menaker: Penggerak Unjuk Rasa Pekerja di Medan Harus Diadili."

[153] "Pemerintah Akan Tindak 'Penghasut' Pemogokan 11.000 Buruh di Tangerang"; "Latief Condemns Exploiting Workers for Political Ends"; "Yayasan LBH tentang Ancaman Pencabutan GSP: Jangan Korbankan Buruh"; "Pangab: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Subversif"; "Latief Asks Workers Not to Go on Strike," *Jakarta Post*, 3 August 1996; "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut"; "Prasyarat bagi Konsolidasi Pekerja Indonesia."

[154] See, for example, Arief Budiman's commentary in Arief Budiman, "Tak Soal Ditunggangi," *Media Indonesia*, 7 July 1991. See also Arief Djati, "Buruh dan Demokrasi," *Surya*, 27 September 1994.

violent, this did not mean that every strike should be condemned as having a provocateur or mastermind.[155] Less than two weeks after the 27 July Affair, a *Kompas* editorial asked, 'Is the role of workers in creating national stability really so strategic? This question arises after the government has made pleas to the workers not to be easily incited by third parties for two days in a row'.[156]

Although these responses were important, the most significant challenge to the government's stance against 'outsiders' came from within SPSI itself. From the mid-1990s, some SPSI activists initiated cooperative exercises with NGOs and alternative unions. Some even called for recognition of unions outside SPSI. In 1994, the National Human Rights Commission (*Komnas HAM*) proposed that SPSI and SBSI merge—a suggestion to which Latief responded by saying that individuals from SBSI could join, but a merger was impossible because SBSI was not a recognised organisation.[157] Saralen Purba (at that time a deputy chair of SPSI's Central Committee) had called for acceptance of SBSI as a partner in struggle (*rekan seperjuangan*) in the same year. Bhoka and Marzuki made a statement of solidarity in support of Muchtar Pakpahan in 1995,[158] and the Metals, Electronics and Machines (*Logam, Elektronik, Mesin*) sector union (which had strong historical and practical connections with YBM) hosted a national seminar involving NGOs, students and members of SPSI.[159] In 1996, just before Marzuki Ahmad replaced Bomer Pasaribu as General Chair of SPSI, he announced that SPSI planned to 'immediately approach organisations which have a *special interest* [English in the original] such as legal aid organisations, the National Commission for Human Rights and NGOs that focus on women and child workers'.[160] In 1997, a number of articles described meetings between SPSI officals and NGOs.[161] However, despite the public

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[155]   Editorial, "Watak Nasional dan Internasional Buruh.".

[156]   Editorial, "Perlu Kerja Keras untuk Ciptakan Kondisi Pekerja Tak Mudah Dihasut."

[157]   "Komnas HAM Usulkan agar SBSI Digabung dengan SPSI," *Suara Merdeka*, 18 June 1994.

[158]   "Menko Polkam: Masalah SBSI Diselesaikan Bertahap."

[159]   "Dari Seminar Nasional SP LEM-JILAF/Jepang: SP LEM-SPSI Harus Menjadi Ujung Tombak," *Barata*, Week 1 February 1995.

[160]   "Ketua Umum SPSI: Problem Berat, Hadapi Konglomerat yang Dekat Pejabat," *Kompas*, 18 November 1996. In contrast, Bomer Pasaribu continued to attack SBSI, PPBI and 'other organisations and groups who claim to further workers' interests'. "Pekerja Agar Tak Mudah Dihasut."

[161]   In one example, in late 1997, LBH Semarang and SPSI jointly opened a complaints office (*pos pengaduan*). See "Bila UU Naker Tak Ditaati, Terjadi Gejolak Pekerja," *Kompas*, 16 October 1997; "Di Jateng, Sudah 864 Karyawan Terkena PHK," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 November 1997.

presence of dissenting voices, the labour organising undertaken by NGOs, alternative unions and radical students continued to be portrayed as the work of 'outsiders' by government officials in the daily press and elsewhere.

Conclusion

The balance of power between the corporatist and revisionist elements of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations shifted throughout the New Order period. When labour corporatism was strongest, the state denied its earlier acknowledgment of workers' interests. However, the rhetoric of revisionism, with its tacit acknowledgment of labour's potential antagonism towards capital, regained some popularity towards the end of the 1980s. Three related aspects of labour policy demonstrated the limits of New Order labour corporatism: the regime's failed attempt to impose *karyawan*, and then *pekerja,* as organic terms encompassing all performers of positive and purposeful activity; the tension between its views of workers' obligations and interests; and the government's contradictory stance on politicisation and the involvement of non-worker outsiders in the official union. The stamp of revisionism was unmistakeable. Workers were said to be best served by the exclusion of non-workers from their unions, which were accorded the right to organise strikes within 'normative' economic boundaries but forbidden to establish political connections.

These concerns were reflected in the New Order's attitude towards labour opposition. The government cautiously accepted NGO assistance in the provision of welfare and education, and even their right to comment on labour affairs. However, it rejected attempts by NGOs and radical student groups to organise workers both as threats to the one-union policy and as interference from non-worker 'outsiders'. The government both differentiated and conflated alternative unions, student groups and labour NGOs. They were differentiated when students and labour NGOs conformed to the government's vision of their function as middle-class supporters of the realisation of national development through the production of a modern, useful workforce. They were conflated when they were perceived to have jeopardised organised labour's freedom from non-worker intervention, and, ultimately, from politicisation.

CHAPTER 6

Classical Labour Intellectuals

> In the Suharto era, workers were like babies. They could cry, but they couldn't express their needs and aspirations. That's where NGOs came in. They could see the baby's condition, and hear its cries, and they knew what it needed. That's why they could speak for workers (*menyuarakan suara buruh*).[1]

In New Order Indonesia, where the life experiences of the working and middle classes were vastly different, radical student groups and labour NGO activists stood apart from factory workers. Indeed, activists had the capacity to intervene in the labour movement precisely because (with a few notable exceptions) they were educated members of the middle class.[2] However, unlike lawyers and other graduates involved in the labour movements of Europe, America or Australia, they did not consider themselves as organic to that movement; they acted as classical labour intellectuals, seeking to open workers' eyes to new ways of understanding and representing their concerns nationally and abroad.

While both labour NGOs and student groups are best understood as institutional classical labour intellectuals, their interpretations of their role as intellectuals differed. For NGO activists, activism had moral dimension, which was closely tied to their function as intellectuals; for radical students, it was a means of guiding the proletariat to a realisation of their historic mission.[3] Unlike their 'revolutionary' student counterparts, labour NGO activists acted as 'ethical' or 'instrumental' labour intellectuals. They did not see themselves as revisionists, but as champions of a social-democratic model of unionism that has come to be accepted as a global norm. However, that global model was based on revisionist tenets—tenets

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[1]   NGO Interview AQ.

[2]   Most labour NGO activists were university graduates from disciplines including History, English Literature, Anthropology, and Law.

[3]   NGO Interview AC; NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview BA; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BL; NGO Interview BN; NGO Interview BP; NGO Interview BR; NGO Interview BS. Also Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000.

that have become the criteria of significance against which a labour organisation is judged.

This chapter demonstrates that labour NGOs acted as non-revolutionary, classical labour intellectuals. It consists of three parts. The first part contrasts student groups and labour NGOs with the movement intellectuals of industrialised societies, then explores the implications of NGOs' classical mode of intellectualism for their relationships with workers, using Spivak's concept of 'voice'. The second part describes the differences between labour NGOs and student groups using Perlman's typology of labour intellectuals. The third part compares labour NGOs and alternative unions in order to show that labour NGOs played a fundamentally different role to alternative unions in the late New Order period. The chapter concludes that labour NGOs were different from both alternative unions and student groups, because while alternative unions aspired to become mass movement organisations of workers, and student groups sought to become a political party,[4] labour NGOs eschewed the direct pursuit of political power and did not seek to become a mass movement. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this did not prevent them from making an important contribution as labour intellectuals to the reconstruction of the labour movement.

Classical Intellectuals and the Question of Voice

In New Order Indonesia, the social gap between classes was a primary determinant in the relationship between workers and labour activists. Both radical students and NGO activists recognised their middle-class, non-worker origins. They believed that 'as the educated group (*kaum terpelajar*) in society, [they had] a responsibility to fight to improve workers' conditions'.[5] Radical student groups argued that workers must be guided (*dibimbing*) by students, whose ability to think (*daya pikir*) is 'different'; they 'must be guided (*dipandu*) to understand the logic of capitalism and

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[4] For a PRD statement on this matter which demonstrated their occasional confusion between revolutionary and labourist politics, see "Laborers Need a Political Party to Fight: PRD," *Jakarta Post*, 6 May 2002.

[5] Statement by R.O. Tambunan, a former member of the DPR, and M.M. Billah, a well-known NGO activist quoted in "Disesalkan, Penangkapan Para Buruh PT GRI." This was necessary, according to Tambunan, because 'Workers are generally backwards and do not understand their basic rights'.

their position in relationship to their bosses'.[6] Labour NGOs sought to improve workers' lot through a process of 'enlightenment' (*pencerahan*) and 'empowerment' (*pemberdayaan*), and spoke of how they 'voiced' (*menyuarakan*) workers' concerns because workers themselves have no voice—and little, if any, awareness of their own interests. Labour NGO and student activists' relationship with workers is best explained by two complementary concepts: Eyerman's distinction between classical and movement intellectuals and Spivak's observations on the relationship between intellectuals and the subaltern.

Classical Intellectuals

Eyerman's distinction between classical and movement intellectuals is a useful means of exploring the relationship between workers and labour activists in New Order Indonesia. As noted in the introduction to this study, Eyerman defined movement intellectuals as organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense; as intellectuals whose task is to provide a subtle illumination of social processes in societies where the gap between intellectuals and the masses is relatively small. Eyerman contrasted these 'modern' intellectuals with classical intellectuals (both Marxist and liberal) who sought to propagate a new world view,[7] arguing that while traces of the classical mode of intellectualism persists in all contexts, they are predominantly found in the more socially differentiated societies of the developing world.[8] Unlike 'movement' intellectuals employed by unions in industrialised countries, labour activists in contexts such as Indonesia act as classical intellectuals.

Despite the popularity of Gramscian terminology amongst some sections of the wider Indonesian NGO community, just one labour NGO activist used a Gramscian definition of labour NGOs' relationship with organised labour in fieldwork interviews.[9] The classic mode of intellectualism was more commonly invoked: as one respondent noted, 'NGOs can offer solidarity, but they are not workers'.[10]

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[6]   Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000.
[7]   Eyerman, "Intellectuals and Progress," 102.
[8]   Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics*, 47.
[9]   NGO Interview AQ. Note that this same respondent made the comment quoted at the beginning of this chapter in which he compared workers with babies.
[10] NGO Interview AJ.

Tarmono, head of YBM and a former trade unionist, described the classical relationship between workers and labour NGO activists succinctly:

> We're not workers, but we voiced the concerns of the workers because workers themselves did not have a voice. What we said came from our observations of what workers experienced, not directly from those workers' own experiences. Although we can't be sure that we really represented their interests, we, as intellectuals, understood workers' lives and knew workers need solidarity. If there is no one to voice workers' concerns, no one to act as a beacon, then workers will never get over their fear of organising.[11]

Unlike Tarmono, the majority of activists did not use the word 'intellectual' when describing themselves. Instead, they used middle class (*kelas menengah*),[12] non-worker (*non-buruh/bukan buruh*)[13] and outsider (*orang luar*).[14] However, all activists saw the degree to which workers' conditions were 'intellectualised' as the most important difference between workers and non-workers. In the words of one activist, 'We don't see what they see because our material conditions are different. They see from their hearts and their stomachs. We see from our heads.'[15]

Worker activists agreed with this assessment, arguing that intellectuals' contribution was vital in a situation where workers themselves had no time or inclination to consider their own position in society:

> Workers need to be encouraged to think about their situation. They work hard all day, and they don't have any opportunity to think about politics. When they get home, all they do is cook and eat and maybe watch television or listen to the radio. You know what the media is like here! Indonesian soaps (*sinetron*) are all about rich people, whose way of life is unimaginable for workers. The funny thing (*lucunya*) is that they don't make workers jealous—they take workers into a dreamworld, where they think

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[11] Tarmono used the English-based term *intelektual* rather than indigenous term, *cendekiawan* as his translation for intellectual. Interview with Tarmono from Yayasan Buruh Membangun on 4 January 2000. Permission was sought and granted for attribution of this quotation.

[12] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AR; NGO Interview BS.

[13] NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BP.

[14] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AS.

[15] NGO Interview BA.

about what they would do if they lived like that. This is the product of 32 years of oppression. Workers don't really understand what inequality (*kesenjangan*) means.[16]

As the activist went on to note, however, building that consciousness was not an easy task: 'Workers have to be guided (*dipandu*) through a lengthy process if they are to develop class consciousness'.[17] This was the task of radical student groups and NGOs in late New Order Indonesia.

The Question of Voice

Spivak has argued that there is a difference between rendering the subaltern visible and rendering the subaltern vocal—that it is important to distinguish between consciousness and conscience, representation and re-presentation when examining intellectuals' representations of the subaltern.[18] This distinction complements Eyerman's analysis of classical intellectuals.[19] Indeed, the question of voice lay at the heart of NGOs' approaches to labour. In New Order Indonesia, labour NGOs attempted to make workers both visible and vocal. Many labour NGOs, particularly policy labour NGOs, 'spoke' as intellectuals for workers in an attempt to represent them. According to one respondent, NGOs spoke for workers in the public domain, in Indonesia and internationally, because:

> Worker issues are very complex, but workers themselves…only see the problem of workers and bosses, even though their position cannot be separated from political conditions overall. Workers don't even see that it's important to be involved at the national and international level. It'd be great if workers could take a position on

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[16] Worker Interview AL.

[17] Ibid. When I asked this activist where he had developed his own opinions, he said he had attended education sessions run by NGOs and borrowed books from students.

[18] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Macmillan, 1988), 285. John Beverly, a Latin Americanist, has argued that there is actually a double layer of representation in the subaltern studies, where the sign 'studies' is privileged over the sign 'subaltern', which, in turn, signifies the subaltern experience. The opening chapters of Beverley's monograph provide a useful overview of the debates within subaltern studies. John Beverley, *Subalternity and Representation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 1-40.

[19] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 285.

international policies, but for now, it's still the NGO activists who speak for workers, not the workers themselves.[20]

Policy labour NGOs succeeded in making workers visible in the late New Order period, but did not always succeed in vocalising workers' concerns.[21] As one respondent noted, there were many instances in which labour NGOs implemented campaigns that had little to do with workers' self-conceived interests. One example cited by a labour NGO activist was a campaign about factory waste polluting the water supplies in a working-class community. The campaign threatened the livelihoods of that same community, who believed that the job opportunities provided by the factory were more important than clean water.[22]

Spivak's subalterns can never speak in the academy, but workers can speak through their collective organisations. Grassroots labour NGO activists believed it was necessary not only to represent workers; it was necessary to enable them to speak for themselves. Workers needed to have their 'eyes opened',[23] to be 'given opportunities (*dikasih kesempatan*), be taught (*diajarin*) and made conscious of their situation (*disadarkan*)',[24] in order to enable them to 'vocalise their interests and establish relations with other workers'.[25] NGOs 'transferred (*mentransfer*) knowledge to the workers[26]—countering the New Order's *pembodohan* (systematic dumbing-down) of labour by educating the uneducated and empowering the unempowered.[27] By making workers clever (*memintarkan buruh*),[28] by equipping them with the language and concepts to understand their condition and their rights, grassroots labour NGO activists believed they were making it possible for workers to speak for themselves.[29]

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[20] NGO Interview AT.

[21] NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AI; NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview AW; NGO Interview BR; NGO Interview BS.

[22] NGO Interview AU.

[23] NGO Interview AM.

[24] NGO Interview AP.

[25] NGO Interview AC.

[26] NGO Interview BK.

[27] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AI.

[28] NGO Interview AA.

[29] Ibid; NGO Interview AC; NGO Interview AK; NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AT.

Yet there was an inherent contradiction between NGOs' self-designated role as 'voice of labour' and their attempts to make workers vocal. As one respondent observed, Indonesia's public culture has little space for the subaltern: 'too much respect is given to those with titles' and those without high levels of formal education 'do not feel it was appropriate to speak'.[30] As a result, under the New Order:

> NGOs became too dominant. Without being conscious of what they were doing, they limited the space for workers to speak to the level of relationships in the factories—the level to which they have no access. In the wider arena, they competed amongst themselves for right to speak for labour…They started off trying to make space for the workers to speak, but—perhaps without being conscious of it—they created a situation where only they could become speakers.[31]

As Y.B. Mangunwijaya—a cultural commentator, Catholic priest and activist—observed regarding NGOs generally, NGO activists' interventions did not always accommodate the interests of those they wished to help:

> Many activists arrive in the style of a guardian angel (*malaikat penolong*), but in their praxis, they attitude is the same as that of officials who see themselves as counsellor/guide/leader (*pembimbing/pembina/pemimpin*) or as the main actor in the process of helping the 'little people'. They bring with them a set of ready-to-use (*siap pakai*) norms and recipes.[32]

Labour NGO activists' motives have long been the subject of self-reflection. As early as 1992, Arist Sirait Merdeka of Sisbikum argued that NGOs' political interests were very different from those of workers.[33] NGO activists echoed that concern during interviews. As one respondent remarked, 'We're here to empower workers, not to empower ourselves by our relationship with them. We have to be self-critical and ask

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[30] NGO Interview AG.

[31] Ibid. The same accusations were made by many respondents about radical students, who assumed the role of the conscience of labour, and attempted to re-present workers as a radicalised, revolutionary mass.

[32] Y.B. Mangunwijaya, "Catatan Pinggir Tentang LSM/LPSM," *Kompas*, 2 January 1992.

[33] Arist Merdeka Sirait, "Buruh dan LSM Membangunan Rumah Bersama," *Prisma* 21, No.3 (1992).

ourselves in whose interests we're acting.'[34] According to another, 'if we're truthful, we have to admit that NGOs have their own interests. We want to empower the workers, but what do the workers want?'[35] A worker activist member of the PRD suggested that students found it equally difficult to understand the interests of workers.[36] He argued that students must experience workers' conditions directly, to 'work, live, eat and bathe with workers' in order to 'truly understand them' and to be able to 'fight for their rights'. The activist recalled members of *Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia Demokrasi* (SMID, PRD's student wing) who had done this in the past. However, he also described cases in which students had slept in the workers' accommodation, but had brought their food from supermarkets and had gone home to bathe.[37]

The language of labour NGOs demonstrated the uneasy balance between their rhetorical emphasis on equality and their role as classical intellectuals. Words commonly used to describe that relationship reflected the divide between workers and activists. These included *pendampingan* (lit. process of accompanying/assisting), *bimbingan* (guidance), and *pembelaan* (defence), and *pendidik* (educator). Many activists did not take a consistent stance when describing their relationships with workers. For example, one activist, who had been associated with three different labour NGOs at different times in his career, first described the relationship between NGO activists and workers using terms like *fasilitator* (facilitator), *partner* (partner), *hubungan solidaritas* (relationship based on solidarity), *pemberdayaan* (empowerment), *penyadaran* (consciousness-building), *sejajar* (on the same level) and *teman* (friends or colleagues). Within minutes, however, the same activist was speaking of *pengabdian* (service), *pengarahan* (direction) and how workers were taught (*diajarin*).[38]

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[34] NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AZ. At times, such comments are made about activists' own organisations; at others, they imply criticism of the efforts of other labour NGOs.

[35] NGO Interview AO.

[36] The respondent was an ex-worker who had been associated with the PPBI before its demise and, at the time of the interview, was involved in a workers' group associated with the FNPBI.

[37] Interview with PRD activist on 23 August 1999.

[38] NGO Interview BF. One policy-oriented NGO activist described the relationship between grassroots NGOs and workers as a patron-client relationship analogous to that of a doctor and patient. NGO Interview AA.

These middle-class activists struggled in their attempts to communicate with workers. As one activist noted, workers became dazed or dumbfounded (*terbengong-bengong*) if activists engaged them in too broad a discussion.[39] Worker activists agreed with these concerns:

> If activists launch straight into philosophical discussions, or just tell workers what is wrong, the workers don't absorb anything (*nggak masuk*). You have to start from the beginning, and find out about their experiences in the factory. At first, workers usually say that 'the company is stingy (*pelit*)' or 'the company is weak (*lemah*)' when you ask them why they think their wages are so low. So then you have to work through the logic of capitalism. I start by asking them, 'so how come your boss can eat at a hotel, while you can only afford to eat at the side of the road'—stuff like that. Then I ask them, 'how many glasses do you make a day? How much are they worth when they're sold? How much do the materials cost? How much profit is there?' Eventually they can see for themselves how much profit the company makes. Then I ask them, 'If it's just because your company is stingy, why is it like that everywhere in Indonesia?' Then I explain that companies want to make big profits and the government wants to encourage foreign investors. I tell them if wages increase, the foreign investors will still come to Indonesia, because there will be less industrial unrest and the domestic market will be better.[40]

Activists also commented on practical difficulties with communication. Many respondents felt they had to learn a new language in order to communicate at all with workers.[41] As one NGO activist explained:

> When I first started working for an NGO, when I spoke, I just went bang-bang-bang. I thought that they'd understand because we all spoke Indonesian. Then I found out that they didn't. Since then, I've been very conscious that although we all speak the same

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[39] NGO Interview AS.
[40] Worker Interview AL. Other worker activists confirmed that this was a widely-held view. Worker Interview AA; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AH; Worker Interview AP; Worker Interview AQ.
[41] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview AV; NGO Interview BK. Formal and spoken Indonesian are quite distinct. Even the language of broadsheet newspapers is very different from everyday spoken language. It should be noted that most materials about labour are written in academic style rather than in plain Indonesian. The difficulty activists have writing in less formal language was not noted by any NGO respondent, but it was a matter for comment for worker activists.

language, there are so many expressions they have never used, that they don't understand.[42]

At their most successful, grassroots labour NGO activists succeeded in making workers themselves vocal. They encouraged worker activists not only to organise in factories, but also to represent themselves in negotiations with employers, and before industrial relations tribunals and in courts of law. At their least successful, they created relationships of subordination (*subordinasi*)'; asymmetrical (*asimetris*) relationships characterised by dependence (*dependensi*), 'relationships between subject and object, where NGOs saw workers as weak objects (*obyek yang lemah*), who needed help because they could not achieve anything by themselves'.[43]

Non-Revolutionary Intellectuals

Labour NGOs and radical student groups both acted as classical labour intellectuals, but their purposes in becoming involved in the labour movement differed. Perlman's neo-revisionist argument that intellectuals have no place in the labour movement is antithetical to the conclusions of this study. However, his division of labour intellectuals into the categories 'revolutionary', 'ethical' and 'efficiency' provides a valuable means of describing the differences between labour NGO and student activists. Radical student groups (particularly those associated with the PRD) perceived their role to be that of Leninist revolutionary intellectuals.[44] In contrast, labour NGOs acted as 'ethical intellectuals', who felt a moral duty (based in religious conviction or humanism) to assist those less fortunate than themselves, or 'efficiency intellectuals', in the tradition of the English Fabians. Christian NGOs and most policy and legal aid NGOs clearly fell into the category of institutional 'ethical intellectuals', whereas YBM's close links to Sjahrir's Fabian PSI suggested it could

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[42] NGO Interview AN. Also NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AV; NGO Interview BA; NGO Interview BJ; NGO Interview BK; NGO Interview BL; NGO Interview BM.

[43] NGO Interview BR. NGO Interview BS. Although NGOs strongly denied that their own organisation has a patron-client relationship with workers, they both acknowledge that a perception exists that labour NGOs generally have such a relationship, and are quick to name NGOs that they believe do. NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AV; NGO Interview BB.

[44] For a brief overview of the history of PRD and associated organisations, see *Jakarta Crackdown*, 121-127. See also La Botz, *Made In Indonesia,* 253-294.

be seen as an institutional 'efficiency intellectual'. The most difficult labour NGOs to accommodate in Perlman's typology are the NGOs run by ex-workers and former student activists. Bhakti Pertiwi and KBB, the ex-worker labour NGOs, did not meet the class-based criteria for NGO membership, or Eyerman's definition of a classical intellectual.[45] Yet although these activists were (with Fauzi Abdullah) most like the 'modern movement intellectuals' described by Eyerman, they separated themselves from other workers by adopting a NGO structure, participated in NGO networks and sought funding through NGO channels during the New Order period.[46] Radical student-based NGOs clearly fitted Eyerman's definition of the classical intellectual. Some suggested they were revolutionaries, but even though a small proportion of student-based NGOs used revolutionary language, they nonetheless argued that the middle class must limit its role and allow workers to control their own organisations to achieve their own ends.[47] As Dita Sari has suggested, unlike the radical student groups who sought to lead workers to revolution, these leftist labour NGOs chose an evolutionary path.[48] Both ex-worker and radical student-based NGOs thus acted as 'efficiency intellectuals' promoting gradual change in the structure of society rather than as workers' organisations or as revolutionaries promoting revolution.

Between Revolutionary and Non-Revolutionary Intellectuals

Under the New Order, Leninist and revisionist concepts of the relationship between unions and revolutionary labour intellectuals were an explicit matter for discussion amongst students and labour NGO activists alike.[49] The ongoing currency of the debates between Lenin and the revisionists was demonstrated by the use of both *revisionis* (revisionist) and *reformis* (reformist) as derogatory terms amongst radical students and some NGO activists in the 1980s.[50] In practice, however, NGO activists rejected vanguardism in favour of the revisionist division between labour's industrial

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[45] Interview with Vedi Hadiz on 15 March 2000.
[46] They have since assumed an 'NGO-like' role with the unions they have sponsored in the post-Suharto period by maintaining a separate identity from the unions they sponsored.
[47] NGO Interview AF; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AH.
[48] See below for Dita Sari's comments on leftist NGOs.
[49] Recall the comments made in Chapter One about Kusyuniati's explicit adoption of 'Marxist' principles when discussing the role of student groups and labour NGOs in the labour movement. See Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 281.
[50] NGO Interview BT.

and political struggles. In contrast, the PRD consciously used the rhetoric of the vanguard party from the early 1990s. As Hadiz has argued, citing a PPBI publication and a speech by Dita Sari:

> [PPBI] intends to educate workers in 'political economy', in order to 'promote an understanding of the political basis of economic exploitation and of the inter-relatedness of narrow economic struggles with political ones'. The reasoning seems to be that because working-class consciousness is still at too low a level, a vanguard of middle-class radicals, who have 'a theoretical understanding', must provide 'direction, encouragement and education'.[51]

In 1999, the PRD worker activist interviewed made similar claims. When asked what he believed an ideal union was, the activist argued that although unions must be capable of fighting for workers' rights, they were not necessarily established by labour. This argument clearly indicated his acceptance of the PRD's vanguard role.[52]

Activists' differing beliefs about their purpose, their relationship to workers, and the nature of class divided the oppositional labour movement and shaped the nature of their contribution to the labour movement. Tensions between the students' revolutionary ambitions and the evolutionary approaches favoured by labour NGOs were articulated in the tactics they adopted, and in their evaluation of the tactics of others.[53] On the one hand, most labour NGO activists accused radical students' groups of using workers for their own political purposes. On the other, members of the PRD and its labour organisations argued that NGOs 'sold' workers for project funding, and accused them of attempting to mollify rather than encourage worker militancy.[54] Commenting on labour NGOs in 1995, Dita Sari wrote that:

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[51]   See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 154. Note La Botz' observation that in his interviews with PRD leaders, he 'was struck by the fact that they remained in many ways a student group that has yet to come to grips with its relationships to workers, unions, and the working class'. La Botz, *Made In Indonesia*, 336.

[52]   Interview with PRD activist on 23 August 1999.

[53]   Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000; Interview with PRD activist on 23 August 1999; NGO Interview AC; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AI; Worker Interview AJ. There was strong rivalry between NGOs and student groups in the New Order period, which continued after the fall of Suharto.

[54]   Kusyuniati also observes that NGO activists believed the PPBI was 'too radical and that their critiques of the government and the military were too vulgar…The majority of NGOs chose less radical ways in which to criticise the government'. See Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 305-306.

NGO activists have established a worker basis, but they still engage in 'reformist' NGO programs and 'cut off' (*memenggal*) workers' radicalism that threatens their patch (*kapling* lit. subdivision). There are even many who have 'progressive theories' but in practice reject militancy and mass action. How could this happen? Because they don't want to acknowledge that *the growth of the labour movement has both quantitatively and qualitatively exceeded the development of labour activists' organisations* [emphasis in original].

At this time, NGOs are not effective weapons in the workers' struggle. Unions are effective weapons to improve the quality of the workers' struggle. But why is there no bravery from those who say they 'side with workers'? It can be honestly answered that…it is because they do not want to lose the 'benefits' and privileges that they have gained…They are afraid to go along with the objective condition of 'worker militancy' because they will lose the privileged position they have established.[55]

The continuing currency of this position within PRD was confirmed in interviews in 1999 and 2000. According to the PRD worker activist cited above, labour NGOs were 'not prepared to go the whole distance'; they 'used' workers' organisations for research—accepting payment for that research, but offering only 'armchair analysis', and not practical assistance, in return.[56] In interviews conducted in 2000, FNPBI activists emphasised NGOs' dependence on donors and the influence that dependence had on both the NGOs themselves and on the workers' groups they sponsored.[57] They argued that the workers' groups they called *anak LSM* (NGO subsidiaries, lit. children of NGOs) were only interested in 'economism' (*ekonomisme*) because of the dictates of donor interests.[58] When asked if student activists could remain idealistic if they joined a NGO, another activist replied that 'perhaps their heart could remain idealistic, but their actions could not, because they would be constrained (*terkendali*) by interests of *funding* (donor agencies)'. In contrast, they argued, a true labour intellectual committed 'class suicide' (*bunuh diri kelas*) to become one with the workers and engage fully with the workers' struggle.[59]

A small number of leftist labour NGO activists echoed the concerns of radical student groups about the methods of their more conservative counterparts. According to one respondent, 'NGOs had a role in changing public discourse, but they did not

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[55] Sari, "Buruh Indonesia Selalu Terus Melawan," 92.
[56] Interview with PRD activist on 23 August 1999.
[57] At the time of the interview, FNPBI itself was receiving funding from ACILS.
[58] Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000. The activists interviewed distinguished between SBSI and FNPBI (they referred to both as 'alternative unions') and the *anak LSM*.
[59] Ibid.

bring real change in labour issues—it was the students who committed class suicide (*bunuh diri kelas*) and became workers…who really brought change.'[60] Another NGO activist maintained that labour NGOs' interventions had been both productive and counter-productive. The problem was, the activist argued, that NGOs had simultaneously pushed workers to act and discouraged them from acting (*mendorong dan ngerem*)—that 'they wanted to inject workers with bravery, but they also injected them with fear, so the workers became indecisive (*bimbang*)'.[61] As a result, 'they had a strong effect on the people with whom they came in direct contact…but they achieved nothing on a macro level, because they could not make up their mind if they were opposition or not'.[62] A similar criticism came from one of the two respondents who believed that NGOs had not made a positive contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement. The respondent in question argued that labour NGOs were 'an obstacle to democratisation', which distracted workers from their 'true struggle' by involving them with income-generating projects and by creating relationships of patronage. The activist maintained that 'true consciousness' resided in parts of the middle class, but NGOs, which had difficulty 'really opposing capitalism' because of their reliance on donors, were not the vehicle through which that consciousness was channelled.[63]

However, most labour NGO activists were critical of radical student groups. One respondent observed that radical students were more than willing to meet with workers, even saying that they 'wanted to relinquish their class interests'. In practice, such meetings did not always meet worker expectations:

> The workers and ex-workers were disappointed because [the students] didn't fulfil their promises. They only wanted to talk about theory—Marxist theory. The workers actually liked those lessons, but when they wanted to talk about their experiences in the field, the students didn't turn up. So that was it. The workers were angry that the

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[60] NGO Interview AJ.

[61] Interview with FNPBI activists on 7 March 2000. A similar sentiment to that expressed by this respondent is developed quite extensively in Sari, "Buruh Indonesia Selalu Terus Melawan," 92. Ironically, in interviews, some FNPBI mobilised the argument usually used against them to criticise NGOs. NGOs, one argued, 'make workers into a commodity, and workers don't trust them'. A leftist NGO activist echoed this sentiment, claiming that 'NGOs generally are mostly about agitation. A lot of them use workers to further their own interests.' Interview with PRD activist on 23 August 1999; NGO Interview AO.

[62] NGO Interview AG.

[63] NGO Interview AH.

students didn't come, or, when they did, they came with their own agenda. It was a mess.[64]

NGO activists were particularly critical of PPBI—and its successor, FNPBI—which they felt used workers for 'political' purposes rather than seeking to act as a 'true' trade union. According to one respondent, who contrasted the worker-centred activities of their labour NGO with the theory-centred approach of more radical groups:

We believe we should be learning from them [the workers]. Some people come and say, 'It has to be this way. The theory says this, this and this.' We don't come with the concept that 'you have to be this and this and this'…We come and see and listen.[65]

Another respondent described the difference between groups that used workers in their broader campaigns, and groups that focused on the workers' wages and conditions and on developing worker-solidarity in the factories. The activist characterised this distinction as being the difference between radical student groups and NGOs that 'exploited issues' (*garap isu*, lit. to rake up issues), on the one hand, and NGOs that sought to 'broaden workers' horizons' (*membuka wawasan*), on the other. The former, the activist complained, believed they had a 'monopoly on truth about labour'.[66] Most NGO activists were particularly disapproving of what they saw as students' and leftist labour NGOs' willingness to promote mass action at the expense of workers' wellbeing. The scholar-activist Kusyuniati echoes a common NGO critique of PPBI's approach as part of a list of PPBI's shortcomings:

PPBI always raised more broad political demands in its demonstrations, in a context where the political consciousness of workers was very low and still dealt with 'bread and butter' issues. Where such political demands are projected as more important than labour issues, the PPBI might be accused of using the workers to support their own

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[64]   NGO Interview AL. Also NGO Interview AS.
[65]   NGO Interview AP.
[66]   NGO Interview BK.

political objectives…The PPBI was more interested in strikes than in building up the labour movement which requires commitment to a long-term objective.[67]

For many NGO activists, the issue was a moral one—a fear that, having 'fired up' (*ngomporin*) the workers and putting them at risk of being sacked, leftist NGOs and student groups 'just move on', whilst 'the workers…have to take the consequences'.[68] Indeed, some labour NGOs did see themselves as exercising a moderating influence on workers' enthusiasms, as members of the PRD and leftist labour NGOs suggested. According to one respondent:

> Sometimes the workers groups are too hasty. They misunderstand. They're not scared to take any risk—they just want to stage a demonstration or a strike. We keep explaining that strikes are a form of pressure to achieve negotiation, but sometimes they only half get it…Meanwhile the risks of action are clear. They can lose their jobs. That's a high price to pay. We tell them they should only strike when there's no other way.[69]

A worker activist associated with a different labour NGO offered a similar interpretation. He argued that outside guidance and support was necessary because 'sometimes workers just get radical; they don't emerge with clear concepts because they don't really understand the issues'.[70]

Critiques of the radical position also came from within the Left itself. Commenting on the position of NGO activists associated with *Yayasan Maju Bersama*, Nori Andriyani, one of the founders of *Yayasan Perempuan Mardika*—itself a Marxist labour NGO—observed that the activists concerned:

> doubt that the Indonesian workers can develop a political consciousness of their own. They suggest that since the progressive left trade unions have been banned and that there is no freedom to organize, there is no agency that can provide political education

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[67] Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 303-304.
[68] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AU; NGO Interview AW; NGO Interview BB.
[69] NGO Interview AP.
[70] Worker Interview AA.

to the workers. They argue that 'never in the history of any society of the world has workers' consciousness developed on its own'.[71]

Having pointed out the Leninist overtones of this position, Andriyani argued that the commitment to a revolutionary socialist party 'is detrimental to the labor movement itself because the very idea inhibits the political potential of the worker activists to develop, and will only justify the dependency [sic] of worker activists on the labor NGO activists of middle class origins'.[72]

Implications for Activists' Understandings of Class

Andriyani's comments indicate that the Leninist-revisionist debate about the role of the vanguard at least in part defined the sometimes-acrimonious disputes about which organisations were—and were not—working in the best interests of workers. Underpinning those disputes was a shared acknowledgment amongst activists of the divide that separated them from the working class. As indicated earlier, radical student groups and activists from some leftist student-based NGOs invoked 'class suicide' (*bunuh diri kelas*) as the solution to the problem of conflicting class interests:

> When we mix with workers, we don't tell them we belong to an NGO, because if you tell workers you're a student or an NGO activist, they think you are clever, that you understand everything. Then they'd want to make you leader. This means you haven't really committed class suicide. You don't really want to educate workers to the point where they can take control.[73]

For activists such as these, the converse was unacceptable. They expressed a fear that worker activists who became closely associated with an NGO risked gentrification— that they would no longer want to work in factories, preferring instead to be fulltime

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[71]   Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists." 30.
[72]   Ibid., 30-31. Andriyani also criticises YMB's focus on labour organisation rather than 'everyday resistance'. As noted in the Introduction, this study does not seek to deny the importance of less organised forms of activism, although I, like YMB and Hadiz, focus on organised labour.
[73]   NGO Interview AH. See also NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AI; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AY.

activists.[74] This phenomenon was known as 'naik kelas' (lit. to pass exams and go up a level at school).

The spectre of communism affected the terms in which NGO activists described the purpose and intentions of their activism, and how the government described NGOs' interests and purposes. Under the New Order, one respondent noted, 'unless an organisation was under the auspices of the government, it was considered criminal'.[75] According to a second, 'when we voiced the concerns of workers, the government assumed that we were acting in our own interests rather than the interests of the workers.'[76] A third complained, 'During the New Order, people thought we were anarchists! The government used the spectre of communism and the PKI to put pressure on the people.'[77] A fourth activist observed that during the New Order period, 'any people who gathered together were called communists'.[78] A fifth respondent, from a labour NGO strongly committed to a liberal, human rights-based framework of analysis, complained that 'In Suharto's time we were called PKI, *pihak ketiga* (lit. third parties) and OTB (*organisasi tanpa bentuk,* formless organisations). We were called Communists!'[79] Reflecting on the effects of New Order anti-communist rhetoric, the last respondent subsequently asserted that NGOs' task was to 'radicalise and educate the workers, because militancy only comes with radicalisation.' However, the activist added:

> sometimes it is dangerous if activists use terms like radicalisation, because the people associate words like radical and militant (*radikal dan militan*) with communism. They don't understand—they get scared. At most we use the word critical (*kritis*). We never use radical or militant.[80]

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[74] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview BE.

[75] NGO Interview AG. As Bourchier has noted, 'for many activists a more insidious barrier to effective political action and to democratic reform [than surveillance and low level terror] has been the government's intensive, sustained propagation of an ideology which rejects the very idea of opposition'. Bourchier, "Lineages of Organicist Political Thought in Indonesia." 2.

[76] NGO Interview AT.

[77] NGO Interview AQ.

[78] Worker Interview AC.

[79] NGO Interview AO.

[80] Ibid.

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Despite many NGOs' commitment to labour militancy, most labour NGO activists argued that the task at hand was not for middle-class activists to enter the factories or to prevent worker activists from leaving them. Some did believe that non-workers must develop class-consciousness. An activist from one student-based NGO argued that non-workers could have (working) class-consciousness, whilst many workers did not.[81] However, for a second respondent, while the possibility of non-workers developing a working-class consciousness existed in theory, in practice, this seldom occurred. This was so, the activist argued, because non-workers could not truly share the experience of being a worker even if they performed working-class work. As a result:

> Even the very few non-workers who really observe the conditions of workers don't necessarily absorb them. Amongst those who do, there is still no guarantee that they share workers' interests, because feelings of pity are not a form of class-consciousness.[82]

For more conservative activists, ideas of class suicide and of non-workers with working class consciousness simply obscured the difficulties in bridging the cultural divide between the working and middle classes.[83] According to one respondent (describing the role of their own NGO rather than the role of NGOs generally) the distance between workers and labour NGOs was both important and desirable:

> Since the beginning we have always maintained a distance from the workers we have assisted. In other words, our role has only been to provide education and training, the equipment necessary for meetings, and publications. We have sought to prepare (*menyiapkan*) workers who are capable of leadership and critical thought, and who are independent and self-sufficient (*mandiri dan swadaya*)…We have tried to minimise the dependence of workers and workers' organisations on the NGO that facilitates them (*memfasilitasinya*).[84]

These sentiments represented the position of the majority of NGO activists, who saw themselves as irrevocably separate from the workers they wished to help. They also

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[81]   NGO Interview BD.
[82]   NGO Interview AL.
[83]   NGO Interview AN.
[84]   NGO Interview BK.

reflected the significance of the divide between the working and middle classes in Indonesia.

In summary, for the students associated with the PRD, the defining differences between labour NGOs and radical student groups were labour NGO activists' reluctance to relinquish the comforts of their middle-class position and their rejection of revolutionary principles. For labour NGO activists (excluding those that adopted a radical philosophy), student groups were too ready to impose their theories on workers and to ignore workers' own needs and wants. These assessments confirm both groups' status as classical intellectuals and their respective rejection or espousal of revolution as intellectuals' primary goal.

Labour NGOs, Alternative Unions and Revisionism

Just as the New Order's denunciation of union politicisation was based on its neo-revisionist rejection of Leninism, the decisions non-worker labour groups made about their approach to labour organising were primarily determined by their position in the debate about the relationship between the labour movement's industrial and political functions. For radical student groups, influenced by classical Marxist theory, those functions were inseparable. However, with very few exceptions, Indonesia's labour NGO activists accepted the social-democratic tradition of unionism that grew out of the revisionist position, in which the industrial and political functions of the movement were pursued separately. For the former, a labour union was a site of direct political struggle under the direction of a vanguard party. For the latter, a union was primarily the vehicle for advancing the economic interests of workers—perhaps in association with a labourist political party, but free from its control. Labour NGOs' acceptance of the industrial model of unionism 'by for and of workers' and their rejection of non-workers' involvement in labour unions flowed from the international labour movement into Indonesia through the ILO, the ICFTU, ACILS and FES. It shaped labour NGOs' relations with the workers groups they sponsored and defined the difference between labour NGOs and alternative unions.

International Influences

In addition to a measure of protection against government repression in the New Order period, labour NGOs' international connections provided funding and ideas. Like NGOs generally, many labour NGOs received funds directly from a range of international sources, including private organisations such as the United States-based Ford Foundation and the Dutch HIVOS (Humanistic Institution for Co-operation with Developing Countries) and government aid organisations, including NOVIB (Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation) and USAID.[85] The European churches were also generous donors. An important additional source of project funding was available from international human rights campaigns and international labour campaigns for labour research, amongst which the anti-Nike campaign has been most prominent.[86] Some labour NGOs received recurring grants while others relied on project-based funding.[87] Others, still, had indirect access to overseas funds through larger Indonesian NGOs, while a small minority relied primarily on self-generated revenue and member contributions.

During the New Order period, some labour NGOs also received money from the ILO, trade unions and solidarity organisations in Europe and North America, most notably the ACILS and FES.[88] While these organisations channelled most of their funds into SPSI before the fall of Suharto, they also sponsored a range of labour

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[85] At the end of 2001, HIVOS listed 31 partner organisations in Indonesia on its website. These included Akatiga, ELSAM, Bhakti Pertiwi, and KOMPAK, the child labour section of Sisbikum. See *Indonesia*; available from http://www.hivos.nl/nederlands/partners/zoeken/land/overzicht. php?land_code=ID. For more details of HIVOS' Asia programs, see Stan van Wichelen, "Organized Opposition, Social Movements and Non-Governmental Organizations in Asia: Report of a HIVOS Seminar on the Role of NGOs in the Asian Context in Bangsaen, Thailand, 17-20 December 1990," (The Hague: Humanistic Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, 1990).

[86] Such campaigns also provided an avenue for publicising working conditions in Indonesia. See "Depnaker: Kunjungan Jackson Tak Jelas Tujuannya," *Republika*, 24 July 1996; "Jesse Jackson Inspeksi Pabrik di Indonesia: Pejuang Buruh Sepatu Nike," *Surya*, 20 July 1996; "Nama Saya Cicih Sukaesih, Dulu Bekerja di Pabrik Nike," *Suara Pembaruan*, 23 July 1996; "RI Worker Protests Outside Nike Town," *Jakarta Post*, 24 July 1996.

[87] Kusyuniati noted both the inability of NGO activists to write 'good proposals' and the relatively small opportunities for funding available to labour NGOs, as opposed to those concerned with less politically-sensitive issues such as the environment and poverty alleviation. Kusyuniati, "Strikes in 1990-1996." 329-330.

[88] For a summary of FES' priorities in Indonesia, see *FES Activities in Indonesia* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, [cited 5 December 2002]); available from http://www.fes.de/international/asien/ indonesia/eng/activities.htm. For details of other international labour networks with links to Indonesia's labour NGOs, see Rachmawati, "Dimensi Internasional LSM dan Pemberdayaan Buruh di Indonesia Tahun 1990-an." 74-80.

NGO activities.[89] Anecdotal evidence suggests FES and ACILS shifted away from the funding of labour NGOs' activities in favour of the growing number of registered unions in the post-Suharto era. This shift reflected their commitment to the union as the primary vehicle of the labour movement.

Assessments of the extent to which international influences shaped the agendas of NGOs vary. Uhlin argued that the Indonesian pro-democracy movement (of which labour NGOs were a part) used a 'lesson-drawing approach' in which the experiences of other countries were adopted, adjusted or rejected according to their suitability in local conditions.[90] In a far stronger statement of international influence, one labour NGO activist observed, 'Indonesia is strongly influenced by global ideas (*gagasan-gagasan dunia*). Where do you think the books the NGO activists read come from?'[91] The terminology used by labour NGOs indicates the extent of international influence on the principles that underpinned their programs. Many terms favoured by NGO activists were directly derived from English, for example *fasilitator* (facilitator), *partner* (partner), *hubungan solidaritas* (solidarity relationship), *motivasi* (motivation), *advokasi* (advocacy), *pengorganisasian* (organising), *sosialisasi* (to spread information about something) and *konsern* (to be concerned). Others were direct translations of the international vocabulary of NGOs, most notably the ubiquitous *pemberdayaan* (empowerment) and *penyadaran* (consciousness-raising). These terms were used by all NGO activists and worker activists with a long history of involvement with labour NGOs, including those with little command of English.

NGOs' international links encouraged two inter-related, but discrete, frameworks amongst the labour NGO community. The first, which was strongest in the international campaigns against sweatshops, envisaged labour rights as a part of a broader suite of human rights.[92] The second—promoted by international labour

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[89] ACILS also unofficially provided financial aid to SBSI during the late New Order period. For a detailed account of labour NGOs' American links, see Caraway, "The Impact of Regime Change on Transnational Labor Activism."

[90] Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization'*, 237, 167-208.

[91] NGO Interview BM. For examples of the diffusion of foreign influence, see Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization'*, 240-241.

[92] See for example *Proceedings: United Nations Workshop for the Asia-Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues, Jakarta, 26-28 January 1993* (New York: United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1993).

bodies—was comprised of 'social democratic notions of the separation of narrow, trade union, interests from those that [were] more overtly political'.[93] Unions have long had an interest in social issues, and in recent decades, this interest has, to some extent, converged with international NGO initiatives concerned with labour rights as human rights. As noted in Chapter One, there has been a growing interest amongst international labour activists in cooperating with NGOs and other social movement organisations on issues of common concern. This interest was reflected in campaigns run by the ICFTU and the ILO. For example, as Waterman has noted, the ICFTU-hosted online Conference on Organised Labour in the 21st Century dealt with constituencies and issues beyond the boundaries of its traditional reach, and was open to participants from the academic and NGO communities.[94] However, despite their willingness to cooperate with non-union bodies, the ILO and other labour organisations such as FES, continue to promote a traditional form of industrial unionism that focuses almost exclusively on centralised union organisations and collective bargaining in formal workplaces at the national level in developing countries, including Indonesia.[95]

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[93] Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 149. For an example of general press statements about international influence on labour issues in Indonesia, see "Perburuhan Indonesia di Mata Dunia," *Republika*, 30 June 1995. Other international trade union organisations also played an important role in advocacy for free trade unionism during the late New Order period. See for example International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, "Trade Union Repression in Indonesia." For press statements about the ICFTU and other international trade union bodies, see for example "Abdul Latief: Unjuk Rasa di Medan Bukan Tanggung Jawab Menaker"; "ICFTU Adakan Kampanye Global Berantas Penggunaan Buruh Anak," *Media Indonesia*, 5 July 1994; "SBSI Belum Terdaftar di ICFTU," *Media Indonesia*, 3 May 1994; "RUU Naker Tarik Perhatian Serikat Buruh Internasional," *Kompas*, 18 July 1997.

[94] Peter Waterman, "Labour Internationalism in the Transition from a National/Industrial/Colonial Capitalism to an Informatised/Globalised One...and Beyond," in *International Conference: The Past and Future of International Trade Unionism*, ed. Bart De Wilde (Ghent: International Association of Labour History Institutions/Amsab-Institute of Social History, 2000); Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick, "Facing New Challenges: The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (1972-1990s)," in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Bern: Peter Lang/International Institute of Social History Amsterdam, 2000), 383-413, 464-495, 508-515. One of the issues covered in the book produced from this online conference is relations between unions and NGOs (see Chapter One). Jose, "Organized Labour in the 21st Century - Some Lessons for Developing Countries." See also van der Linden's comments on the likely future direction of the international union movement in a period of 'transnational internationalism' in Marcel van der Linden, "Conclusion," in *International Conference: The Past and Future of International Trade Unionism*, ed. Bart De Wilde (Ghent: International Association of Labour History Institutions/Amsab-Institute of Social History, 2000).

[95] See also for example ILO, *Indonesia: Social Adjustment through Sound Industrial Relations and Labour Protection*, Rev Ed ed. (Manila: ILO, 1997); ILO, *Workplan Indonesia-ILO (1994-1999)*

Between Labour NGOs, NGO-Sponsored Workers' Groups and Alternative Unions

The degree to which labour NGO activists accepted revisionist principles about worker-run unions focused on collective bargaining and free of interference by intellectuals was demonstrated in the firm distinction they drew between labour NGOs, workers' groups and alternative unions. While many NGO activists blurred the boundaries between radical labour NGOs and student groups, no labour NGO activist suggested that NGOs be conflated with either the workers' groups sponsored by grassroots labour NGOs or SBSI (the major alternative union of the New Order period). In short, whilst labour NGO activists disputed the New Order's neo-revisionist labour rhetoric and its negative attitude towards their activities, they accepted the conceptual distinction the government drew between workers and themselves as non-workers, and between unions and their own non-union organisations.

Labour NGOs were, by definition, limited-member organisations.[96] Policy NGOs generally had no direct connections with workers, while grassroots labour NGOs were structurally separate from the workers' groups they sponsored. Workers' groups often met in the presence of NGO activists in premises rented by NGOs. They attended NGO-run training courses and implemented NGO-designed initiatives. Yet workers' groups remained formally independent even when grassroots NGO activists were involved in their most basic, routine activities. The separation between NGO-sponsored workers' groups and the labour NGOs themselves, although often more rhetorical than practical, was predicated on activists' convictions about the nature of trade unions. In the words of one respondent, 'NGOs' task is to encourage the workers to form unions, not to control them. We need to raise their self-awareness so that they see the need to organise.'[97]

(ILO Jakarta, 1994 [cited 7 January 1999]); ILO, *A New Era for Freedom of Association and Protection of Workers's [sic] Rights in Indonesia* (ILO, Jakarta, 27/5/1998 1998 [cited 10 February 1999]); available from Http://www.un.or.id/ilo/english/press.htm. See also *FES Activities in Indonesia*.

[96] The only exception amongst the NGOs surveyed was Solidaritas Perempuan, which began as a limited-member organisation, but later decided to become an open association.

[97] NGO Interview AU.

Workers could not always tell the difference between NGO functions and those of unions.[98] However, even most radical labour NGO activists saw a clear division between their own organisations and mass-based alternative unions.[99] NGO activists highlighted three main groups of factors when asked to explain the difference between labour NGOs and alternative unions: form and function; funding and independence; and unions' ability to serve workers' interests. The first group of activists distinguished labour NGOs from unions based on differences of form and function. One respondent argued that 'NGOs are interested in *pendampingan* (lit. standing beside or assisting) which is different from being part of a labour movement'.[100] Another emphasised organisational differences between NGOs and unions, that 'NGOs are an institute (*lembaga*)—an institute that cares about workers, but not a labour union. We don't need a large membership…like a trade union does'.[101] In a similar vein, a third argued that:

> Mass organisations and non-governmental organisations are different. As an NGO, we're very conscious that we should not become too big. It is perfectly acceptable if mass organisations become as big as they can, but NGOs are not mass organisations.[102]

Others referred specifically to funding when defining the difference between unions and labour NGOs. According to two labour NGO activists, self-funding was a matter of principle for trade unions. Two activists observed that unions had more potential to be independent of outside financial aid because, unlike NGOs, they have the

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[98] NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AP.

[99] The only respondent who made a statement to the contrary argued that SBSI was not a workers' organisation. This was, however, a criticism of SBSI rather than a considered statement on the difference between unions and labour NGOs. In other parts of the interview, the respondent emphasised the differences between labour NGOs and unions. NGO Interview AJ.

[100] Ibid. *Pendampingan* is one of the most common concepts used to describe the NGO-worker relationship. It is a very difficult word to translate. Its root, *damping* means 'close' or 'near', and its most common verb form, *mendampingi,* means 'to accompany', 'to stand beside' or 'to closely assist'. NGO activists who speak English most often translate it as 'to accompany'. This does not, however, capture the nuances of the Indonesian term, which has strong overtones of 'assistance', and, in speech, sometimes of 'supervision' and/or 'guidance'.

[101] NGO Interview AO.

[102] NGO Interview AP.

ability to raise funds from members.[103] A third activist argued that 'workers need to build their own unions and pay for them themselves' because otherwise they would never be truly free'.[104] A fourth noted that 'the defining feature of unions is that they "live" (*hidup*) from membership dues', and that even if unions were registered, if they could not achieve self-sufficiency, they were in fact NGOs.[105] Likewise, in the opinion of the fifth activist, financial independence brought with it freedom from outside influence:

> The labour movement—unions—they're responsible to their members. But NGOs are responsible to their boards. That's very different. Then there's the problem of money. NGOs have to ask for money from outside. They don't have dues or anything. They can't run by themselves. Unions are different. They can survive on their members' dues. NGOs can't do that.[106]

This preoccupation with unions' financial independence was closely linked to the third group of responses, which focused on unions' greater integrity as a vehicle for workers' interests. In this group, all but two respondents were firmly opposed to ongoing 'outside' involvement in trade unions. [107] However, this did not mean that they fully accepted the New Order's economistic vision of trade unionism. As one respondent noted, echoing the sentiments of the majority of respondents, 'the trade union's function is to defend the rights of workers…But that cannot happen in the factory alone, because workers' interests are not confined to the factory'.[108]

The strength of labour NGO activists' opinions about intellectuals' involvement in the labour movement was demonstrated in their criticisms of the continuing involvement of Muchtar Pakpahan as General Chair of SBSI.[109] As Tom

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[103] NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AZ. Like unions in many developing countries, both the SPSI and the alternative unions the New Order period and the post-New Order period relied heavily on external funding.

[104] NGO Interview AM.

[105] NGO Interview BR.

[106] NGO Interview AB.

[107] NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AQ.

[108] NGO Interview AU.

[109] As noted in Chapter Two, the social-democratic SBSI, like SBM-SK before it, was established by labour NGO activists. As noted in Chapter Five, this connection was often cited by the New Order government as a reason why SBSI was not a 'real' union.

Etty of the *Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging* (FNV, Dutch Trade Union Federation) confirmed in 1994, labour NGOs:

> hold the view that setting up a union and being active in it is only workers' business. They are, for that reason, very critical vis-à-vis the trade union movement as it manifests itself currently in Indonesia: 'outsiders' play the leading role there. Clearly, their main target is the SPSI. But remarkably enough some of them are also somewhat weary [sic] of the SBSI, whose General Chairman is a lawyer by profession.[110]

For the founders of SBSI themselves, Pakpahan's chairmanship presented a dilemma. According to Amor Tampubolon of YFAS (the NGO to which Pakpahan previously belonged), Pakpahan was only intended to be a short-term, transitional leader. His decision to continue in the post caused some tension between SBSI and his former colleagues.[111] Tampubolon's reaction to the SBSI case reflected the consensus amongst labour NGOs' on the role of intellectuals in labour organisations. NGO activists generally accepted that it necessary for 'outsiders' to be involved in the setting up of unions, because 'workers cannot do it on their own'.[112] However, they saw outsiders' continued involvement as both unnecessary and undesirable.[113] One reason given for this—in a comment made verbatim by two respondents—was trade unions' ability to better understand workers' needs because 'NGOs don't live directly with the workers, whereas unions do'.[114] Another respondent put the question of middle-class involvement in unions even more baldly, commenting that 'the middle-class is too dominant in labour, so we don't want to add to it. Workers' organisations should be organised by workers for workers themselves. We want to open their eyes, but then release them.'[115]

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[110] Tom Etty, "Indonesia in 1993: The Labour Year" (paper presented at the Ninth INFID Conference, Paris, 22-24 April 1994), 9. In interviews, activists from a number of labour NGOs were very critical of Pakpahan personally.

[111] Interview with Amor Tampubolon on 29 March 1999. Permission was sought and granted for attribution of this quotation.

[112] NGO Interview AZ.

[113] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AD; NGO Interview AI; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AU; NGO Interview AW; NGO Interview AZ.

[114] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AU.

[115] NGO Interview AH. The question of labour NGOs' relationship with unions became more immediate after government policies towards trade unions were revised during the Habibie

Labour NGO activists did not dispute workers' right to be political, or their own right to speak politically on behalf of workers. They disputed the right of intellectuals to belong to unions. Labour NGO activists—like Asmara Hadi of the Printers' Union in the 1950s—generally saw the involvement of 'outsiders' in union leadership as at best a temporary evil in an uneducated society.[116] Their vision for the future of the labour movement was defined by their commitment to unions by, for and of workers. The implications of that commitment for their own position were determined by their interpretation of the relationship between unions and the labour movement. If they had defined the labour movement broadly to include non-union organisations, such as political parties and NGOs, they could have justified their own long-term role. As most defined it narrowly as a collection of unions, they believed they had no ongoing place in that movement.

Conclusion

Both labour NGOs and student groups acted as classical labour intellectuals in New Order Indonesia. Student groups, which were the direct descendants of the Leninist political party, envisaged their role as 'revolutionary intellectuals'. Labour NGOs, too, acted as classical intellectuals, but not as revolutionaries. Instead, they were, to borrow Perlman's terms, 'ethical' or instrumental' intellectuals. Tensions arose between labour NGOs' acceptance of the revisionist model of unionism and their attempts to speak for labour, in their capacity as advocates, and to give voice to workers, through their roles as educators and organisers. As will be demonstrated in the chapters that follow, this tension defined the limits of their role in that movement in the late New Order period and after the fall of Suharto.

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interregnum (see Chapter Eight), but was a subject for debate amongst labour NGOs well before the fall of Suharto.

[116] See Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 7

NGO and Worker Assessments

Labour NGOs' status as classical, institutional intellectuals affected both their role in the labour movement and assessments of that role. Labour NGO activists believed intervention was both necessary, because workers could not achieve the same level of organisation without them, and beneficial, because they could both help workers to change their circumstances and directly influence government policy through their connections with the media, sections of the political elite and international lobby groups. However, unlike trade unionists, whose place in the labour movement was clearly defined by international precedents, NGO activists regularly questioned the legitimacy of their involvement.

This chapter examines NGO activists' attitudes to their work and explores NGO activists and workers' assessments of NGOs' contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement.[1] It argues that labour NGO activists defined themselves primarily in terms of their status as non-worker intellectuals, not in terms of their function as a part of the labour movement. Activists' commitment to their non-worker status produced an unwillingness to participate fully in the labour movement, which was strongly criticised by workers. While worker activists recognised NGO activists as non-worker intellectuals, they did not share NGO activists' narrow, union-centred definition of the labour movement, which excluded labour NGOs from the category, 'labour movement organisation'. They believed NGO activists should have accepted their status as a 'labour movement organisation' and met their obligations as part of the labour movement.

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[1] It should be noted that workers' and NGO activists' reflections on their experiences in the late New Order period were recorded in 1999, 2000 and 2001. As labour NGO activists widely reported increasing worker cynicism towards NGOs after the fall of Suharto, worker activists' opinions, as expressed here, were shaped by the events of that period. This chapter should be read, therefore, with this *caveat* in mind.

NGO Activists' Assessments of their Contribution

Labour NGO activists believed they made an important contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement in the late New Order period. While they did not wish to detract from the role workers themselves played in the upsurge in labour activism in the 1990s, all but two respondents emphasised the significance of NGOs' contribution to the form that labour activism assumed. Words and phrases used to describe their role included 'very dominant',[2] 'very important',[3] 'very useful',[4] 'influential'[5] and 'prominent'[6]—even 'heroic' (*heroik*).[7] However, that role was circumscribed by their status as non-workers and their commitment to the classical mode of intellectualism.

Workers or Activists?

Most labour NGO activists were engaged in a waged employment relationship with the board, or director, of a NGO. However, the majority did not see themselves as workers. NGO work was a hybrid form of activity, whose participants were both activists and employees. Most NGOs advertised positions, and distinguished between 'volunteers' and 'staff', and, for some, NGO work was clearly a form of employment. A recent recruit to one labour NGO argued:

> We're workers—we should get together and fight for our rights. If we don't get decent working conditions, it means that we're oppressed too. We work, and there's a management team. We have rights and duties. We have the duty to come here; we can't be late. And we're scared of our boss. What's so different between us and factory workers? I am a worker who has a boss.[8]

For others, the issue was more complex. According to one activist, the perspective taken determined whether NGO activists' were seen as workers or non-workers:

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[2]   NGO Interview AA. Also NGO Interview BS.
[3]   NGO Interview AL.
[4]   NGO Interview AU.
[5]   NGO Interview AQ.
[6]   NGO Interview AE. Also NGO Interview AZ; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BS.
[7]   NGO Interview BS.
[8]   NGO Intervew BC.

It is difficult to make a definite statement on whether NGO activists are workers (*buruh*) or non-workers (*bukan buruh*). You need to look at the context. If you consider it from the perspective of the work relationship, then activists/NGO workers (*pekerja NGO*) can be called workers (*buruh*). This is because NGO workers are the subordinates in a relationship of power in the workplace—the Foundation or NGO. Thus, from a managerial or administrative perspective on the work relationship, they can be called workers. This has implications with regard to the pressures of work, dismissal and so on. However, from the perspective of interests (*kepentingan*), NGOs do not struggle for or represent the interests of their own class, they focus on the interests of a different class, the class of the oppressed.[9]

Even the most committed labour activists were conscious of the material sacrifices activism required. However, not all were willing to accept those sacrifices. For example, one respondent, who had proclaimed his commitment to the 'service' model of NGO activism, nevertheless noted, 'I don't feel as prosperous (*sejahtera*) here as staff in other labour NGOs. I'm only human, aren't I? I'm the coordinator here, but what facilities do I get? In other groups, the facilities are much better.'[10]

Labour relations were mostly a matter for controversy in big NGOs. Informal lunchtime conversations observed during extended fieldwork at one large NGO confirmed the importance of working conditions in the NGO setting. The NGOs' staff discussed their levels of pay, the fitness of those levels of pay in relation to the size of funding proposals made by the NGO to its donors, and the degree of management's control over the direction of the various departments in the NGO. Some staff were unhappy with what they perceived to be poor levels of pay and excessive management control. The situation for activists in smaller NGOs was less negotiable, because they had less chance of changing their conditions of employment. According to one respondent, who had considered the issue in some detail:

Only BINGOs [Big NGOs, English in the original] have clear staffing systems and clear rights to wages, job security and pensions. Workers in small NGOs have no recourse if the NGO where they work closes down. It would be difficult to establish a formal union in these, NGOs because many of them do not meet the minimum

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9   NGO Interview BS.
10 NGO Interview AP. This was not seen as a universal condition. In our extended discussion of this question, the activist added, 'Who says you can't prosper from working at an NGO? Look at Adnan Buyung and Teten Masduki. Some work because they are called, but others see the opportunity to become famous.'

criterion of 10 workers. Most NGO workers have a two to three year contract, so they are reluctant to organise themselves, but there are some cases in NGOs that indicate a need for a union, where sacked workers have been forced to fight for their rights individually through the courts.[11]

NGO activists' status as workers became a matter for public debate when some NGO activists moved to form a union after the Hong Kong Bank case and conflict over sacking of activists at YLBHI in 1995-96.[12] For example, an article entitled 'NGOs Start to need a Union' reported discussions at a seminar called the 'Significance of Labour Unions for non-profit organisations', which held at LBH Jakarta on 14 November 1996. Those present argued that NGO activists needed a union because they have no legal protection against unfair dismissal or the payment of inadequate wages. However, some thought unionisation was impossible because of the activist aspects of NGO work. The article concluded that conflict had arisen because the relationship between staff and the NGO boards 'is no longer just based on idealism, but is now coloured by a pattern of "boss" (*atasan*) and "subordinate" (*bawahan*)'.[13] The debates about the status of NGO activists continued into the post-Suharto period. In late 2001, Munir (formerly of LBH Surabaya), called for the government to protect *pekerja HAM* (human rights workers). The choice of *pekerja* rather than *aktivis*—or for that matter *buruh*—indicated both that the blue-collar/white collar divide remained strong and that at least some NGO activists considered themselves 'workers'.[14]

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[11] NGO Interview AC. According to the same respondent, there are also definitional difficulties in defining NGO activists as workers: 'The status of NGO staff is clearly not waged workers (*pekerja upahan*). It comes back to the question of what is a worker—there is no shared understanding of that term.'

[12] NGO Interview BQ. The Hong Kong Bank was the site of considerable industrial unrest in the 1990s. In February 1994, workers went on strike to demand better wages and conditions. See "Karyawan Hongkong Bank Unjuk Rasa," *Kompas*, 1 February 1994. 200 employees of the Hong Kong Bank went on strike in April 1996, and were subsequently sacked. The case, which became very controversial, was one of the few instances of white-collar militancy during the New Order period. For details of the Hong Kong Bank case, see "HongkongBank Blamed for Dispute," *Jakarta Post*, 1 June 1996; "HongkongBank Case Discussed at Arbitration Body," *Jakarta Post*, 3 June 1996; "PHK HongkongBank Ditolak 166 Karyawan Selamat," *Republika*, 29 July 1996. Note that Hong Kong Bank was often written as a single word.

[13] "LSM Mulai Butuh Serikat Pekerja," *Kompas*, 15 November 1997.

[14] See "Pemerintah Diharapkan Melindungi Pekerja HAM," *Kompas*, 13 November 2001. See Chapter Eight for comments on the divide between white and blue collar workers in Indonesia.

However, opinions such as these remained the view of the minority. The majority of labour NGO activists rejected the worker aspect of their identity and NGOs' characteristics as a workplace. As one activist noted, labour NGOs were generally considered to be:

> organisations based on concern (*keprihatinan*) and on humanitarian and intellectual ambitions (*cita-cita kemanusiaan dan cita-cita intelektual*) about the existing labour situation, which they realise through their organisational programs.[15]

Most activists saw their work as a calling (*panggilan*) or service (*pengabdian*);[16] they sacrificed the rewards of a self-centred career for the other-centred satisfaction of promoting justice and democracy.[17] In the words of one respondent:

> NGO activists are not workers. There is no employer-employee relationship and the work of NGO activists is humanitarian work. The desire to become engaged in activism is fuelled by an ideological awareness of the need to help the oppressed. I would not have become an activist if I didn't have that awareness. When I became an NGO activist, I understood all the consequences and risks of doing so. These included the risk of facing the military and of not receiving adequate financial consideration for my efforts. NGO activists who feel they are workers are not sincere in their work. They should look for a job that pays better! When NGO activists consider themselves workers, it destroys their activist spirit, and they are no longer truly 'militant' (*militan*). It leads to corruption, to acceptance of bribes from employers or to just seeking popularity for themselves (*hanya mencari popularitas diri sendiri*) and so on.[18]

Such opinions confirm that NGO activists believed they were outsiders, rather than either individual members of the labour movement (as workers or as intellectuals) or an institutional part of that movement (as labour NGOs).

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[15] NGO Interview BA.

[16] NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AZ. The overwhelming majority of interviewees expressed this sentiment in some way.

[17] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AD; NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AI; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AK; NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview AZ; NGO Interview BA; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BF; NGO Interview BP.

[18] NGO Interview BO. Similar responses were given by NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BF.

NGOs' Contribution to the Labour Movement

Labour NGOs' ability to provide physical resources, publicity and access was very important to the emerging labour movement, but their key contribution was the provision of knowledge. Labour NGO activists understood labour law, social structures of power and models of labour relations other than Indonesia's own. They could help workers to use every-day language to speak about their experiences, or teach them specialist terms that gave them independent access to valuable sources of information.[19] In Eyerman's terms, they gave not only voice, but language, 'providing the very means through which insight is possible'.[20]

When asked why NGOs became involved in the labour movement, respondents invariably drew attention to the rapid rise in the number of industrial workers in Indonesia and the difficulties those workers faced.[21] They explained how the majority of these newcomers to the factories came from rural backgrounds, and received no preparation for the workforce through their schooling, through the state-sponsored union (SPSI), or from the Department of Manpower.[22] As a result, they had little understanding of industrial employment.[23] However, activists were divided on the extent to which NGOs' intervention was the main factor in increased levels of labour activism during the 1990s. A number of NGO activists argued that whilst workers would have engaged in strike actions without NGO intervention, NGOs had played an important role in systematising and organising workers' spontaneous reactions to their exploitation.[24] In the words of one activist:

> Workers would have gone on strike whether or not NGOs were involved with labour. Strikes were inevitable because there was a problem. The workers experienced oppression directly. But you can see the impact of NGOs in the quality of strikes. Some workers just go crazy. They want to destroy everything. Others are more orderly. That's where NGOs' role lay. Workers organised strikes—and strikes are a

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[19]   NGO Interview AN.

[20]   Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics*, 47.

[21]   See Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia*, 111-133; Kammen, "A Time to Strike."

[22]   NGO Interview AE. Also NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview AT. For an anthropological account of the 'push factors' encouraging young women to seek employment in the cities, see Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 126-131.

[23]   Worker Interview AA.

[24]   NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AL.

form of organisation—but as soon as each strike was over, the organisation collapsed. NGOs helped workers to organise on a more permanent basis.[25]

According to another, workers would have organised in any case, but 'without the contribution of NGOs, there would not have been the progress there has been'.[26]

More commonly, however, activists proposed it was 'not likely' that workers could rise up without support 'from outside'.[27] They believed intervention was necessary because 'workers are busy with their own situation, and they don't always see the importance of looking beyond that'; that 'workers were forced to work long hours if they wanted to survive. When did they have time to think about themselves? That's where the NGOs came in.'[28] A third activist emphasised workers' acceptance of their situation:

> Workers' apathy towards their fate—whether it was created by capitalism or it emerged by itself—is clearly a vicious circle. They only know house-factory-house-factory, they don't ever question their situation. The Javanese say *nrimo* [to accept] don't they? You know, fate. So if they are not made conscious (*disadarkan*), they will never rise up…They just accept the way it is, that it's fitting that they be treated like they are because they believed, 'We're labourers. We're ignorant, we have no education.'[29]

NGOs became involved, activists argued, because workers themselves had little opportunity to develop the physical and conceptual resources required to take control of their situation.[30] NGO activists' social status and education gave them access to resources that workers themselves did not have. Unlike factory workers, they had time, money, international support, and ideas about labour and labour organisations.

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[25] NGO Interview AL. Also NGO Interview BB. For participant-centred accounts of particular strikes and other factory campaigns, see Laine Berman, *Speaking through the Silence: Narratives, Social Conventions, and Power in Java* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Chapter 5; Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists." 104-136; Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 92-148.

[26] NGO Interview AA.

[27] NGO Interview AQ.

[28] NGO Interview AT; NGO Interview AE.

[29] NGO Interview AP. See Athreya's discussion of economic reciprocity in urban and rural settings in Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 92-97.

[30] NGO Interview AE. Also NGO Interview AA.

Their contacts in the media, with sympathetic figures in the government, the bureaucracy and overseas, meant they had the ability to make statements about labour and the means to ensure that those statements were heard. As one activist reflected:

> NGOs' role in the labour movement during the Suharto era had a lot to do with the way the government responded to NGOs. When NGOs talked, the media listened, and that put pressure on the government. I think it all began there. At that time, workers had no channel. The assumption was that if there was a union, it should be used, but at that time there was no organisation that voiced workers' concerns. So there had to be intermediaries (*perantara*). And those intermediaries were NGOs. NGOs came to the workers and offered to make them conscious (*menyadarkannya*). The workers trusted them because they felt that NGOs cared about them. They felt represented (*terwakili*). Represented by the NGOs. Who else was there? No other organisation was going to go to the workers, and it would have been too hard for an individual to do. What was interesting was that it became a trend. Then, consciously or unconsciously, workers entrusted us with their fate (*menitipkan nasibnya*). The issues came from below, but workers trusted NGOs to develop those issues and made them public. Look at the Gadjah Tunggal case. NGOs were involved in all the big demonstrations. And many NGO activists were arrested. They took the same risks as the workers, in the sense that they too could be arrested and interrogated. Maybe that's why the workers believed they were their friends—friends who had access to the wider public.[31]

As indicated by this respondent, the nature of the industrial relations system was an important catalyst for NGOs' involvement with industrial labour. As another activist argued, intervention was necessary because after 'thirty-two years of no freedom to organise…workers don't have enough initiative to establish trade unions'.[32] Fear of communism and the government's responses to communism were also frequently highlighted as one of the obstacles to organising. According to another labour NGO activist, although most people working in Indonesian factories in the 1990s were born after 1965:

> They were scared to organise because in 1965 there was a coup in Indonesia. Workers now are the children of that generation. When they come to the city, their parents tell them, 'When you work, just work, don't get involved in any organisations'. Of course the children ask, 'why's that?' Their parents tell them, 'the workers' organisation is

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[31] NGO Interview AA. A very similar explication of the origins of NGOs' involvement in the labour movement was provided in NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview AQ.

[32] NGO Interview AQ. Also NGO Interview AG.

called SOBSI, and SOBSI is communist. The communists wanted to stage a coup and they all got killed.' They tell them about SOBSI and tell them not to get involved.[33]

Consequently, activists argued, labour NGOs not only had to convince workers that it was both appropriate and beneficial for them to form labour groups and take part in worker actions, they had to overcome their suspicion of organisations more generally. NGOs' role, then, was to develop an awareness amongst workers that they 'were indeed workers, and that they had a fundamental right to establish trade unions'.[34]

The Limits of NGOs' Role

Activists openly acknowledged a range of shortcomings which characterised labour NGOs individually and collectively. They attributed those shortcomings both to the characteristics of individuals and to NGOs' ambiguous position in the labour movement.[35] Issues most often mentioned were the difficulty of working under a repressive government; individual and organisational egotism; pressures from donors; and the conflict between workers' interests and NGOs' organisational need for continuity (primarily through access to international funding), along with the related concern of being seen to be effective. However, activists' narratives and interpretations of labour NGOs' role were perhaps most influenced by their backgrounds, their convictions, and their personal reasons for becoming involved in labour activism.[36]

Personality-based conflicts were characteristic of NGOs generally, because NGO activists' work was driven to a greater or lesser extent by their individual commitment and convictions.[37] Many of the activists interviewed for this study had

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[33] NGO Interview AU. Also Worker Interview AA.

[34] NGO Interview AQ. Also NGO Interview BB.

[35] See Sinaga, *NGOs in Indonesia*, 186-203 and Saragih, *Membedah Perut LSM*, 20-28 for catalogues of the limitations of Indonesian NGOs more generally.

[36] For personal histories of a number of NGO activists, see La Botz, *Made In Indonesia*, 1-28.

[37] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AD; NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AF; NGO Interview AG; NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AI; NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview AR; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview AX; NGO Interview AZ; NGO Interview BF; NGO Interview BL; NGO Interview BO; NGO Interview BP.

been associated with a number of NGOs over time. Some had previously been active in other labour NGOs, while others had been involved in organisations working in a related field, for example, a NGO focused on human rights, legal aid or women's issues. Others still had come from organisations with more disparate concerns, such as the environment. Where activists left a NGO on good terms with their colleagues, cooperation was enhanced by their move. Where they left as a result of unresolved conflict, relations between the activists' old and new place of employment—or in some cases, between the NGO with which they had been affiliated and the NGO they subsequently established—could be compromised.

Institutional rivalry was also strong. NGO activists interviewed for this study were quick to acknowledge that labour NGOs did not always work together to achieve the best outcomes for workers. One long-term labour NGO activist observed that it had been much easier to network before the explosion in NGO numbers during the 1990s. Since then, the activist commented, 'each institution seems to have its own priorities'.[38] According to another:

> Each NGO has its own hidden interests—that's the NGO disease. This makes it very difficult for NGOs to form strategic alliances. Some NGOs want to be better than the rest, to force their ideas on everyone else and to gain prominence for their own organisation. They don't take working together seriously.[39]

Many respondents recognised the difficulties their organisations faced as a result of the pressure to appear more successful than other labour NGOs:

> The NGOs involved in labour have yet to develop a common platform. There's a history to this. When opportunities arise, it seems wonderful, but after the honeymoon has passed, we fall back into the *abyss* [English in the original]. Cooperative efforts always fail because instead of all acknowledging our strengths and weaknesses, we all want to emphasise our capabilities more than we want to cooperate.[40]

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[38]   NGO Interview AM.
[39]   NGO Interview AZ.
[40]   NGO Interview AE.

In some instances, international pressures with regard to funding, performance and accountability were barriers to cooperation amongst labour NGOs. In the words of one respondent:

> All labour NGOs claim to care about workers. And they are all conscious that workers' problems must be faced together, they can't be dealt with individually. But to be honest, we are under pressure to make sure our individual organisations stand out. So we cooperate on big issues, but when they're finished, we go back to working on our own.[41]

NGO funding and the possibility of excessive donor influence were questions which concerned every respondent to a greater or lesser degree.[42] The level at which an individual NGO was influenced by donor priorities depended considerably on whether they were funded on an ongoing basis or by project. However, the evolving focus of labour NGOs demonstrated that even organisations that receive reliable base funding were influenced by current trends.

One strong indication of donor influence was the number of labour NGOs that had gender programs, even though gender was clearly not an issue of high concern for many of the activists involved. Two respondents raised the issue of gender when asked directly if donor's funding priorities influenced their programs. The first respondent observed that their NGO had no plans to establish a gender program until donors encouraged them to do so.[43] The second, who challenged the public perception that labour NGOs' priorities were always dictated by funding, commented that:

> What donor gives anything if it's not in their interests? But that doesn't mean that NGOs can be totally controlled. In my experience, NGOs have an opportunity to determine what they do. Like the gender issue. Gender is a sexy (*seksi*) issue, but we don't deal with gender. [Name of NGO] does not have a special program for women.[44]

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[41] NGO Interview AA.
[42] As on other particularly sensitive issues, respondents tended to identify the problems that beset other NGOs rather than those that troubled their own.
[43] NGO Interview AJ.
[44] NGO Interview AE.

Sometimes actions taken in response to pressures to take on donor-promoted programs, to compete for donors' funds, or to prove to donors that one NGO was more effective than another, resulted in accusations that workers were 'sold' (*dijual*);[45] 'kept' (*dipelihara*)[46] and 'subdivided' (*dikapling-kaplingkan*)[47] for organisational gain.[48]

The frequency of conflict in, and between, labour NGOs was also partly caused by the conditions in which they operated. Labour was one of the more controversial arenas in which NGOs were involved in the late New Order period. NGOs' decisions about strategy had very real implications for the personal safety of workers and NGO activists. It is therefore not surprising that proponents of different levels of confrontation with the state often disagreed about the approach that should be taken to assist workers. These disagreements sometimes fuelled feelings of resentment. As one respondent commented:

> Different labour NGOs have different paradigms. There's nothing wrong with having different opinions in a democracy. The problem doesn't arise out of not cooperating— it arises when NGOs start denouncing each other. Then they get exclusive because they think that they are right (*merasa diri benar*).[49]

This sentiment was echoed by a number of other interviewees. One observed that 'there is not enough communication between labour NGOs, because each NGO believes they are right (*menganggap diri benar*).[50] For another, the problem was that 'in NGOs, egotism (*akuisme*) is very high'.[51] A third expressed discontent with the lack of cooperation far more strongly, describing the relationship between some labour NGOs as being one of mutual disparagement (*saling ejekan*).[52] Conflict

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45 NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AV.
46 NGO Interview AK.
47 NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AO.
48 Such accusations were often the result of differences in philosophy or approach, inter-organisational jealousy, or personal clashes between NGO activists. It should be noted, however, that some respondents told detailed anecdotes about cases in which other NGOs had claimed responsibility for workers' groups or strikes which they initiated.
49 NGO Interview AP.
50 NGO Interview AS.
51 NGO Interview AU.
52 NGO Interview AZ.

between labour NGOs was a major obstacle to their effectiveness in the rebuilding of the Indonesian labour movement.

Workers' Perceptions of Labour NGOs

Labour NGOs had direct contact with only a small proportion of factory workers in Indonesia. However, interview data suggests grassroots labour NGOs had an enormous impact on the workers and worker activists with whom they dealt directly.[53] The importance of this direct contact was reflected in the matters raised by worker activists. Although labour NGOs' policy advocacy function was identified as important by all labour NGO activists, few worker activists interviewed offered commentary on the role of policy and research labour NGOs. They concentrated instead on the organisations with which they were associated, on other grassroots labour NGOs, or on legal aid organisations that dealt with workers. Overall, their interactions with grassroots labour NGOs could be characterised as 'critical engagement'. Worker activists had very firm views on labour NGOs' shortcomings (discussed below). However, fieldwork interviews confirmed Hadiz's observation that 'even the most anti-NGO workers actually do still say that they want to maintain contact with labour NGOs'.[54]

NGOs' Contribution

Worker activists used a mixed range of terms to describe their relationship with labour NGOs. Some of these clearly reflected NGOs' promotion of international concepts of partnership. As noted earlier, it was common to hear a large number of borrowed lexical items when speaking to worker activists who neither speak nor read

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[53] As noted in Chapter One, labour NGOs' influence is acknowledged by many scholars. See for example Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia;* Andriyani, "The Making of Indonesian Women Worker Activists"; Aspinall, "Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule"; Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." See also La Botz, *Made In Indonesia.* See in particular Athreya's detailed account of one workers' interaction with a labour NGO and a labour NGO training program in Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 113-118.

[54] Interview with Vedi Hadiz on 15 March 2000.

English, most notably *fasilitator* (facilitator) and *partner* (partner).[55] In another reflection of labour NGO activists' own beliefs about the relationship between themselves and worker activists, one worker activist commented that NGOs had been both 'dominant' (*dominan*) and 'the voice of workers, because workers themselves had no voice'.[56]

When asked why they had developed relationships with labour NGOs, worker activists pointed to NGOs' capacity to assist in a wide range of ways. One unionist offered the following examples when asked how his organisation's association with a labour NGO had been of benefit:

> For instance if someone from our union gets arrested by the police in a demonstration. He needs a lawyer to help him so he doesn't get abused by the police. Or say if some workers need some research about wages. That takes a survey and all sorts of things. They can't do a survey! We're talking about factory workers, here! They don't have the skills to do research like that.[57]

Others noted other types of practical assistance, such as the provision of physical facilities, opportunities to meet other workers, money to run meetings, and technical training on how to run an organisation or organise effective strikes.[58]

At a more fundamental level, however, labour NGOs offered workers education and understanding.[59] The importance of education was confirmed by a worker who had recently attended an NGO-sponsored training workshop for the first time. When asked why he had attended the course, he replied 'if we want to organise, we have to have knowledge'.[60] For him, an ideal NGO was one that:

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[55] Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AH; Worker Interview AQ. Other terms used by the worker activists, which suggested a different kind of relationship, included *mitra* (colleague), *pendidik* (educator) and *pembimbing* (guide). Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AG; Worker Interview AH.

[56] Worker Interview AD.

[57] Worker Interview AB.

[58] Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AF; Worker Interview AH; Worker Interview AQ; Worker Interview AT; Worker Interview AU.

[59] Worker Interview AA; Worker Interview AB; Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AE; Worker Interview AG; Worker Interview AH; Worker Interview AI; Worker Interview AJ; Worker Interview AK; Worker Interview AL; Worker Interview AM; Worker Interview AN; Worker Interview AP; Worker Interview AQ; Worker Interview AR; Worker Interview AS; Worker Interview AT; Worker Interview AU.

[60] Worker Interview AM.

> helps workers because they know a lot about law and stuff, and we always get stuck when we want to do something. We're blind; we don't know which way to go. But like they said yesterday, we're not allowed to wait for instructions. They're only motivators. It's funny. We all still want to be motivated, even though we should be able to motivate ourselves.[61]

An experienced worker activist (whose strong opinions about NGOs' shortcomings are described below) also referred to the importance of motivation. The most important aspect of labour NGOs' involvement in the labour movement was, he said, that they 'provided ideas, motivation…they provoked us to think'. He continued to say that, with the help of NGOs, '*yang nggak tahu jadi tahu, yang nggak sadar jadi sadar*'—'those who didn't know came to know, those who were not conscious became conscious'.[62]

Worker activists recognised labour NGOs' contribution to both their own development as activists and their ability to organise others. Many worker activists identified consciousness-raising as the most important function of labour NGOs. They characterised class-consciousness as 'not something that grows by itself, but something which workers must be made to understand'.[63] Worker activists recognised that communication and consciousness-raising were difficult tasks:

> The hardest thing about establishing a union is making the workers conscious. You can't just do it once. You have to do it twice, three times, even four times. There are lots of methods that can be used to raise workers' consciousness. But they all take time, and you have to move slowly. You have to start from their experience—from real cases. The best time to move is when something has happened in the factory. For example, if a worker is unfairly dismissed. Say a female worker is pregnant, and the company won't give her maternity leave. Her case can be used as material (*dijadikan bahan*) for making other workers conscious. It's a very long process because you are working with people who don't know anything at all about organising. I know from my experience that even when workers learn about their rights—about law, about this, that, and the other—even after they've taken part in a strike, they're sometimes still confused. They don't really know what they've been doing. When that happens, you have to start again from the beginning. You have to educate them, so that they become conscious, then you have to organise them all over again.[64]

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[61]   Ibid.
[62]   Worker Interview AD.
[63]   Worker Interview AB.
[64]   Worker Interview AS.

The effects of NGOs' consciousness-raising efforts were apparent in workshops in which newly recruited workers participated alongside 'graduates' from previous courses. There was a clear difference between the problems they perceived in their workplaces and their understanding of those problems. This was reflected, for example, in illustrations produced in a consciousness-raising exercise at one workshop. Novices produced simple drawings of their journey from their village to the city, showing themselves working in the fields and then in a factory. 'Graduates' from previous courses produced far more complex storyboards, which included illustrations representing conflict in factories and the inequalities between factory owners and workers. In meetings involving long-term worker activists, the extent to which those worker activists had absorbed the language and concepts of their middle-class mentors was even more apparent. In some meetings, it was very clear which participants were workers. In others, however, it was difficult to tell the difference between worker activists and their NGO counterparts.

Worker activists who had a long association with labour NGOs strongly differentiated between themselves and their non-activist counterparts, who were 'not yet conscious' (*belum sadar*).[65] In the words of one, 'many of our friends would rather sleep and eat than attend a meeting.'[66] These views were confirmed in interviews with a number of young female factory workers in a large export-oriented footwear factory, who had no interest in talking about inequities in the workplace. Instead, they described the consumer goods they were saving for, how they managed their money to achieve their saving goals, and their plans for marriage.[67] Another group of workers, who lived in the dormitory attached to a textile factory, discussed similar matters. They had been approached by worker activists, but had no interest in becoming involved in labour activism, which they said would take up all of their leisure time and offer little in return, except danger.[68] One of the workers who had chosen not to attend NGO-sponsored activities confirmed that many workers are

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[65] Worker Interview AA; Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AL; Worker Interview AS; Worker Interview AT; Worker Interview AU.
[66] Worker Interview AC.
[67] Interview with non-activist workers at PT X on 24 January 2000.
[68] Interview with non-activist workers at PT Y on 27 January 2000.

wary of the perils of activism: 'We've been asked along to their activities, but it's too risky'.[69]

Worker activists acknowledged workers' fear of the consequences of activism, which they felt they understood because they, too, were workers. Reflecting on the different perspectives of NGO activists and workers, one worker activist noted, 'NGO activists don't know what it means to be workers, the fear that workers have'.[70] However, according to the worker activists interviewed, when workers did 'become conscious' (*menjadi sadar*), their attitudes changed.[71] 'Once workers are conscious (*sudah sadar*), they are happy to give up their time for meetings and discussions. They're even prepared to give up their overtime rather than miss a meeting.'[72] Workers' commitment to organising was clearly evident in meetings and education sessions attended during fieldwork. Some groups whose regular meetings I attended gave up tens of hours each month to their activism and took risks in their workplaces to encourage others to become involved. Many of the worker activists interviewed had been sacked at least once for their involvement in workplace organising. Some had gained employment in different factories in the same city, whilst others had been forced to move to another province because they had been blacklisted by factory owners. Others had become fulltime activists after failing to find other employment.

The Class Divide—From Below

Although many worker activists distinguished themselves from other workers who were 'not yet conscious', they were equally cognisant of the deep divide between themselves and middle-class NGO activists. Assessments of labour NGOs' practice revolved around the questions of commitment and differing interests. It should be noted that while some respondents made criticisms of the NGO with which they were associated, most often, worker activists were far more positive about the particular

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[69] Worker Interview AE.
[70] Worker Interview AC.
[71] Worker Interview AA; Worker Interview AB; Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AL; Worker Interview AS; Worker Interview AT; Worker Interview AU.
[72] Worker Interview AL.

organisation with which they had links than about labour NGOs in general. This suggests that to some extent they had become mired in inter-NGO conflict.

Some of the strongest criticisms of labour NGOs came from worker activists who spent the largest proportion of their time in the company of labour NGO activists. At one level, criticisms concerned the practices of organisations with which worker activists had a generally good working relationship. One member of another NGO-sponsored union remarked dryly that the NGO activists with whom he spent time 'have too many demands on them, and they make promises too easily. For example, they might promise to be somewhere at 9:00 am, but they might not get there until 3:00 pm, or even 7:00 pm'.[73] My own experiences attending meetings and training sessions held in worker communities by a range of NGOs suggests that it is not uncommon for workers to spend a considerable proportion of their day off or their evening waiting for NGO activists to arrive.

More fundamentally, however, worker activists' criticisms concerned NGOs' inability to relate to workers' material conditions:

> NGOs have lots of theories about how to build up the labour movement. They know a lot about theory because they've all been to university. But that theory can't always be put into practice. What works in the Philippines or in Korea doesn't necessarily work in Indonesia. They want to help, but they're groping around in the dark.[74]

Another commented, 'this mightn't sound very nice, but I personally think that labour NGOs are like pop-song writers'.[75] When pressed to elaborate, the respondent continued:

> Well, they make a big fuss about something—something that will make news—but there's nothing to back it up. At first they are really, really enthusiastic, but then it just turns in to a polemic. After that, there's nothing. Then it starts all over again. It's always like that. What I mean is that for organisations that say they want to build up the strength of the workers, they tend to be not very…not very consistent. They're just

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[73] Worker Interview AH.
[74] Worker Interview AP.
[75] Worker Interview AJ.

interested in polemics. To put it even more negatively, workers become a sort of political commodity (*komoditas politik*).[76]

Many worker activists' comments reflected the class-based structure of Indonesian society generally. One worker activist, who had earlier argued that middle-class outsiders were a necessary part of the labour movement, gave a long list of examples to illustrate the gap between workers and NGO activists. He was particularly critical of the big hotels in which NGOs often held meetings, their formality and their 'flash words'.[77] Speaking with a tinge of bitterness in his voice, another observed that '**NGO activists need a car, and a tie…that just makes the distance between them and the workers bigger and bigger. We don't want to be like that'.[78] This worker activist, who was a member of an NGO-sponsored union, also noted the problems experienced by labour NGO activists generally, and policy NGO activists in particular, when communicating with workers:

> The problem is that NGO activists have trouble writing in language that workers understand. This is an ongoing issue. The trouble is if they write 'properly' (*menulis dengan baik dan benar*) workers can't read it! For example, Akatiga does a lot of research about labour conditions, but it doesn't help us at all, because of the way they write about it. It would be much more useful if we could understand what they wrote.[79]

The same activist readily provided a catalogue of the types of NGOs who used workers for their own interests:

> Workers' perceptions about an NGO depend on that NGO itself. Some make a hobby out of selling workers (*tukang jual buruh*)…there are plenty of those. There are also those who *minteri*. Do you understand *minteri*? It's Javanese. It means they don't make workers clever, they just make a big deal out of how much cleverer they are. They use workers. They don't want to listen, because they think they know better. Then there are the ones who find out that workers are having a strike and bring their typewriter so they can ask for power of attorney. They type it all up on the spot then they put themselves forward. There are lots of those, too! Then there are the ones that make membership cards and tell the workers to pay dues, but when something

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[76]   Ibid.
[77]   Worker Interview AS.
[78]   Worker Interview AB.
[79]   Ibid.

happens, when they're supposed to step in, they don't. It's so easy to find examples. Take the legal aid NGOs. They employ lawyers. But let's face it, who do lawyers usually defend? Lawyers don't defend workers. Lawyers defend bosses. So the ones that work in legal aid just do it to get some experience. What sort of commitment is that?[80]

According to another worker activist, labour NGOs were 'just busy with their own programs. They just arrive, stir up a demo then disappear'.[81] A similar comment was made by union official closely associated to one grassroots labour NGO:

It seems that many NGOs just create rumours (*ngedrop isu*)—to be blunt, they become involved in provocation. They 'make workers conscious' then tell them to strike. It's just not that easy—there has to be a step-by-step process with training.[82]

Conversely, according to third worker activist, some NGOs claimed credit for workers' own organising efforts. When asked for a concrete example of this process, the activist described an incident from personal experience. After attempting to form a workers' group in his workplace, he had become involved with an NGO. In co-operation with that NGO, he and his fellow workers created a sizeable network of workers' groups in a number of factories, only to have another NGO claim credit for establishing the entire network. The activist's rage was palpable when he explained that 'it was in all the national newspapers. It was headline news! But they didn't do anything in the field!'[83] Comments such as these were often accompanied by references to NGOs' dependence on donor funding. According to one respondent, the need to secure funding had a very direct effect on labour NGOs' approach to workers:

Because of the donors, they sort of ask workers to make an unwritten commitment to them. I mean, if a particular group of workers has been guided by one NGO,

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[80]   Ibid.
[81]   Worker Interview AK.
[82]   Worker Interview AF.
[83]   Worker Interview AJ.

well…it's hard for them to ask for help from another NGO. And if they do, they can be punished in some way, or even ostracised completely. That was the worst thing.[84]

Another respondent found fault with labour NGOs' failure to work together. He argued that failure was a consequence of NGOs' tendency to serve their own interests rather than the interests of workers:

> When NGOs talk about the labour movement, they can never agree. They can never unite to develop a common vision (*visi*). Their priorities are all different. They just keep on working on their own, developing puppet organisations. They don't focus on developing cadres of worker-organisers [who can operate independently], they develop NGO cadres.[85]

A third worker activist raised a related point about the divisions between NGOs, which that respondent saw as limiting workers' ability to participate in labour forums and to form networks:

> Because NGOs have their own interests, it's really hard to unite workers. The workers are all in separate boxes because of NGOs' interests. For example, if there's a discussion. It ends up that the NGOs get represented, not the workers. Even if workers want to run their own discussion they have to ask permission from their NGOs! This is real. It's a big obstacle.[86]

The primary issues were, then, the extent of NGOs' commitment to workers and the extent to which that commitment was subordinated to their personal interests, their organisational interests, or the demands placed upon them by donors. These concerns reflect the structural divisions between labour NGOs and the workers' groups they sponsored with regard to organisational purpose, funding and linkage. They confirm that NGOs acted as labour intellectuals from outside, rather than from within.

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[84] Worker Interview AP.
[85] Worker Interview AJ.
[86] Worker Interview AQ.

Pressures for Change

Towards the end of the New Order period, NGOs' commitment to the labour movement was challenged by a growing number of workers who, often as a result of the education and training provided by labour NGOs themselves, began to perceive inconsistencies between their own interests and the interests of NGOs. NGO activists described a growing awareness of a need to change the way they operated from the mid-1990s.[87] As one recalled, reflecting on the evolution of the NGO-worker relationship, 'at first workers were just pleased someone wanted to help, but they got more critical. If they did not like what an NGO did, they distanced themselves'.[88]

In some respects, worker activists' criticisms stemmed from NGO activists' classical approach. One NGO activist noted that he had become increasingly aware of the 'risk that the relationship between an NGO and its workers could become like the relationship between a father and a child'.[89] Another argued that it was time for labour NGO activists to recognise that workers have insights into their condition that outside intellectuals do not: 'we claim to see something they do not see, but we have to remember that they see things we cannot.'[90] In other respects, workers' criticisms of labour NGOs' practice as 'outside intellectuals' illuminated the premises on which NGOs' role in the labour movement was constructed. Whereas labour NGO activists believed their proper place lay outside the organised labour movement, workers and worker activists believed this was problematic. Labour NGO activists argued that their role should be temporary and limited, because 'true' labour organisations were independent organisations of, by and for workers. However, workers did not accept labour NGO activists' reasons why their role was restricted by their status as outsiders. They saw NGOs' failure to commit fully not as a necessary and desirable functional division, but as an abrogation of their responsibilities.

One of the major themes in interviews with worker activists was their unhappiness about the point at which labour NGOs stepped back and left workers to

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[87]   NGO Interview AS.
[88]   Ibid.
[89]   NGO Interview BK; NGO Interview BL.
[90]   NGO Interview BK.

manage their own campaigns.[91] Whilst labour NGOs often made their intention to withdraw explicit during preparation for strike action, worker activists did not understand their reasons for doing so. As one worker noted, reflecting on his own expectations of a labour NGO:

> People learn from NGOs—they become clever (*pintar*). They form groups and at some stage they organise a demonstration. It turns out that those workers cop it too. Even if the demands are met, the vocal ones get sacked. I think that NGOs shouldn't just 'tickle' (*menggelitik*) us. It doesn't take any special skills to get up and say 'oppose, oppose, oppose. Smash them!' But it's the people who do the smashing who get arrested, not the NGOs. NGOs should be more responsible. NGOs need to think more—they can't just give us knowledge, they have to be there for us. It's like a karate teacher who teaches kids karate. The kids take other kids on, but if they can't manage, the teacher steps in. Or if you have kids, you teach them that they have to do this and this and this, but if there's a problem, as parents you have to get involved. That's how an NGO should be.[92]

Although workers and worker activists recognised the class differences between themselves and labour NGO activists, they did not accept the revisionist demarcation between unions and institutional labour intellectuals. Athreya cited one worker who chose to associate with an alternative union rather than a labour NGO because 'NGOs…teach you how to do everything but then they leave you to do it on your own. They're not there to help you when you actually are brave enough to take action, and they can't keep you from being fired.'[93] However, for many workers and worker activists, distinctions between unions and labour NGOs were artificial. They expected both to be fully committed to the labour movement, and condemned both when they failed to meet this expectation. Workers did not criticise labour NGO activists for being non-worker intellectuals; they criticised them for being outsiders. Workers argued that NGO activists were an important part of the labour movement, who had a duty to immerse themselves in workers' struggles.

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[91] Worker Interview AB; Worker Interview AC; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AG; Worker Interview AI; Worker Interview AM; Worker Interview AN; Worker Interview AQ; Worker Interview AT; Worker Interview AU.

[92] Worker Interview AN.

[93] Athreya, "Economic Development and Political Change in a Workers' Community in Jakarta, Indonesia." 115.

Conclusion

During the late New Order period, labour NGOs and worker activists alike characterised labour NGOs' contribution to the reconstruction of the labour movement primarily in terms of NGO activists' identity as non-workers. Labour NGO activists believed they could help workers because they had access to knowledge and resources that workers did not have—resources available because of their privileged position as members of the educated middle class. Equally, they believed they could not be a true part of the labour movement because they were non-workers who could empathise with workers' travails but could never truly share them. These middle-class activists, who constituted the majority of labour NGO staff, emphasised the difference between their own class background and the background of workers. They identified the strong sense of 'calling' they felt came with their work, which, for most, was less a form of employment than a moral mission. When reflecting on their own shortcomings, they cast them in terms of the difference between the interests of workers and their own interests as outsiders.

Labour NGOs' contribution as classical intellectuals was acknowledged by worker activists, but that acknowledgment was accompanied by growing doubts about the depth of NGOs' commitment to labour. Worker activists did not reject labour NGOs' involvement in labour issues; they criticised labour NGO activists for their failure to devote themselves fully to their role in labour movement. Worker activists' rejection of labour NGOs' insistence that worker organisations must be completely *of* the working class indicated that worker activists were far less committed than labour NGO activists to union-centred models of the labour movement. As one member of a trade union that had formed out of an NGO-sponsored workers' group noted, worker activists 'were really conscious that the labour movement needs more than just workers. It needs other people, middle-class people and so on, who care about labour issues. We can't stand alone.'[94]

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[94]   Worker Interview AB.

CHAPTER 8

The Search for a New Role

> NGOs have to change. We have to re-evaluate our position. The methods we used to use don't work anymore. In the past we stood beside (*mendampingi*) workers, but now they want to self-actualise (*aktualisasikan dirinya*).[1]

In May 1998, the New Order came to an end after Indonesia's currency collapsed as a result of the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997. The monetary crisis (*krismon*) sparked a 'total crisis' (*kristal*), which, in turn, prompted the resignation of President Suharto and the disintegration of the New Order's corporatist state system.[2] Developments in the early post-Suharto period had a profound effect on the labour movement in general, and on the position of NGOs in relation to that movement in particular. The easing of structural and policy constraints on trade union registration and operation during the Habibie interregnum brought NGOs' suitability as an alternative channel for labour organising increasingly into question for workers and NGO activists alike. During that time, and during the subsequent presidency of Abdurrachman Wahid, NGOs reassessed their role in the labour movement. There was little consensus about the future direction of their engagement with workers and unions in the debates that followed.

This chapter outlines changes in the regulation of labour representation, and labour NGOs' reactions to those changes between Suharto's resignation on 20 May

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[1] NGO Interview AT. As noted earlier, *mendampingi,* means 'to accompany', 'to stand beside' or 'to closely assist'. It is difficult to find an English equivalent that captures the nuances of the Indonesian term, which has strong overtones of 'assistance', and, in speech, sometimes of 'supervision' and/or 'guidance'. This quotation provides a good sense of the contrast between 'self actualisation' and the function of *pendampingan*.

[2] For early accounts of the events leading to the fall of Suharto, see Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1999), 337-366; G. Forrester and R.J. May, eds., *The Fall of Soeharto* (Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing, 1998). For a general overview of the economic effects of the crisis see Hal Hill, *The Indonesian Economy in Crisis: Causes, Consequences and Lessons* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1999); Anne Booth, "The Impact of the Indonesian Crisis on Welfare: What do We Know Two Years On?," in *Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis*, ed. Chris Manning and Peter Van Diermen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000).

1998 and the end of the Wahid presidency in July 2001. Part One examines external challenges to NGOs' position in the labour movement, focusing on shifts in the structures and discourse of labour representation, while Part Two describes labour NGOs' efforts to redefine themselves. The final part of the chapter examines the implications of these developments for NGOs' future in the organised labour movement. The chapter argues that labour NGOs' initial retreat and subsequent attempts to redefine their role confirm labour NGO activists' status as outside intellectuals in the classical mode and their acceptance of unions' status as the only legitimate organisational form available to the labour movement. It concludes that NGOs can continue to make an important contribution if labour NGO activists reassess the criteria of significance against which they judge their position in relation to labour.

External Challenges

Urban employment growth fell sharply in 1997-98 as a result of the economic crisis.[3] Manning has noted that whilst manufacturing was not the worst-affected sector in the economy, manufacturing employment fell more than 10 per cent in that year—a loss of over one million manufacturing jobs.[4] Meanwhile, the real wages of those who continued to be employed in manufacturing dropped 38 percent.[5] It was not until

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[3]   Chris Manning, "Labour Market Adjustment to Indonesia's Economic Crisis: Context, Trends and Implications," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 36, No. 1 (2000): 121. See also Iftikhar Ahmed, "Additional Insights on Indonesia's Unemployment Crisis" (paper presented at the Mini Workshop on Food and Nutrition, Jakarta, 10-12 May 1999); *Employment Challenges of the Indonesian Economic Crisis* (International Labour Organisation, [cited 29 April 2003]); available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/jakarta/publ/book.htm. In 1997-98, the government implemented labour-intensive programs in an attempt to absorb the newly-unemployed, in which a number of NGOs became involved. See for example "Labor-Intensive Projects to Start Again," *Jakarta Post*, 14 May 1998. The program, which was initiated in December 1997, was largely funded by the World Bank. It gave priority to newly unemployed blue-collar workers. See "Pemerintah Upayakan Program Padat Karya," *Kompas*, 16 December 1997; "Government Vows to Speed Up Labour Intensive Programs," *Jakarta Post*, 6 February 1998. It was suggested in interviews that many new NGOs were formed to meet the need for providers for this and related programs.

[4]   Employment in the construction industry fell 17.4 percent in that year. See Manning, "Labour Market Adjustment to Indonesia's Economic Crisis," 122-124. See also "Profil Pengangguran 1998," *Business News*, 18 August 1999.

[5]   Manning, "Labour Market Adjustment to Indonesia's Economic Crisis," 129. See also AKATIGA, "The Impact of the Crisis on Labour," (Bandung: AKATIGA, 1998). For a detailed account of the effects of the crisis on workers in North Sumatra, see Herwin Nasution, "Buruh Sumatera Utara: Ditengah Krisis Ekonomi" (paper presented at the The Impact of the Economic

2000 that the real minimum wage—a standard not adhered to in all factories—began to approach pre-crisis levels.[6] At the same time, however, restrictions on labour organising were significantly relaxed. Changes in the regulatory and policy environment, along with changes in Indonesian society generally, presented a significant challenge to policy and grassroots labour NGOs alike.

The Habibie Interregnum

Most of the legislative and policy changes affecting the regulation of labour in the three years after the fall of Suharto occurred during the Habibie interregnum. Indeed, as Bourchier has observed, despite the scandals that dogged Habibie's government, he 'presided over a remarkable, almost Gorbachev-esque, period of political reform'.[7] In the labour arena, developments in the regulation of trade unionism transformed the industrial relations landscape. While the retention the formal structures and rhetoric of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations confirmed that the Habibie government's policies were not entirely new, Habibie resolutely abandoned the Suharto regime's commitment to a *de facto* single vehicle of labour representation.[8] It was this development that allowed NGO-sponsored workers' groups and other labour groups (including the unions effectively subsumed into FBSI in 1973) to seek registration with the Department of Manpower.

Two major legislative initiatives influenced the form and substance of unions in the three years after the fall of Suharto. The first of these was the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No.87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise. The second was the decision to proceed with the implementation of Manpower Law No.25/1997. The Habibie government's

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Crisis on Labour in Indonesia Workshop, Bandung, 12-14 July 1998); Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera, "Refleksi Pengorganisasian Buruh".

[6] In 2001, the minimum wage in Jakarta was Rp.426,250 (approximately A$80)—the equivalent of Rp.194,431 in 1996 prices "Wage and Employment Effects of Minimum Wage Policy in the Indonesian Urban Labor Market," (Jakarta: SMERU, 2001), 2, 40. This report provides a series of useful tables on the structure of the Indonesian labour market to 1999. See "Wage and Employment Effects of Minimum Wage Policy in the Indonesian Urban Labor Market," 11-16.

[7] For a brief political overview of the Habibie interregnum, see David Bourchier, "Habibie's Interregnum: Reformasi, Elections, Regionalism and the Struggle for Power," in *Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis*, ed. Chris Manning and Peter Van Diermen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000).

[8] See for example "Menaker: Ada Pemimpin Buruh yang Bermanuver Politik," *Media Indonesia*, 2 July 1998.

ratification of ILO Convention No.87 signalled its willingness to jettison the one-union policy. Its refusal to abandon Manpower Law No.25/1997 demonstrated its refusal to break completely with concepts and practices of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.

ILO Convention No.87 was ratified through Presidential Decision No.83/1998 and implemented through Ministerial Regulation PER-05/MEN/1998.[9] Ministerial Regulation PER-05/MEN/1998 considerably lowered requirements for union, union federation and confederation registration, but it did not permit true freedom of association. Under the regulation unions seeking registration were required to be either sectoral or enterprise-based, and the Department of Manpower retained the rights to reject applications for registration and to monitor the internal affairs of registered unions.[10] According to some informants, the commitment to a single union in a workplace was unofficially maintained in some jurisdictions where Department of Manpower officials refused to permit alternative unions to register in workplaces where an SPSI unit existed.[11] While industrial relations practice and the Department of Manpower's rhetoric remained contradictory, informants noted bureaucratic and military intervention in labour affairs decreased considerably during the Habibie interregnum.[12] Legislative and policy reforms stemming from the ratification of the

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[9]   "President Habibie Signs ILO Convention on Unions," *Jakarta Post*, 6 June 1998.

[10]   See Articles 4 and 5 of the Regulation. FSPSI campaigned against the Regulation, arguing that it interfered with the unity of Indonesian workers and allowed 'pretend' unions to register. See for example "Fahmi Idris Diminta Mundur Karena Tidak Bisa Persatukan Pekerja," *Suara Pembaruan*, 3 September 1998; "Banyak SP yang Tidak Nyata: Permenaker No.05/1998 Diminta Dicabut Kembali," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 24 February 1999. In another example of FSPSI's continuation of the rhetoric of the New Order, it opposed the formation of labour parties because 'the establishment of political parties only weakens workers, because it divides their strength'. Bomer Pasaribu quoted in "Kemana Buruh Bergabung?," *Merdeka*, 5 September 1998. See also "Dirugikan Nama Mirip: DPP FSPSI Akan Menggugat Partai SPSI," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 March 1999.

[11]   NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AD; NGO Interview AI.

[12]   Another form of intervention in labour affairs also emerged in the Habibie interregnum. A large number of external players had the opportunity—and appeared to be eager—to influence the future of labour representation to a degree that was unthinkable in Suharto's Indonesia. In March 1999, as organisations such as ACILS and FES focused on promoting union management skills in SBSI and FSPSI *Reformasi* respectively, the ICFTU was rumoured to be encouraging 'closer cooperation' between the larger union federations (Interviews, March 1999). At least two such organisations were in fact formed in 1999. The *Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Indonesia* (KSBI, Indonesian Confederation of Trade Unions), which unites *Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslimin Indonesia* (PPMI, Brotherhood of Muslim Workers, GASBIINDO, *Gabungan Serikat Pekerja Merdeka* (Gaspermindo, Amalgamated Indonesian Free Trade Unions) was formed on 13 May. "Monthly Report for May," (Jakarta: American Center for Labor Solidarity, 1999), 16. Two months later, on the 16 July, ACILS itself 'facilitated' the formation of *Forum Solidaritas*

convention were supported by reductions in direct military and bureaucratic intervention in industrial relations.[13] Most notably, informants reported that military intervention in the workplace, in grassroots workers' groups and in labour NGOs declined considerably, although many interviewees described a shift from direct military involvement to companies' use of *preman*, or local thugs.[14] On 30 September 1999, just before the Habibie interregnum ended, Ministerial Regulation PER-05/MEN/1998 was superseded by Ministerial Decision No.201/1999. Ministerial Decision No.201/1999 appeared to accommodate the different types of unions forbidden under the earlier Regulation. According to Article 3, for example, workers' organisations could be sectoral, or take 'other forms that meet workers' needs'. However, the remainder of the Decision dealt only with the organisational structures it explicitly defined. Union structures permitted by the regulation were thus restricted to enterprise unions (*serikat pekerja*), sector-based union associations (*gabungan serikat pekerja*), federations (*federasi serikat pekerja*) and confederations (*konfederasi serikat pekerja*). The implications of this anomaly became evident soon after Ministerial Decision No.201/1999 came into force. When the FNPBI-affiliated KOBAR attempted to register, its application was refused on the grounds that Article 1 (3) of the decision defined union associations (*gabungan serikat buruh*) as groups of unions in one industrial sector.[15] ACILS reported that:

Unionis (FSU, Unionists' Solidarity Forum), which brought together SBSI, FSPSI-*Reformasi*, Sarbumusi, the *Federasi Organisasi Pekerja Keuangan dan Perbankan Indonesia* (FOKUBA, Federation of Indonesian Bank and Finance Workers' Organisations) and FNPBI. "Monthly Report for July," (Jakarta: American Center for Labor Solidarity, 1999), 16.

[13] The decrease in military and bureaucratic intervention was supported rhetorically by Minister for Manpower Fahmi Idris. See "Depnaker Tidak Lagi Menjadi Pembina Serikat Pekerja," *Media Indonesia*, 22 September 1998; "Militer dan Polisi Jangan Campuri Urusan Pekerja," *Media Indonesia*, 32 July 1998; "Selesaikan Perselisihan di Perusahaan: Rundingan Bipartit Tak Lagi Libatkan Kepolisian," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 22 August 1998. This was not to suggest that the bureaucracy or the military withdrew from labour affairs. See for example "Niess Temui Pakpahan: Pekerja Masih Hadapi Teror," *Kompas*, 10 February 1999; "SPSI Tuntut Penembak Pekerja Diadili," *Kompas*, 8 March 1999; "Unjuk Rasa Diwarnai Tembakan Lukai Buruh," *Surya*, 12 February 1999.

[14] The use of *preman* was widespread and obvious. In my factory visits in early 2000, for example, I could always identify *preman* standing at the factory gates. Note that direct military involvement did certainly continue in some areas. For example, according to one respondent, 'At one level, the police haven't changed much. We got about 5000 people together for a Halal bi Halal, and the police still sent *Intel* [intelligence officers] and all that—even though we'd let them know we were doing it.' NGO Interview AB. See also "Preman Gebuki Puluhan Buruh di Bogor," *Media Indonesia*, 28 September 1999.

[15] "Monthly Report for October," (Jakarta: American Center for Labor Solidarity, 1999), 18.

Kobar leaders were also advised by Ministry officials that they were not permitted to include in their constitution or by-laws objectives such as international labor solidarity, promoting democratization and world peace because these were political objectives outside the role of a trade union which is required to be concerned only with social and economic matters. This rejection had its basis in Article 7 of the decree which regulates the objectives of worker organizations to include, in true New Order language, the promotion of *Pancasila* industrial relations, the work ethic, discipline and productivity.[16]

As this statement suggested, there were few changes made in the official language of industrial relations during the Habibie interregnum. Despite *Pancasila*'s fall from favour at the national level, the concept retained official currency in industrial relations throughout the transition period.[17] The Department of Manpower's commitment to *Pancasila* Industrial Relations was reaffirmed in the explanatory notes of the Draft Law on Labour Unions and the Draft Law on the Industrial Disputes Tribunal:[18]

Every worker has the right to become a member of or establish a labour union. This right is a basic human right, and is guaranteed in Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution…But as responsibility towards wider interests, namely the interests of the people and the nation, must be demanded of workers as they access their rights, those rights must still be accessed within the framework of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations.

Pancasila Industrial Relations is the manifestation of the principles of *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution in the industrial relations sphere…In *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, every workers' complaint and every labour force problem should ideally be solved by the parties themselves according to family principle through processes of deliberation to reach a consensus.

Pancasila's continued relevance in industrial relations was demonstrated in the Ministerial Decision No.201/1999. While the Decision removed the requirement for

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[16]   Ibid. Also *FNPBI Being Registered: The Easier Way to Develop and Lead the Indonesia [sic] Worker' [sic] Movement* (LabourNet Germany, 2000 [cited 24 April 2003]), available from www.labournet.de/internationales/ indonesien/fnpbi3.html.

[17]   On the eve of the June 7 election, it seemed that *Pancasila*, the state philosophy, had disappeared completely from Presidential rhetoric. In Habibie's twenty-minute State Address, broadcast on TVRI on 6 June 1999, *Pancasila* was not mentioned once.

[18]   A third bill on Manpower Development and Protection was also drafted in 1990. Photocopies of the Draft Laws on Labour Unions and the Industrial Disputes Tribunal referred to here (which were later replaced) were provided by LBH Bandung in March 1999.

unions to adopt *Pancasila* as their sole organisational basis, it continued to frame Indonesian labour relations within the *Pancasila* Industrial Relations model.

Yet although the Habibie government continued to invoke *Pancasila* Industrial Relations, it made its recognition of the limits of organic corporatism explicit. A *caveat* was added to the description of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations in the Draft Law on the Industrial Disputes Tribunal:

> It is, however, recognised that workers' complaints and differences in opinions and interests between workers and employers cannot always be resolved through use of the family principle and processes of deliberation to reach a consensus.

This *caveat* represented a significant change in policy from the height of the New Order period, when government and union documents denied the legitimacy of conflict and promoted the family principle and deliberation to reach a consensus as the only acceptable means of communication between unions and employers.

The second important legislative measure of the Habibie interregnum was the transitional government's decision to proceed with the implementation of Manpower Law No.25/1997.[19] The Manpower Law, which the New Order had described as an attempt to comprehensively update Indonesia's labour legislation, was designed to replace six ordinances and eight laws in force in Indonesia. As well as defining the operation of the industrial relations system, it covered labour force issues in both the formal and informal sectors. Despite widespread criticism, a Habibie government-appointed working group decided against striking Manpower Law No.25/1997 from the statutes.[20] In fact, the only change made through Law No.11/1998 on the Change of the Implementation of Law No.25/1997 was to postpone the date the law became

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[19] *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 25 Tahun 1997 Tentang Ketenagakerjaan* (Jakarta: Cipta Jaya, 1997).

[20] See for example "RUU Ketenagakerjaan Hambat Buruh Berorganisasi," (Pamphlet produced by Komisi Pembaharuan Hukum Perburuhan: n.d.); "Undang-Undang Ketenagakerjaan Bakal Menyulitkan Hidup Buruh?," (Pamphlet produced by Komisi Pembaharuan Hukum Perburuhan: n.d.). As noted in Chapter Five, the draft of this law was a focus of extensive protest before Suharto's resignation because the laws it replaced had provided workers with at least nominal protections which were not preserved in the new law. For early critiques of Manpower Law No. 25/1997, see Amiruddin and Masduki, eds., *RUU Ketenagakerjaan*.

effective from 1 October 1998 to 1 October 2000.[21] Although Manpower Law No.25/1997 was not implemented during the Habibie interregnum, the decision not to abandon the law sent a message to NGOs, unions and worker activists that forces for continuity in industrial relations remained strong.[22] Those forces were not sufficient, however, to prevent dramatic changes in the industrial relations landscape during Habibie's period in office. Despite ongoing legal and bureaucratic obstacles to full freedom of association, there was sufficient change in the first few months of Habibie's presidency to prompt an explosion in union registration and activity. By the end of the Habibie interregnum, there were twenty federations registered at the national level.[23] A wide range of smaller unions had also been recognised.[24]

Many of the new unions were qualitatively different from those of the New Order. During the New Order period, white-collar workers were encouraged to disassociate themselves from blue-collar workers in the labour hierarchy promoted by the government, while public servants and workers in state-owned enterprises were not considered stakeholders in industrial relations.[25] Consequently, most official and unofficial labour organising involved blue-collar workers employed in the private manufacturing sector. However, union activity was not confined to blue-collar industries—or even to the private sector—during the Habibie interregnum.[26] A

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[21] "Ditunda, Pelaksanaan UU No 25/1997," *Kompas*, 9 September 1998; "Government to Defer Enforcement of Labor Law," *Jakarta Post*, 28 August 1998; "Menaker: 'Agenda Politik Jadi Pertimbangan': Pemberlakuan UU 25/97 Ditangguhkan Dua Tahun," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 17 October 1998; "UU Ketenagakerjaan No.25/1997, Ditunda," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 August 1998.

[22] The DPR and the executive agreed on 27 September 2002 to abandon Law No.25/1997. "Govt, House Drop 1997 Labor Law," *Jakarta Post*, 28 September 2002.

[23] Photocopied table provided by FSPSI officials. An outline of the origins and structures of 14 of these unions is provided in "Unions in Transition, 1998-1999."

[24] By August 2000, 24 national union organisations, and some 10,330 enterprise unions, had registered with the Department of Manpower and Transmigration. "Legalitas Serikat Buruh Tergantung Pemerintah," *Kompas*, 12 September 2000. By the end of 2001, the Department of Manpower had registered 61 federations, 1 confederation, almost 150 labour unions and some 11,000 enterprise unions. SMERU, "Industrial Relations in Jabotabek, Bandung, and Surabaya during the Freedom to Organize Era," vi. More recently, ILO spokesperson, Tri Andhi Suprihatono has criticised the 'mushrooming' of unions, which he argued weakened unions' ability to bargain at the shopfloor level. See "Serikat Pekerja Menjamur, Hubungan Industrial Lemah," *Kompas*, 21 May 2002.

[25] The shift towards white-collar militancy began before the fall of Suharto in banking industry and hotels, and amongst journalists.

[26] Although this activity cannot be said to have created a lasting sense of solidarity between the bank workers or public servants and their blue-collar workers, it has opened up the discursive and practical possibilities for further unionisation of white-collar workers and the public service, and some links with blue collar workers. See "Pesangon Karyawan Bank Bisa Ditiru Buruh Lain," *Media Indonesia*, 22 May 1999. Divisions between blue- and white-collar workers remain

resurgence of white-collar unionism was centred in the banking sector.[27] Two national bank unions registered after bank workers were involved in extensive demonstrations for better severance pay, following announcements that some 17,000 bank workers were to be retrenched from the thirty-eight insolvent banks closed under the IMF-sponsored restructuring of Indonesia's financial sector.[28] However, the Habibie government's lifting of restrictions on unionism in state-owned enterprises on 9 March 1999 represented an even stronger break from New Order industrial relations policy. In April 1999, employees at a number of state enterprises withdrew from the state's civil servants' organisation, KORPRI (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*), and formed their own unions,[29] while in June 1999, the *Federasi Serikat Pekerja BUMN* (FSP-BUMN, Federation of State Enterprise Workers' Unions) was established.[30] Some months later, over 1,000 teachers went on strike because the Electoral Commission categorised them as a 'functional group'.[31]

Blue-collar unionism nevertheless remained the primary focus for organising in Habibie's Indonesia. The blue-collar unions that successfully registered in the first

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sharp—as do divisions within their ranks. As one NGO activist commented, 'take for example hotel workers. They divide themselves up according to the number of stars their hotel has!' NGO Interview AA.

[27] For an account of unionism in the banking industry, see Samuel Gultom, "Krisis Ekonomi dan Mobilisasi Pekerja Bank, Studi Kasus Pembentukan Federasi Organisasi Pekerja Keuangan dan Perbankan Indonesia (FOKUBA)." (Unpublished Sarjana Politik Thesis, University of Indonesia, 2000).

[28] See "17.000 Pegawai Akan Diberhentikan," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 14 March 1999; "Bank Employees Urged to Form Unions," *Jakarta Post*, 22 February 1999; "Bank Owners Urge IBRA Negotiates with Employees," *Jakarta Post*, 25 March 1999; "BRI Pangkas 5.000 Karyawan," *Surya*, 23 July 1999; "Karyawan 38 Bank Gelar Lagi Unjukrasa," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 20 April 1999; "Karyawan Bank Danamon Unjuk Rasa," *Surya*, 10 August 1999; "Karyawan Bank Tolak Formula Pesangon yang Ditetapkan BPPN," *Media Indonesia*, 20 April 1999; "Karyawan Bank Unjukrasa," *Waspada*, 16 March 1999; "Karyawan Bank yang Terlikuidasi Blokir BI," *Kompas*, 19 March 1999; "Karyawan Dua Bank Pertanyakan Nasib," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 15 March 1999; "Pesangon Karyawan Bank Ditambah," *Surya*, 10 April 1999; "Sekitar 700 Bankir Bermasalah akan Dicekal: Unjukrasa Karyawan Bank Meluas," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 16 March 1999; "Staffs of Closed Banks Vow to Continue Strikes," *Jakarta Post*, 13 March 1999; "Tetap Minta Pesangon 10 Kali PMTK: Karyawan Bank Ngotot Tolak Kerjasama dengan BI," *Merdeka*, 20 March 1999.

[29] See "Karyawan BUMN Dirikan Federasi SP," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 11 June 1999; "Karyawan BUMN Tidak Harus Ikut Korpri," *Suara Merdeka*, 9 January 1999; "Karyawan Garuda Tinggalkan Korpri," *Media Indonesia*, 20 May 1999.

[30] "Karyawan BUMN Dirikan Federasi SP."

[31] See "Wakil PGRI Tidak Masuk UG: Ribuan Guru di Jateng dan Jatim Unjuk Rasa," 7 September 1999. Functional groups did not have the right to vote in New Order Indonesia. For further discussion of PGRI, see Sulistiyo, "Pemberdayaan PGRI dengan Organisasi Pekerja," *Suara Merdeka*, 25 November 1999. All civil servants were officially given permission to form unions in early 2000. See "Hasil Ratifikasi ILO: PNS Bebas Bentuk Serikat Pekerja," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 15 February 2000.

few months after Suharto's resignation fell into two broad categories. The first of these was comprised of national sector unions and union federations. Unions in this category included FSPSI and its break-away, FSPSI *Reformasi*,[32] SBSI, the ICMI-linked *Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslimin Indonesia* (PPMI, Brotherhood of Muslim Workers),[33] and *Federasi Serikat Buruh Demokrasi Seluruh Indonesia* (FSBDSI, All-Indonesia Federation of Democratic Workers' Unions). It also included a number of reconstituted pre-New Order, non-communist unions—such as GASBIINDO, Sarbumusi and *Kesatuan Buruh Marhaen* (Marhaenist Workers' Union)—which had been absorbed into FBSI in 1973.[34] NGO activists interviewed in the early months of the Habibie interregnum were sceptical about the credentials of most of the newly registered union federations. One informant, for example, argued that many of them were simply seeking formal recognition because it was unclear what the rules governing union formation would be after the election of 7 June 1999.[35] Another offered a similar analysis, describing the unions that appeared in 1998 as 'sand castles that had absolutely no strong foundations. The leaders of those unions were opportunists, who wanted to get involved in particular political parties or get some benefit from handling labour cases.'[36]

Another category of new blue-collar unions consisted of small, factory-based concerns. A significant proportion of registered or aspiring unions in this category

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[32] FSPSI split in late August 1998, when nine of the 13 industry unions left the federation. See "Sembilan SPA Menarik Diri Dari FSPSI," *Kompas*, 25 August 1998. Attempts were made by the Minister of Manpower to encourage the factions to reunite. See for example "Atika: 'Niat Menaker Satukan Kembali Terlambat': DPP FSPSI Tolak SPSI Reformasi Bergabung," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 27 November 1998.

[33] The *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) was formed under the auspices of B.J. Habibie and Adi Sasono. See Robert W. Hefner, "State and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56 (1993).

[34] Some of the original leaders of these unions facilitated their re-emergence. Of particular note is GASBIINDO, which was headed once more by Agus Sudono.

[35] This analysis makes sense given the speed with which some of these federations emerged in the immediate post-Suharto period. It is also supported by the sudden emergence of four 'workers' parties with no clear electoral base. The parties—the SBSI-affiliated *Partai Buruh Nasional* (PBN, National Labour Party); Wilhelmus Bhoka's *Partai Pekerja Indonesia* (PPN, National Workers' Party); and two parties rumoured to be fronts for Suharto's interests, the *Partai Solidaritas Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (PSPSI, All-Indonesia Workers' Solidarity Party) and the *Partai Solidaritas Pekerja* (PSP, Workers' Solidarity Party)—appeared in the lead up to the General Election of 7 June 1999. Significantly, none of them succeeded in winning a seat in the DPR. PBN, the most successful, received a mere 0.08% of the vote. The parties' electoral failure adds weight to criticisms that the parties lacked a worker base and were largely vehicles for personal ambition or elite machinations.

[36] NGO Interview BO.

had their roots in the NGO-sponsored workers' organisations of the late New Order, such as the YFAS-linked *Serikat Buruh Garmen Mandiri P.T. Billion Knitting Factory* (Independent Garment Workers' Union of the Billion Knitting Factory). Worker activists associated with some labour NGOs, such as PMK, also 'infiltrated' some FSPSI and FSPSI *Reformasi* workplace units.[37] Although they had adopted this strategy before Suharto fell, changes within the structures of FSPSI and FSPSI *Reformasi* provided new opportunities for activism. Another type of NGO-sponsored union that emerged in the Habibie period was the regional union. *Serikat Buruh Jabotabek* (SBJ, Greater Jakarta Labour Union) was established on 11 October 1998 by a number of labour groups—namely *Perkumpulan Buruh Jabotabek* (Jabotabek Workers' Association); KBB; *Kelompok Peduli Diri* (Concerned Workers' Group) and the *Paguyuban Pekerja Katolik* (Association of Catholic Workers).[38] In the city of Surabaya, the *Serikat Buruh Regional* (SBR, Regional Labour Union) was formed on 1 May 1998, just before the fall of Suharto. SBR was associated with Humanika, a Surabaya-based labour NGO.[39] *Gabungan Serikat Buruh Independen* (GSBI, Association of Independent Labour Unions), which had links to Sisbikum, was also regional in nature. Unlike SBJ or SBR, however, GSBI was a federation that claimed to represent legally-registered plant-level unions in Bogor, Tangerang and Bekasi.[40] Like FNPBI, GSBI, SBR and SBJ were initially unable to formally register, as the formation of regional unions and union associations contravened Ministerial Regulation PER-05/MEN/1998, through which ILO Convention No.87 was implemented, and Kepmen No.201/1999, the Ministerial Decision that superseded it less than a month before Habibie's presidency ended.

The Wahid Presidency

Although Abdurrachman Wahid had been personally supportive of the labour movement during the Suharto years, his government introduced few substantial

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[37] Interview with worker activists associated with PBJ who held positions in the workplace unit of a union associated with FSPSI-*Reformasi* on 30 January 2000.

[38] "Unions in Transition, 1998-1999," 56. Interview with unionists from SBJ on 13 January 2000.

[39] "Unions in Transition, 1998-1999," 53.

[40] Interview with Arist Merdeka Sirait on 23 February 2000; Interview with GSBI unionists on 25 February 2000.

changes to labour policy. Many labour NGO activists compared the Wahid presidency unfavourably with that of Habibie.[41] According to one NGO respondent:

> When Habibie was still President, if we screamed out, our screams were heard, and things changed. Now things are different. If we scream something out, Gus Dur [Abdurrachman Wahid] just smiles. He hardly gives us a sideways glance. Politically, workers' position was stronger under Habibie.'[42]

As another respondent noted, 'Since Gus Dur became President…well, nothing changed really. There haven't been any policy changes'.[43]

Four aspects of continuity in labour policy were important in the Wahid period. The first was the ongoing focus on international models of unionism, demonstrated in April 2000, when Bomer Pasaribu (then Minister for Manpower) publicly announced his plans to make Indonesia a 'model of international labour standards'.[44] The second was the continued use of the concept of the 'outsider' by bureaucrats and officials. In one example, in Bandung, the Regent (*Bupati*) H.U. Hatta Djatipermana, told a meeting of employers that they should 'reject the presence of provocateurs in

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[41] Wahid appointed three Cabinets during the twenty-one months of his presidency. Bomer Pasaribu was replaced by a temporary Minister of Manpower, Erna Witoelar, some months before the second Cabinet was announced in August of that year. In the second cabinet, Manpower and Transmigration were recombined, and the former Minister of Transmigration and Population, Alhilal Hamdi, became Minister of Manpower and Transmigration. A third Cabinet reshuffle took place on 1 June 2001, less than two months before Wahid was forced to step down, in which Hamdi retained the Manpower and Transmigration portfolio. In Megawati's Cabinet, appointed on 9 August 2001, Hamdi was replaced by Jacob Nuwa Wea, Chairman of FSPSI and a PDI-P member. Nuwa Wea retained his position in FSPSI after becoming Minister. For statements from Nuwa Wea on his plans for the Ministry and his position in FSPSI, see "Nuwa Wea Plans to Improve Labor Conditions," *Jakarta Post*, 22 August 2001; "Pro-Labor Decree Remains Effective, Says Nuwa Wea," *Jakarta Post*, 11 August 2001. For a biographical portrait of Bomer Pasaribu published at that time, see Wahyu Atmadji, "Tuduhan Tak Masuk Akal," *Suara Merdeka*, 21 November 1999. Labour activists' relationship with the successive Wahid Cabinets began badly with the appointment of Bomer Pasaribu as Minister for Manpower in October 1999. Pasaribu's appointment was strongly opposed by labour NGOs, student groups and SBSI, but was supported by some factions within FSPSI. Within 24 hours of the announcement, 18 unions and labour NGOs gathered to express their opposition to the new Minister. "Monthly Report for October," 17. Protestors in Jakarta included three sectoral unions of SBSI, YLBHI, LBH-Jakarta, LBH-APIK, ISJ, FNPBI, *Solidaritas Perempuan*, Akatiga, SBJ and Sisbikum. There were protests about the appointment in Medan. See "500 Buruh Gelar Doa Keprihatinan dan Tuntut Menaker Bomer Dicopot," *Suara Merdeka*, 4 December 1999. For Pasaribu's self-defence, see Wahyu Atmadji, "Bomer Pasaribu: Kesalahan Menteri Lama Ditimpakan ke Saya," *Suara Merdeka*, 21 November 1999.

[42] NGO Interview AP.

[43] NGO Interview AB. Similar opinions were expressed by NGO Interview BS.

[44] "Indonesia, Model Standar Buruh International [sic] Versi ILO," *Suara Merdeka*, 28 April 2000.

their factories'.[45] Similarly, after riots in Bandung in May-June 2001, officials condemned the demonstrations for not being 'purely the actions of workers'.[46] The third aspect of continuity was ongoing official intervention in unions. Some labour activists described cases in which employers forced workers to join a company-sponsored union and where NGO-sponsored unions registered, but were then dissolved by the Department of Manpower.[47] FNPBI, which had attempted to register twice during the Habibie interregnum, finally succeeding on 18 September 2000.[48] Only a week before, Mardjono (Director of the Industrial Relations Division of the Department of Manpower and Transmigration), had claimed that FNPBI 'still had a long way to go' to achieve registration, because 'unions may not become engaged in politics and have no reason to provide political education'.[49] Finally, there was an ongoing commitment to the language of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations amongst some government factions in the Wahid period. One example of this was a debate over the use of *pekerja* or *buruh* and the place of *Pancasila* in a proposed industrial relations bill. According to the chair of the House's Working Committee:

> Several factions want to maintain the terminology of '*pekerja*' because, according to them, '*buruh*' has a pejorative meaning and was linked to Marxist ideology, while several others want to maintain '*buruh*' because, according to them, '*pekerja*' was misused by the former New Order regime to make a division among workers.[50]

On the subject of *Pancasila*, Al Mu'taqim added, 'We are near to a conclusion that labor unions are free to adopt ideologies other than *Pancasila*, but they should not contradict it'.[51]

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[45]   "Tolak Provokator Masuk Pabrik," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 27 October 1999.

[46]   "Amuk Buruh dan Mitos Bandung," *Kompas*, 19 June 2001. The officials took the outsider theme even further, suggesting that the demonstrations were not even of 'Bandung people'.

[47]   NGO Interview AQ; NGO Interview BI.

[48]   Romawaty Sinaga, *Indonesia: Militant Union Wins Legal Recognition* (2000 [cited 30 April 2003]); available from http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2000/416/416p20.htm. At the time this report was written, Romawaty Sinaga was one of FNPBI's international officers. She was later employed by the ILO.

[49]   Mardjono quoted in "Legalitas Serikat Buruh Tergantung Pemerintah."

[50]   Amru Al Mu'taqim quoted in "Government, House Agree on New Labor Rules," *Jakarta Post*, 7 June 2000.

[51]   Amru Al Mu'taqim quoted in Ibid. Note that Wahid launched a failed attempt to lift the ban on Communism during his term in office.

Most contentious, however, was the question of labour legislation itself. While relatively little labour legislation was passed in the Wahid period, government's regulation of labour remained at the centre of worker protests and labour activist politics. Controversy continued over Manpower Law No.25/1997 and associated draft laws continued into the Wahid presidency.[52] In 2000, two consecutive laws were passed, which again altered Law No.11/1998—the law that had postponed the implementation of Manpower Law No.25/1997.[53] As a result, the date of implementation was postponed again to October 2002. Two draft supplementary laws, dealing with labour unions and a revamped Industrial Relations Tribunal respectively (*Rancangan Undang-Undang tentang Serikat Pekerja; Rancangan Undang-Undang MPPI*), were later produced. These draft laws were broadly consistent with the overall framework of Law No.25/1997, although they did redress some aspects that had attracted earlier criticism. The Draft Law on Resolution of Industrial Disputes was submitted to the DPR on 8 June 2000, along with a later draft law on the Guidance and Protection of Labour,[54] but these bills were not passed

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[52] See for example "Politik Perburuhan yang 'Amburadul'," *Kompas*, 6 March 2000. A survey of the *Jakarta Post* archives for the period between June and September 2002 (the period leading up to the planned implementation of Manpower Law No. 25/1997 on October 1 2002) demonstrated the continuing tensions surrounding the bill. The government finally decided on 27 September 2002 to nullify the law. See "Businesspeople Refresh Stance Against Pro-Labor Bills," 21 September 2002; "Govt Bows to Pressure, Revises Two Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 22 August 2002; "Govt, House Drop 1997 Labor Law."; "Govt, House Review Controversial Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 7 September 2002; "Labor Union Going Too Far, Minister Says," *Jakarta Post*, 22 July 2002; "Labor Union Restrictions Too Tight: Minister," *Jakarta Post*, 26 June 2002; "Meeting to Unravel Labor Dispute," *Jakarta Post*, 28 August 2002; "Under-Pressure House to Review Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 23 September 2002; "Workers Protest New Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 12 September 2002; "Workers Urge DPR to Stop Deliberating Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 12 August 2002; Mochtar Kurniawarn, "Workers and Businessmen Unhappy with Revised Labor Bill," *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 2002; Tertiani Simanjuntak and Jupriadi, "House Offers to Mediate for Controversial Labor Bills," *Jakarta Post*, 24 September 2002; Dadan Wijaksana, "New Labor Bill Could Turn Foreign Investors Away," *Jakarta Post*, 1 July 2002. See also "DPR dan Serikat Pekerja: Sepakat Membuat RUU Ketenagakerjaan Baru," *Kompas*, 22 October 2002.

[53] These were Law No.03/2000 and Law No.28/2000. The text of the latter, which was passed on 20 December 2000, is available as *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 28 Tahun 2000 Tentang Penetapan Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang Nomor 3 Tahun 2000 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 1998 Tentang Perubahan Berlakunya Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 1997 Tentang Ketenagakerjaan Menjadi Undang-Undang* (Government of Indonesia, 2000 [cited 16 September 2001]); available from http://www.ri.go.id/produk_uu/isi/uu2000/uu28-00.html. See also "Enactment of Labor Law Postponed Further," *Jakarta Post*, 3 October 2000; "House Agrees to Delay Labor Law Enforcement," *Jakarta Post*, 28 November 2000.

[54] For commentary on the drafts, see for example "Buruh dan Pengusaha Tolak RUU PPHI dan PPK Sejak Awal," *Kompas*, 16 July 2002.

during the Wahid presidency. The draft trade union bill, which was submitted to the DPR on 14 February 2000, was passed as Law No. 21/2000 on 10 July.[55] Under the law, as few as ten workers could form a union. Its passage was particularly significant because it made registration possible for many more unions, including FNPBI, GSBI and a number of other unions based on NGO-affiliated and student-sponsored workers' groups. However, the law retained provisions giving the government power to withdraw official recognition. It also allowed the court to dissolve unions that contravened the 1945 Constitution or *Pancasila*, or whose leaders threatened national security.[56]

A number of important Ministerial Decisions were also issued during the period. These included Ministerial Decision No. KEP-150/Men/2000 on employment termination, which was circulated in June 2000. KEP-150/Men/2000 gave resigning workers and workers dismissed for serious violations rights to compensation, which prompted employers to complain that the decision was too generous to labour. President Wahid reportedly supported the employers,[57] and the Ministerial Decision was modified by Minster for Manpower and Transmigration Alhilal Hamdi in May 2001 through Ministerial Decisions No.Kep-78/Men/2001 and No.Kep-111/Men/2001.[58] These amendments resulted in violent protests in June 2001, particularly in Bandung, where protesters argued that striking workers would be penalised by the modification.[59] Finally, the government announced that it would

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[55] Criticisms of the trade union bill were particularly widely covered in the press in February and March 2000. See for example "Forum Solidaritas Union Tolak RUU Serikat Pekerja," *Kompas*, 3 March 2000; "Rame-Rame Nolak RUU Serikat Pekerja," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 15 February 2000; "RUU Serikat Pekerja: Pemasungan Tanpa Akhir," *Kompas*, 6 March 2000; "SBSI Tolak RUU Serikat Pekerja," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 30 March 2000; "YLBHI Tolak RUU-SP Karena Tak Memihak Pekerja," *Media Indonesia*, 25 March 2000. .

[56] ICFTU, *Indonesia: Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights (2002)* (2002 [cited 30 April 2003]); available from http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991215670 &Language=EN.

[57] "Gus Dur Wants Labor Decree Reviewed," *Jakarta Post*, 8 November 2000.

[58] For a discussion of the implications of these regulations, see SMERU, "Industrial Relations in Jabotabek, Bandung, and Surabaya during the Freedom to Organize Era," 17-21.

[59] See "Aksi Tolak Revisi Kepmennaker No 150/2000: Kemarahan Buruh, Ketidakpedulian Elite," *Kompas*, 16 June 2001; "Amuk Buruh dan Mitos Bandung."; "Government Reviews Pro-Labor Decree," *Jakarta Post*, 8 May 2001; "Govt Issues New Decree on Labor," *Jakarta Post*, 1 June 2001; "Kepmennakertrans No 78/2001: Gelombang Penolakan Semakin Kuat," *Kompas*, 30 May 2001; "Minister Delays Labor Law Due to Fear of Rallies," *Jakarta Post*, 17 May 2001; "Revision of Manpower Ministry Decree a Setback: Activists," *Jakarta Post*, 9 May 2001; "Ribuan Buruh Tuntut Revisi Kepmennakertrans Dicabut," *Kompas*, 12 June 2001; "Pekerja Tolak Hasil Revisi Kepmenaker," *Media Indonesia*, 9 May 2001.

postpone Decree No.78/2001 and re-enact No.150/2000. The reversal, which was greeted with hostility by business, demonstrated the Wahid government's inability to enforce unpopular labour legislation.

Internal Reassessments

The three years between mid-1998 and mid-2001 were a period of rapid change; although conditions were still difficult for labour organising, it was a 'period of opportunities, of transition' for workers and NGO activists alike.[60] In the words of one NGO activist, reflecting on the first year of the post-Suharto period, 'everything was changing. The trouble was identifying those opportunities and using them properly.'[61] Concern about labour's failure to adequately grasp the opportunities presented by *Reformasi* was widespread.[62] As one worker activist observed, 'after Suharto stepped down, an opportunity opened up, but workers haven't had the capacity (*kapasitas*) to take it'.[63] What workers did have, however, was a much stronger position in respect to the state and employers under the new conditions. As one NGO activist noted:

> There's been a big change in the consciousness of workers about getting together. Before, people censored themselves (*mensensor diri*). Now workers are beginning to be able to meet people like us in their homes. Before, to meet workers, we had to steal opportunities (*nyuri-nyuri*). Now workers look for education themselves—we don't have to go looking for them.[64]

Most NGO and worker activists acknowledged that conflict between workers and NGOs became much more evident after the fall of Suharto.[65] As opportunities to

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[60]   NGO Interview AE.

[61]   NGO Interview AA. See also Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera, "Refleksi Pengorganisasian Buruh".

[62]   Aspinall, "Democratisation, the Working Class and the Indonesian Transition."

[63]   Worker Interview AJ.

[64]   Worker Interview AA.

[65]   NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AL; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AJ; Worker Interview AS. Little had changed at the time of writing. In December 2002, I received reports that escalating conflict between NGOs and unions. Debates about the future of NGO involvement in the labour movement continued to rage. On one hand, some activists argued that workers lacked the skills to organise and therefore needed help. On the other, some argued that NGOs too were novices in the changed conditions of the post-Suharto era, and that too much NGO

meet and organise became more easily available, workers increasingly resented what they perceived as NGOs' attempts to control them. Significantly, conflict came to focus on the rights of workers to have their own organisations free from NGO 'interference'. One NGO activist, who observed in March 2000 that 'there have been a lot of changes in the last year', reflected a little ruefully on the success of NGOs' attempts to educate workers. 'NGOs taught the workers so that they'd be clever. But after they became clever, they could think for themselves, and they started to be critical.'[66] Another complained, 'There is tension about NGOs' involvement. Some workers now see it as intervention (*intervensi*).'[67] According to yet another, 'While NGOs still want to help, workers now have their own bargaining power. It was never like that before.'[68]

Initial Insecurity

In the first few months after the fall of Suharto, many labour NGO activists struggled to reposition themselves. As one activist commented, the 'problem was that NGOs didn't get together, they just rushed into the post-Suharto period'.[69] Policy NGOs, in particular, were unsure of how to proceed in the new era of uncertainty, when boundaries and campaign targets were unclear and previously successful methods no longer seemed to work. When explaining their reservations about the future of labour activism in Indonesia, activists from policy NGOs pointed to the decline in 'public interest' in labour issues, the breakdown of inter-NGO forums and the fragmentation of labour representation as the sources of their pessimism in 1999.[70]

Paradoxically, then, the opening-up of the polity and media reduced NGOs' effectiveness as advocates of workers' rights in the first few months after the fall of Suharto. Previously vocal labour NGOs failed to capitalise on opportunities to exert

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influence on unions was dangerous because NGOs were dependent on external funding and were thus at risk of being overly influenced by donors. Personal communication with Fauzi Abdullah on 24 December 2002.

[66] NGO Interview AA. At one training workshop I attended, one of topics addressed was worker activists' strategies for handling NGOs.

[67] NGO Interview BK. One concern for some NGO activists was the growing number of NGOs who claimed to be involved in labour issues, but whose motives were unclear. NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview BG.

[68] NGO Interview AT.

[69] NGO Interview AL.

[70] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AC; NGO Interview AF.

pressure on a transitional government vulnerable to domestic and international demands for change. During the first flush of *Reformasi*, middle-class activists who had used labour issues to voice their more generalised feelings of dissent were able to express those feelings directly. Some policy NGOs and NGO activists who had been previously very influential in the labour arena began to diversify their interests in response to what they saw as national priorities (and the priorities of donors), while the public voice of the policy activists who remained committed to labour issues was effectively drowned out by other, more pressing, concerns.[71]

One empirical manifestation of this development was the change in the level of press coverage of labour affairs. In contrast to the late New Order period when labour was a dominant issue in the daily press, there was a marked decrease in media coverage during the Habibie interregnum. In the early months after the fall of Suharto, issues surrounding the organisation of labour were notably absent from public debate. Press coverage of labour issues focused overwhelmingly on migrant workers, strikes, wages and mass layoffs, and the dramatic increase in the number of registered unions in that time attracted surprisingly little commentary.[72] Newspaper reports referring to labour NGOs, particularly those citing labour NGO activists' opinions on industrial labour, remained scarce for the remainder of 1999, although reports of NGOs' involvement in demonstrations and strikes gradually reappeared, and NGO commentary on female migrant labour and child labour was frequently reported.[73]

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[71] NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AS; NGO Interview BO. Even ACILS undertook a crisis monitoring program which had little to do with its core focus on labour. One particularly controversial example of this was Teten Masduki, the head of YLBHI's labour division. Teten, who received extensive publicity for his work with International Corruption Watch in the months leading up to the 1999 General Election, was widely criticised by labour NGO activists interviewed for 'deserting' labour.

[72] There were only twenty-three articles included on union formation between June 1998 (when Convention No.87 was ratified) and the middle of May 1999 in the *Problema* newspaper clipping series. Most of those dealt with the split in FSPSI. The four 'labour' parties which qualified for the June 7 election also failed to raise the media profile of labour: in the same range of *Problema* collections, the labour parties were the subject of only eight articles.

[73] One extended opinion piece on industrial labour that did appear during this time was Wimar Witoelar, "Pungki Indarti, Warga yang Tertinggal Kaum Buruh," *Waspada*, 27 June 1999. The next opinion piece of this length authored by an NGO activist to be included in the *Problema* clipping service (there had been a number written by academics in this period) was Haneda Lastoto, "Buruh Indonesia dalam Regim Kapitalisme Global," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 29 April 2000. At the time the article was written, Lastoto was the director of LBH Bandung.

There nevertheless remained what one policy labour NGO activist called 'a *politics of representation* [English in the original] where NGOs still thought their voice was the voice of the workers'.[74] KPHP, the major vehicle for policy advocacy in the last years of the New Order, effectively ceased to operate in the early months after the fall of Suharto, although the *Kelompok Perempuan untuk Keadilan Buruh* (KPKB, Women's Group for Workers' Justice), which was established in 1997, continued to be active.[75] The major cooperative campaign during the Habibie interregnum was coordinated by the *Komite Aksi Satu Mei* (KASM, Committee for Action on 1 May), a new cooperative initiative.[76] In addition to arranging demonstrations on 1 May, KASM was involved in campaigns against labour legislation at other times.[77]

NGOs that sponsored grassroots workers' groups were generally better placed to take advantage of the window of opportunity offered by *Reformasi*.[78] Yet despite their optimism, grassroots labour NGOs faced many new challenges. Sharp decreases in real wages and mass layoffs of factory workers during the early months of the Habibie interregnum forced them to question the efficacy of their community-based workers' groups. In interviews, some grassroots labour NGO activists commented on the personal feeling of loss they experienced when it became obvious that their carefully nurtured workers' groups and networks were under threat.[79] Conversely, new opportunities to organise in the workplace forced grassroots labour NGOs to shift their focus and develop a range of new strategies to encourage the growth of

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[74] NGO Interview AC.

[75] Its members included LBH APIK, LBH Jakarta, Sisbikum, YFAS, IPJ, Akatiga, and Bhakti Pertiwi. KPKB produced a series of information sheets on labour issues. See for example "Buruh dan K3 (Kesehatan dan Keselamatan Kerja)," (Information Sheet produced by the Kelompok Perempuan untuk Keadilan Buruh: n.d.).

[76] See "Tidak Benar, Tanggal 1 Mei Identik Dengan Komunis," *Suara Bangsa*, 1 May 1999. See also "300-Strong Rally to Laud Labor Day," *Jakarta Post*, 3 May 1999.

[77] KASM was comprised of a range of unions and labour NGOs, including Akatiga, ELSAM, IPJ, LDD, LBH APIK, LBH Jakarta, YFAS, Solidaritas Perempuan, Sisbikum and Bhakti Pertiwi. "Komite Aksi Satu Mei Tolak Keputusan Menteri Tenaga Kerja Transmigrasi No.78/2001 Hasil Persekutuan Pengusaha dan Pemerintah," (Pamphlet produced by the Komite Aksi Satu Mei: n.d.). For accounts of 1 May 2000, see "Peringatan Hari Buruh Sedunia 1 Mei: Ribuan Buruh Demonstrasi," *Kompas*, 2 May 2000; "Peringati Hari Buruh Sedunia: Ratusan Buruh 'Long March' Tugu Proklamasi-Bunderan HI," *Kompas*, 1 May 2000; "Peringati Hari Buruh, Pekerja Diajak Mogok," *Surya*, 1 May 2000; "Thousands of Workers Mark Labor Day," *Jakarta Post*, 2 May 2000.

[78] NGO Interview AD; NGO Interview AW; NGO Interview AZ; NGO Interview BN.

[79] NGO Interview AC; NGO Interview AW.

workers' organisations in factories—a task for which many were ill-prepared. Yet while most interviewees expressed frustration at their inability to take full advantage of new opportunities for factory-based organisation, they were ultimately confident that they could continue to help workers in the long process of forming authentic labour unions in the factories, or by a combination of factory and community approaches.

Although activists recognised that changes in the industrial relations climate demanded different approaches from all labour NGOs, there was little consensus about what those new approaches should entail.[80] All but one of the fourteen NGOs surveyed in industrial areas of Jabotabek (Greater Jakarta) and in West and Central Java in 1999 agreed that the long-term future lay largely with some form of factory-based worker organisation. At that stage, however, they disagreed on whether the benefits of registering a union outweighed the uncertainties associated with involvement in the official system. Some argued that the crisis had proven that community-based groups simply could not cope with the issues facing workers in Indonesian factories, and that registration was the only way to overcome workers' vulnerability.[81] Others believed that less formal, unregistered workers' groups should simply become more factory-focused, but avoid the scrutiny—and potential discrimination—that registration might bring.[82] At this early stage, most NGO activists were sure they would continue to have some role in the labour movement; however, just what that role would be was another question.[83]

Growing Confidence and a Vision for the Future

A year later, activists from all twenty-five labour NGOs surveyed unanimously argued that the traditional (registered) trade union was the most appropriate organisational vehicle for labour. As one respondent noted, 'there was still a crisis of

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[80]   Fauzi Abdullah, "Catatan Kecil: Pengorganisasian di Tingkat Akar Rumput" (paper presented at the Workshop on the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Labour in Indonesia, Bandung, 12-14 July 1998), 4; NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AT; NGO Interview BB.
[81]   NGO Interview AM; NGO Interview AZ; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BN.
[82]   NGO Interview AF; NGO Interview AI.
[83]   According to one respondent interviewed in early 1999, 'if they're worried they won't, then they have a lack of self-confidence' NGO Interview AJ.

identity (*krisis identitas*) amongst labour NGOs'.[84] However, most labour NGO activists were far more positive about their own future than they had been in early 1999.[85] By June-July 2001, when my third fieldwork visit was conducted, many policy labour NGOs had renewed their focus on public advocacy over issues including Labour Day,[86] the appointment of Bomer Pasaribu,[87] the shortcomings of the draft trade union law,[88] minimum wages[89] and the arrest of the worker activist Ngadinah.[90] One important difference between the cooperative forums active during the Wahid presidency and those of the Habibie interregnum and the New Order period was the extent to which unions were involved. Whereas in the past, cooperative efforts had involved policy and grassroots labour NGOs, they now included a number of labour unions with labour NGO connections and FNPBI. The three best known of these were KASM and KPKB, which continued to operate in the Wahid period,[91] and the *Forum Buruh dan LSM untuk Keadilan Buruh* (FBLKB, NGO and Workers' Forum for Workers' Justice), which was active from the end of

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[84]   NGO Interview BI.

[85]   They were not all as positive about the future of organised labour itself. Many respondents expressed ongoing concerns about the future of trade unionism, government intervention in labour affairs and employer hostility to unions. NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AL; Worker Interview AD; Worker Interview AS.

[86]   See "Buruh Akan Gelar Aksi Nasional," *Suara Merdeka*, 27 April 2000; "Peringatan Hari Buruh Sedunia 1 Mei: Ribuan Buruh Demonstrasi."; "Peringati Hari Buruh Sedunia: Ratusan Buruh 'Long March' Tugu Proklamasi-Bunderan HI."; "Peringati Hari Buruh, Pekerja Diajak Mogok."; "Thousands of Workers Mark Labor Day."; "Peringatan Hari Buruh Sedunia 1 Mei di Berbagai Daerah: Diwarnai Unjuk Rasa Menuntut Kenaikan Upah," *Kompas*, 2 May 2001. May Day campaigns continued in 2002, when Minister for Manpower Jacob Nuwa Wea encouraged employers to grant workers a holiday, but noted that workers must request permission from their employers to take time off worker to hold a demonstration because 1 May was not a national holiday. See "Unjuk Rasa Buruh, Antara Harapan dan Kenyataan," *Kompas*, 1 May 2002.

[87]   "500 Buruh Gelar Doa Keprihatinan dan Tuntut Menaker Bomer Dicopot."; "500 Buruh Riau Unjuk Rasa Anti Bomer Pasaribu."; "Kredibilitas Bomer Dipertanyakan." See also "Dosa-Dosa Bomer Dibongkar ICW," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 31 October 1999; "FSPSI Imbau Masyarakat Dukung Mennaker," *Kompas*, 30 October 1999; "Mennaker Ditolak, Mennaker Menjawab," *Kompas*, 28 October 1999.

[88]   See "RUU Serikat Pekerja Masih Diskriminatif," *Kompas*, 21 June 2000.

[89]   See for example "FSPSI dan LBH Mengecam UMR, Pengusaha Minta Pengertian," *Kompas*, 23 February 2000; "Suara Buruh: UMR Tak Mencukupi untuk Hidup Layak," *Kompas*, 25 February 2000.

[90]   Ngadinah was arrested for mobilising workers in an export footwear factory. Her case was the focus of a sustained NGO campaign. See for example "Detention of Labor Activist Suspended," *Jakarta Post*, 25 May 2001. Meanwhile, some research and policy NGOs, including Akatiga, made plans to become directly involved in training for trade unionists and other labour NGOs.

[91]   See "Aksi Bersama Satu Mei 2001," (Pamphlet Produced by the Komite Aksi Satu Mei: 2001); "Satu Mei Hari Buruh Sedunia: Hancurkan Politik Perburuhan Orde Baru," (Pamphlet Produced by the Komite Aksi Satu Mei: n.d.).

1999 to the middle of 2001.[92] Labour legislation continued to be a major focus for labour NGOs after Abdurrachman Wahid was deposed: a new NGO-worker forum called *Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh* (KAPB, Committee Against the Oppression of Workers) was established soon after Megawati assumed the presidency.[93]

The process of transition was much more challenging at the grassroots level, where decisions to promote the formation of independent unions had far-reaching consequences for grassroots labour NGOs. These NGOs found it increasingly difficult to maintain their old practices in a changing situation:

> NGOs began to get nervous about their position. I think this nervousness was because NGOs had been very slow to analyse the situation. You could say that they were not ready for the fruits of their efforts—workers have begun to have a critical attitude towards NGOs and are experiencing the euphoria (*eforia*) of organising independently. NGOs' attempts to maintain their position in the changing situation has pushed them to adopt strategies that are not appropriate responses to the broader issues.[94]

As another respondent noted, 'there was a clear transformation in ideas about the role of labour NGOs':

> Lots of NGOs that used to run education courses and organise workers have sponsored the formation of trade unions. They've deliberately made agreements with them about who will handle what. For example, while education should be the function of the

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[92] The labour NGOs involved in FBLKB, were YLBHI, LBH Jakarta, LBH APIK, YFAS, Sisbikum and its child labour affiliate KOMPAK, ELSAM, ISJ, Akatiga, and Bhakti Pertiwi. FBLKB focused particularly the draft laws on the Guidance and Protection of Labour and the Resolution of Industrial Disputes. See. "RUU Serikat Pekerja Mengebiri Hak Buruh: Tolak Sekarang Juga!" (Pamphlet produced by Forum Buruh dan LSM Untuk Keadilan Buruh: 2000). See also "Tanggapan Forum Buruh dan LSM untuk Keadilan Buruh (FBLKB) atas Rancangan Undang-Undang Penyelsaian Perselisihan Industrial (RUU PPI)," (Jakarta: 2000). SBSI was also active in lobbying on labour legislation. At the end of October 1999, SBSI set up a team to examine six draft laws – *RUU Serikat Buruh, RUU Peradilan Perburuhan, RUU Jamsostek, RUU Pemutusan Hubungan Kerja, RUU Pengupahan dan Kesejahteraan, RUU Perjanjian Kerjasama.* See "SBSI Kerja Maraton Garap Enam Rancangan Undang-Undang: Muchtar Gosok Politisi Rombak Nasib Kaum Buruh," *Rakyat Merdeka*, 31 October 1999.

[93] Again, its members included a number of unions as well as labour NGOs including Akatiga, IPJ and its parent organisation ISJ, LBH Jakarta, LBH APIK, LDD, YFAS, PBHI, Sisbikum, Solidaritas Perempuan; Bhakti Pertiwi and YLBHI, as well as three NGO alliances, namely *Komite Aksi Satu Mei, Konsorsium Pembela Buruh Migran Indonesia,* and *Jaringan Mitra Perempuan.* See Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh, "RUU PPHI: Dibuat Bukan Untuk dan Oleh Buruh," (Statement on the Formation of Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh: 2001).

[94] NGO Interview BP.

trade union, NGOs agree to handle it for the time being because the unionists aren't capable yet (*belum mampu*) of doing it.[95]

For some worker activists there remained a blurring between unions and NGOs. According to one worker activist involved in an NGO-sponsored trade union, 'workers think we're the NGO, and we're treated like gods (*didewakan*)'.[96] Increasingly, however, 'grassroots labour NGOs' role was being taken on by trade unions', which had assumed the tasks of 'educating workers and mobilising'.[97] The difference, according to one activist, was that:

> Before the fall of Suharto, NGOs helped workers directly. Now they act as facilitators who help to maintain the unions. Now they should be focused on pushing unions to create a common perception about what the labour movement should be.[98]

Activists believed the new situation required the development of a 'cooperative relationship', in which 'unions were set free (*lepas*), and NGOs acted as a transitional bridge'.[99] Some NGO activists believed this task required them to become more visible. According to a member of Bhakti Pertiwi, which had operated clandestinely during the Suharto period:

> We used to organise underground. We were very *low-profile* [English in the original]. People didn't know about Bhakti Pertiwi. They just knew us as individuals. After Suharto fell, we started organising our worker groups into a union. At first we were a bit hesitant about appearing in the open, let alone declaring a union. We were scared that the situation would change again. But then we decided we had to just take the risk.[100]

However, many NGO activists were cautious about workers' ability to run unions without assistance. Union organisers' lack of skills was a common theme in the

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[95] NGO Interview AL. Also NGO Interview BU.
[96] Worker Interview AC.
[97] NGO Interview AA.
[98] NGO Interview BH.
[99] NGO Interview BI.
[100] Interview with Bhakti Pertiwi Activist on 14 February 2000. Permission was sought and granted for attribution of this quotation.

responses of grassroots labour NGO activists, which emphasised both the realities of trade unionism in the early post-Suharto period and NGOs' reluctance to fully relinquish their 'guiding' role. Reflecting on problems with the new unions, one NGO activist commented that:

> You have to remember that most worker activists were born after there was last a real union in Indonesia. The new trade unions are like someone who puts up a doctor's plaque but tells the patients when they arrive that the doctor is still in training (*masih sekolah*).[101]

This concern was reflected in grassroots NGOs' relationships with the fledgling unions. One technique used by a number of labour NGOs to encourage the unions to take more responsibility was the formulation of formal Memoranda of Understanding, which documented the level of funding and other support the union could expect. Commenting on one such case, one respondent noted that:

> We have a clear commitment to make workers capable, to empower them. It's not just a theory. We've proved it. We developed organisations. We told workers they had to prove themselves, but we also told them we'd help them if they needed it. But that has a limit. If we think that they're capable, we'll leave them. Finished. Even now we've established an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding, English in the original]. We didn't have anything like that before.[102]

More generally, the ability to organise in the workplace has demanded a renegotiation of power structures and programs. As a worker activist observed in early 2000, 'the NGO stepped back (*mengambil jarak*), and now deals more with higher-level issues (*masalah ke atas*). We deal directly with the workers.'[103] According to another, 'after 1998, the role of [name of associated NGO] changed. They were less directly involved, and supervised more (*lebih mensupervisi*).'[104]

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[101] NGO Interview AK.
[102] NGO Interview AP. At least one other NGO established a formal Memorandum of Understanding with its associated trade union around this time. NGO Interview BA.
[103] Worker Interview AC.
[104] Worker Interview AD. Having used the word *mensupervisi,* this respondent corrected him/herself, saying 'not supervision, really, consultation' (*bukan supervisi sebetulnya, konsultasi*). Cognates of the word 'supervision' emerged frequently in my second round of interviews, along with more familiar words such as guiding (*membimbing*).

As one NGO activist noted, workers began to assume more responsibilities. 'We used to invite them to discussions, now they run their own. They can even run training sessions themselves.'[105] However, according to another NGO activist, 'it still becomes obvious in tight situations that the NGOs remain in control'.[106] As a third respondent noted:

> If anything goes wrong, or they need something, they run back to the NGOs. Many unions have an NGO as their *patron* [English in the original]. In that sense not much has changed. It's just become more formalised. NGOs are still dominant.[107]

A fourth NGO activist, echoing the sentiments of many of his colleagues, observed that 'conflict will increase if the [NGO-affiliated] unions want to stand on their own, but the NGOs still want to *dominate* [English in original]. But for now the unions still need the NGOs'.[108]

Many worker activists acknowledged their continued reliance on NGOs. According to one, for example, 'if we're stuck, we ask them for help'.[109] However, the right to organise meant, according to another, that 'now there are opportunities for us to speak directly about issues that concern us, although we're not always ready to use them'.[110] Permitting workers to speak for themselves presented a challenge to labour NGOs. Some NGOs ensured that workers participated in discussions:

> Before, only NGOs discussed workers' issues. Now, we send workers to seminars and workshops. They should be there—we just go with them if the invitation is made out to us. The workers are the ones who have an interest in this (*berkepentingan*).[111]

Not all labour NGOs made this transition smoothly. As one NGO activist observed, whilst workers were eager to make connections with other worker groups, associated

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105   NGO Interview AT.
106   NGO Interview BI.
107   NGO Interview AA.
108   NGO Interview AL.
109   Worker Interview AH.
110   Worker Interview AC.
111   NGO Interview AZ. Similar sentiments were expressed in NGO Interview AQ.

NGOs were often still reluctant to allow such connections to be formed.[112] In interviews, worker activists also described this reluctance. For example, one respondent said—in the presence of an NGO activist—that NGOs 'should not shut their doors to members of other unions'.[113]

Funding also became an increasingly important point of friction between NGOs and workers' groups. On the one hand, NGO activists argued that NGOs 'can't expect unions to deal with a lot of money yet'.[114] On the other, they complained that 'if we ask them to show where the money has gone, it can seem like domination (*dominasi*)'.[115] According to one NGO activist, 'NGOs still have a high level of control because they have access to funds. Some interfere with the selection of union officials.'[116] In a different vein, another respondent noted that workers no longer had to accept NGOs because those NGOs no longer had a monopoly over funding opportunities:

> Workers know when NGOs are right or wrong. They make it clear when they've been impoverished (*dimiskinkan*) by NGOs who are just looking for funding and so on. They're not scared to ask questions now that they've realised that they can perhaps access that funding themselves.[117]

The tension between NGO-sponsored unions continued need for assistance and their subordinate relationship with their NGO sponsors was an ongoing challenge for both parties during this period.[118] At the time of writing, it had not yet been resolved.

The Way Forward

Despite some initial obstacles to policy NGOs' ability to speak for labour, the fall of Suharto and the subsequent liberalisation of Indonesia's polity and labour relations regime demanded relatively few significant changes in policy NGOs' approach to

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[112]   NGO Interview AL.
[113]   Worker Interview AH.
[114]   NGO Interview AO.
[115]   NGO Interview BL.
[116]   NGO Interview BI.
[117]   NGO Interview AT.
[118]   NGO Interview BU; NGO Interview BV. There were many cases of conflict between grassroots labour NGOs and unions during this period in North Sumatra and throughout Java.

labour issues. In contrast, that liberalisation forced grassroots NGOs to fundamentally reconsider their role. The major questions facing grassroots labour NGOs at the end of the Wahid presidency were whether their involvement in the labour movement would continue, and, if so, what shape it would take. NGOs' deliberations about these questions illuminate the themes of this study. In one activist's view:

> Some NGOs will last, and others will disappear. In other words, many of the roles they have taken on—and are still doing now—will be taken over by unions. In that sense they're temporary. But they'll survive if they take on more specific roles: for example, producing education modules and teaching union officials how to use them. That would take a lot longer if unions did it themselves. There are some things that will still need an *expert* [English in original]. That's what the NGOs can do. For example, providing information about occupational health and safety, and advocacy in the sense of identifying the issues. NGOs can also undertake political functions.[119]

The majority of respondents argued that NGOs must eventually stop performing the 'trade union functions' they had undertaken in the late New Order period. This reflected their revisionist beliefs about the nature of trade unions and their acceptance the international conviction that the union is the only significant organisational vehicle available to the labour movement. For a minority, however, the change prompted a reconsideration of the nature of unionism and the position of intellectuals in the labour movement, which suggested that labour NGOs may come to be accepted as institutional labour intellectuals. If this occurred, it would signal a redefinition of the labour movement to encompass non-union labour movement organisations.

Reinforcing the Limits of Unionism

For most NGO activists, there remained a strong division between workers and non-workers. According to one respondent:

> What are needed now are not unions organised by NGOs, but unions that are organised by workers themselves whose officials are drawn from the working class. If

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[119]   NGO Interview AL. Also NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview BD.

NGOs organise unions, it's easy to make accusations that their interests are not the interests of workers.[120]

According to a second activist, 'we have to be prepared to retreat when workers are capable of handling everything themselves'.[121] In an article published in 2001, Indrasari Tjandraningsih (Akatiga) and Arist Merdeka Sirait (Sisbikum) declared that unions must be run by workers themselves, 'because they best understand their situation'.[122] Interviews confirmed that this opinion was widely shared. In the words of another activist, echoing the concerns of many of his colleagues, 'ideally, the unions should run things themselves. We should not become leaders, or show that we organised those unions. We're just friends who have helped them with things they need.'[123]

Revisionist themes also characterised NGO activists' evaluations and expectations of the unions formed in the post-Suharto period. One NGO activist reported, 'there are no unions yet that are truly from the workers'.[124] Another agreed that 'there are no unions in the pure sense in Indonesia yet', adding 'Indonesian unions cannot be truly independent because their funds come from outside and their leaders are non-workers'.[125] According to a third activist, the 'trouble is now that many people have a lust (*bernafsu*) for forming unions. They don't care about the workers, they're just after the money from ACILS and whatever.'[126] Elaborating further, a fourth respondent noted that 'it is difficult to tell how much all these new unions demonstrate the strength of the labour movement because quite a lot of them were established by non-workers or by nostalgic worker activists from the 1950s

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[120]   NGO Interview AC.
[121]   NGO Interview AZ.
[122]   "Idealnya Dikelola Buruh Sendiri," *Kompas*, 24 June 2001. Tjandraningsih was quoted in this article as saying that she was always amazed to hear how articulate workers were in meetings. It is obvious, she said, 'that the idea that our workers are stupid is a judgment that is extremely biased towards intellectuals and the middle class.'
[123]   NGO Interview AN.
[124]   NGO Interview BK.
[125]   NGO Interview AC.
[126]   NGO Interview AN.

who have since become bureaucrats or entrepreneurs'.[127] Yet another noted the danger that workers might 'be used (*diperalatkan*) for political purposes'.[128]

Some grassroots labour NGO activists claimed that when the workers' groups they had sponsored in the late New Order period were 'ready' to function as fully operational unions, their NGO would be able to disband.[129] However, most labour NGOs sought to find a new role, fearful that 'if NGOs do not stay relevant, then unions will reject them'.[130] Many talked about shifting more towards policy advocacy.[131] As noted earlier, others suggested that NGOs should pull back and provide technical support, such as developing educational materials, while a number of NGOs had long-term plans to establish training centres.[132] These propositions implied a continued acceptance of the New Order's separation of workers and non-worker activists. As worker activists formerly associated with NGO-sponsored workers' groups became unionists, they, too, began to espouse the revisionist position. In the words of one worker activist involved in an NGO-sponsored trade union, 'we don't depend on non-worker activists anymore. We can walk by ourselves now (*jalan sendiri*).'[133] Consequently, as one NGO activist observed:

> NGOs have positioned themselves as the representatives of workers' groups, but now those workers' groups can represent themselves by forming a union—with all their weaknesses and strengths. So who does the NGO represent or act for (*mewakili atau mengatasnamakan*) now? Divisions (*pemilahan*) are clearly being made, because NGO activists don't consider themselves in the same category as the workers (*merasa bukan bagian dari buruh*), while unionists don't consider NGO activists in the same category as they are (*aktivis NGO bukanlah bagian dari mereka*).[134]

It seemed apparent that labour NGOs were indeed just a transitional phenomenon in the inevitable transition to an exclusively union-centred labour movement.

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[127] NGO Interview BG.

[128] NGO Interview BH.

[129] NGO Interview AB; NGO Interview AP. These responses were largely rhetorical.

[130] NGO Interview BI.

[131] NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AK; NGO Interview AQ.

[132] NGO Interview AE; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AT; NGO Interview BB; NGO Interview BN; NGO Interview AA; NGO Interview AJ; NGO Interview AO; NGO Interview BH.

[133] Worker Interview AJ.

[134] NGO Interview BP. The activist concerned felt this was not a problem with the NGO with which they were affiliated.

An Alternative Path

A small number of NGO activists were, however, willing to consider the possible existence of an alternative to 'pure' workers' unions. Most activists disagreed with the proposal that NGO personnel could become union officials. They believed that NGOs 'want to help give birth to unions, but those unions must be made up of workers themselves. That's where it gets difficult. We feel we are one with workers, but that doesn't make it legitimate for us to be part of a union.'[135] However, some suggested that they could be absorbed into specialist functions within unions as education officers, researchers or legal advisors—a standard practice in other contexts.[136] Yet even this group rejected the possibility that the NGO itself could become a legitimate part of the labour movement. The informant who had given the only Gramscian definition of NGOs' role in the labour movement argued that, in theory, there was no problem with union members being non-workers, although he quickly noted that members of his organisation were not planning to take that path.[137] Another respondent observed:

> If we want to be come individual members of a union, that's okay. But an NGO couldn't become part of the union structure. An NGO is different from a mass organisation. But if we were invited to join as individuals, that'd fine. But we should be advisors, not decision-makers. There needs to be a proper procedure.[138]

According to Arist Merdeka Sirait, the '*repositioning* [English in the original]' of grassroots-oriented labour NGOs brought with it two possibilities:

> NGOs could merge with unions. In this case, the NGO would dissolve and its personnel would become part of the mass movement organisation they sponsored earlier. Or they could stay separate and become a *supporting system* [English in the original] for the union movement. In that case, NGOs wouldn't merge with unions because they consider the unions a product (*produk*) that must be enlarged and

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[135]   NGO Interview AE. Also NGO Interview AH; NGO Interview AN; NGO Interview BL.
[136]   NGO Interview AL; NGO Interview AP; NGO Interview AQ.
[137]   NGO Interview AQ.
[138]   NGO Interview AP.

'facilitated' (*difasilitasi*) until it can stand on its own. When that was achieved, the NGOs could move on to something else.[139]

Fauzi Abdullah had also considered this possibility. When describing 'some long discussions' with worker activists about whether or not NGO activists could be part of the union, he reported the conversation as follows:

> I asked them, 'Suppose there was a union. Can someone like me be a member?' [The workers] said that I could join, but I could not be an ordinary member. I'd be an extraordinary member with different rights from ordinary members. I'm not sure whether it's right in theory, but I agree with that idea. We don't want to be totally divorced, because that has always been the government's policy—they always separated workers from their supporters. So if we took that position, we'd be supporting the government. I think we should be involved, but know our place. If we always want to lead, then there is a problem.[140]

Sirait's and Abdullah's positions were consistent with international trade union practice.[141] They suggest openings for individual activists as modern movement intellectuals, but not for NGOs. In doing so, they denied the New Order's assumptions about the separation of workers and individual labour intellectuals. However, they upheld the union-centred definition of the labour movement that prevails international.

In another context, however, Abdullah identified a different possible future for labour NGOs. In 1999, at a strategic planning forum entitled 'Facing a New Arena', he argued that labour activists 'need to differentiate between workers' organisations and the labour movement. Outsiders can't join a union, but outsiders can join the labour movement.'[142] In 2002, plans were announced to create a permanent forum called *Sindikasi Gerakan Buruh Indonesia* (SGBI, Indonesian Labour Movement Syndicate)—a forum that would include unions, policy and grassroots labour NGOs,

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[139] Interview with Arist Merdeka Sirait on 23 February 2000. A number of other respondents mentioned this organisation in their criticisms of NGOs that wanted to continue to dominate the labour movement.

[140] Interview with Fauzi Abdullah on 9 March 2000.

[141] These positions did not have majority support within the NGO community in July 2001, when my third period of fieldwork was conducted. Most activists continued to argue that unions must be exclusively by, for and of workers.

[142] Fauzi Abdullah cited in "Proceeding [sic]" (paper presented at the Menghadapi Arena Baru, Baranangsiang, 14-16 December 1999).

students, other mass organisations and individuals.[143] Such an organisation would provide a foundation on which to develop a broader definition of the labour movement that includes non-union organisations—a definition that would more accurately reflect the practice of organised labour in Indonesia.

Conclusion

The changes in the terrain of labour relations in the three years after the fall of Suharto gave worker activists more leverage in their relationship with labour NGOs. In particular, new opportunities for grassroots labour organising challenged NGOs' dominance of the Indonesian labour movement. There was, however, no fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between worker activists and labour NGOs during the Habibie and Wahid presidencies. Rather, the changes in the regulation of labour representation crystallised tensions that had initially surfaced in the late New Order period, and forced labour NGO activists to seek ways to redefine their role.

Developments during the Habibie and Wahid presidencies indicated that although labour NGOs rejected the corporatist elements of New Order labour policy, the majority shared its emphasis on unions 'by, for, and of workers'. Only a minority of NGO activists sought to redefine themselves as legitimate members of the labour movement. Although their efforts had not achieved concrete change by the end of the Wahid presidency, their deliberations offered the prospect of a new model of the labour movement in which organisations other than unions were recognised. Such a model challenges international assessments of the relationship between workers, unions, and labour NGOs.

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[143]   NGO Interview BR. These plans were significant even if this organisation fails to materialise.

CONCLUSION

An Historical Construction

This thesis is the first full-length study of Indonesia's labour NGOs and the first attempt to systematically examine New Order labour historiography. Whereas other scholars have contextualised labour NGOs in New Order Indonesia, this study has positioned them within the broader 'institution' of 'organised labour', using Foucault's notion of a 'history of the present' to challenge the criteria of significance on which the definition of that institution—and therefore current scholarship—is based.

The question posed in this thesis was why Indonesian labour NGOs were not recognised, nor recognised themselves, as a legitimate part of the organised labour movement. The search for an answer to this question began in the present, with the relationships between industrial workers, NGOs and the state in the late New Order period, and in the first three years after the fall of Suharto. However, it ended in the past, with an exploration of how the 'institution' of labour representation was defined in Indonesia and elsewhere. The study constructed one 'history of the present' amongst many possible histories by exploring why organised labour was imagined in Indonesia in the particular way that it was.

The study has shown that, in the present, labour NGOs acted as labour intellectuals who sought to bring the plight of industrial workers to the attention of the wider community, and knowledge and consciousness to workers themselves. Activists' statements and actions indicated that these labour NGOs acted as 'ethical intellectuals' and 'efficiency intellectuals' in the classical mode, rather than as contemporary movement intellectuals. The contours of the Indonesian labour movement reflected the class divisions in New Order society. NGO activists were middle-class, non-worker outsiders, who were ill equipped to understand the subjective position of workers. Moreover, they were ambivalent about their involvement in labour organising and advocacy. On one hand, they believed they could help workers to challenge the New Order's punitive control of labour. On the

other, like the government, they believed that non-worker intellectuals had no place in a labour movement that consisted only of unions.

Workers initially accepted labour NGOs as the knowers of knowledge and the bringers of truth. They were grateful for NGOs' support and guidance, and welcomed their intervention. However, inconsistencies between workers' expectations and NGOs' practices rapidly emerged. NGO activists' own doubts about their role in the labour movement became evident in the acts of imparting knowledge to and speaking for workers. Workers came to question both NGOs' commitment to labour and their right to speak and act for labour in the language they had learnt from the NGOs themselves. NGOs' involvement with labour was also ambiguous in the eyes of the state. They were accepted insofar as they assumed the traditional duty of educated, middle-class Indonesians, assisting workers to become good citizens, and providing constructive criticism on labour policy within the boundaries of *Pancasila* Industrial Relations. However, they were rejected when they stepped beyond that role to assume the functions of unions, as defined by the New Order; when they took a position in the labour movement that was seen as not rightfully theirs.

The majority of labour NGOs did not challenge the key tenets of New Order rhetoric about the composition and purpose of unions. They, like the government, were committed to the model of tripartism endorsed by the ILO. In the social-democratic model of unionism dominant internationally after World War II, labour's political and industrial functions were separated: although unions had links to political parties, they were not subordinated to them. Labour NGOs adopted this model as part of a package of internationally promoted values about labour rights as human rights, or because of their commitment to the principles of labourism. The New Order government's appeal to social-democratic unionism was more problematic, because it contradicted the tenets of organic corporatism that defined the New Order state. A close examination of New Order statements about unions suggests they did indeed present two contradictory messages: first, that unions were part of an organic whole, a corporatist state that embodied Indonesia's 'national character'; and, second, that unions were class-based organisations devoted to the pursuit of workers' socio-economic rights.

On the surface, attempts by the state to moderate international criticism of its labour practices appeared to explain this contradiction. However, while international pressure encouraged aspects of New Order labour rhetoric that seemed to contradict the regime's corporatist paradigm, that pressure did not determine those aspects. New Order unionism had its roots in the principles of revisionism, which had emerged victorious in the restructuring of labour in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A systematic examination of New Order historiography demonstrated the strength of those principles, while a study of the history of the Indonesian labour movement revealed the origins of the logic of New Order unionism. The insights into the genealogy of New Order unionism—a genealogy that began not in Indonesia itself, but in late nineteenth century Europe—shed light on the ambiguities of labour NGOs' position in the present.

These ambiguities were accentuated after the fall of Suharto when union registration requirements were liberalised. As NGOs sought to define a new role in response to changes in labour policy, debates about the limits of that role became intense. Most NGO activists recognised opportunities for their continued involvement in the labour movement as advisors and advocates, but believed they should step back from their dominant position in favour of economic unions run 'by, for and of' workers. While some argued that they could participate in unions as individuals (as labour intellectuals do in other contexts), this position, too, suggested that NGO activists accepted the premise that unions were the only possible form of labour movement organisation. A third possibility was offered by a small number of activists in an attempt to reconcile NGOs' contribution to the labour movement with their non-union status—a possibility that suggested definitions of the labour movement be extended to include individuals and non-union organisations. This study took a very different route to the same conclusion. It demonstrated that NGOs are excluded from definitions of the 'labour movement' because the institution of 'organised labour' is an historical construction, not an immutable reality. That institution must be redefined to include non-union bodies if it is to reflect the practices of the organised labour movement in countries such as Indonesia.

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Interviews

Representatives of the following NGOs were interviewed. Non-activist workers and workers associated with grassroots NGOs and/or associated unions were also interviewed. Interview data is coded to ensure anonymity.

Akatiga
Institut Sosial Jakarta
Kelompok Buruh Bandung
Kelompok Kerja Humanika
Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan
Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung
Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta
Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surabaya
Lembaga Daya Dharma Keuskupan Agung Jakarta
Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane

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Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat
Pelayanan Buruh Jakarta
Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum
Solidaritas Perempuan untuk Hak Asasi Manusia
Yayasan Annisa Swasti
Yayasan Arek Surabaya
Yayasan Bhakti Pertiwi
Yayasan Bina Karya
Yayasan Buruh Membangun
Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera
Yayasan Kelompok Pelita Sejahtera
Yayasan Lapera Indonesia
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Yayasan Perempuan Mardika

Interviews were also conducted with the following individuals and organisations:

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Appendix A: Labour Historiography

The accounts compared in the table that follows are divided into four groups: accounts written by non-Indonesians most regularly cited by scholars, accounts written between 1945 and 1965, transitional accounts, and accounts written under the New Order. Details of these accounts are included in the body of Chapter Four.

The table is designed to allow easy comparisons of a large number of texts. The authors are listed down the side of the table, while the events mentioned in the texts are listed across the top with the date most regularly cited for that event. Events include the founding of particular organisations, the release of government labour policy or general political events that had an effect on labour. If the account concerned mentions that event, the corresponding box is shaded. If there is no year listed in the box, the author either used the year noted at the top of the column, or mentioned the event without reference to a year. If a year is written in the box, then the event was mentioned at that time. Some accounts were written for a particular period (for example, to 1926) and others were published before the timeframe of the table is complete. In such cases, the authors are still listed, but no boxes appear after their name. The biographical details of sources described in the table (in order of appearance) are listed below in the groups in which they appear.

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GROUP TWO:
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GROUP THREE:

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Kertonegoro, Sentanoe. *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja (Trade Unionism): Studi Kasus Indonesia dan Negara-Negara Industri*. Jakarta: Yayasan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia, 1999.

Shamad, Yunus. *Industrial Relations in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bina Sumber Daya Manusia, 1997.

Simanjuntak, Payaman. "Perkembangan Organisasi Pekerja di Indonesia." *Jurnal Pusat Studi Indonesia* 9, No. 1 (1998).

	Nederlandsch-Indisch Onderwijzers Genootschap (NIOG, Association of Dutch Teachers)	1905 as the beginning of unionism	Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution in Russia (inspiration)	Japanese victory in Russo-Japanese war (inspiration)	Staatsspoorbond (SS Bond, Railway Workers' Union)	Postbond (Postal Workers Union)	Cultuurbond (Agricultural Workers Union)	Serikat Pegawai Pemerintah (Government Employees' Union)	1908 as beginning of 'real' unionism	Budi Utomo	Suikerbond (Sugar Workers' Union)	Vereeniging voor Spoor en- Tramweg Personeel in Nederlandsche-Indie (VSTP, Railway and Tramworkers' Union)
	1894	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1907	1907	1908	1908	1908	1908
Ingleson					■				■	■		■
Hawkins									■			
Tedjasukmana	■				■					■		■
Sandra (1958)		■			■	■	■					■
Sandra (1961)	1897				■	■					1906	
Aidit		■			■					■		
SOBSI		■			■					■	■	
GASBIINDO		■			■					■		■
Hasibuan	■				■				■			■
Trimurti		■		■						■		■
Soekarno									■	■		■
SPSI (1986)									■	■		■
SPSI (1995)	1879				■	1906					1906	
Department of Manpower	1897				■	■			■	1920	1906	
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak	1897				■	■			■		1906	
Shamad	■								■	■		■
Kertonegoro	1879				■	1906					1906	

	Handelsbond	Douanebond/Perhimpunan Bumiputra Pabean (PBP, Custom's Officers Union)	Serikat Dagang Islam (SDI)	Serikat Islam (SI)	Burgerlijke Openbare Werken in Nederlandsche Indie (BOWNI, Union of Public Works Supervisors)	SS Bond abolished	SI Banned	Perserikatan Guru-Guru Hindia Belanda (PGHB, Netherlands Indies Teachers' Union)	Persatuan Guru Ambachtsschool (PGAS, Ambachtsschool Teachers' Association)	Kerukunan Pegawai Post Bumiputra (KPPB, Native Postal Workers' Association)	Sneevliet in VSTP	Bond van Pandhuis Personeel (PBP, Pawnshop Workers' Union)
	1909	1911	1911	1912	1912	1912	1912	1912	1912	1912	1913	1913
Ingleson	▓	▓		▓	▓			▓		▓	▓	▓
Hawkins		▓		▓				1911				▓

	Handelsbond	Douanebond	SDI	SI	BOWNI	SS Bond abolished	SI Banned	PGHB	PGAS	KPPB	Sneevliet in VSTP	Bond van Pandhuis
Tedjasukmana		1910		1911		▓		▓			1914	
Sandra (1958)	▓	▓	▓	▓		▓				1917		1914
Sandra (1961)	▓	▓		▓								
Aidit		▓	▓	▓				1916	1916		▓	
SOBSI	▓	▓		▓		▓		▓		1917		
GASBIINDO	▓	1910						▓	▓			

	Handelsbond	Douanebond	SDI	SI	BOWNI	SS Bond abolished	SI Banned	PGHB	PGAS	KPPB	Sneevliet in VSTP	Bond van Pandhuis
Hasibuan		1911		1911		▓		▓			▓	
Trimurti		▓	1906	▓				▓				

	Handelsbond	Douanebond	SDI	SI	BOWNI	SS Bond abolished	SI Banned	PGHB	PGAS	KPPB	Sneevliet in VSTP	Bond van Pandhuis
Soekarno								▓				
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)		▓	1912									
Department of Manpower			1920					▓				
Government of Indonesia								▓				
Simanjuntak			▓					▓				
Shamad				▓				▓				
Kertonegoro		▓	1912									

	Strikes (1913)	Semaun in VSTP (1914)	Ordinance permitting the use of military to protect essential services (1914)	Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, Indies Social Democratic Association) (1914)	VSTP joined the International Transport Workers Federation (1914)	Persatuan Pegawai Perkebunan (PPP, Plantation Workers Association) (1915)	ISDV first discusses idea of forming a union coordinating body (1915)	Perserikatan Pegawai Pegadaian Bumiputra (PPPB, Native Pawnshop Workers Union) (1916)	Opium Regie Bond (ORB, Opium Workers' Union) (1916)	ISDV attempts to form a trade union federation (1916)	Vereeniging Inlandsch Personeel Burgerlijke Openbare Werken (VIPBOW, Union of Native Public Works Employees) (1917)	Treasury Union (1917)
Ingleson	■	■	■	■	■		■			■	■	
Hawkins						■		■			■	■

	Strikes	Semaun in VSTP	Ordinance...	ISDV	VSTP joined ITF	PPP	ISDV first discusses	PPPB	ORB	ISDV attempts	VIPBOW	Treasury Union
Tedjasukmana		■		■		1924	■		1915	■	1916	
Sandra (1958)				■		■			■		■	
Sandra (1961)				■		■		1914			1916	
Aidit				■		■			1915		1916	
SOBSI				■		■		1914	■		1916	
GASBIINDO				■		1924		1914	1915		1916	

	Strikes	Semaun in VSTP	Ordinance...	ISDV	VSTP joined ITF	PPP	ISDV first discusses	PPPB	ORB	ISDV attempts	VIPBOW	Treasury Union
Hasibuan		1913		■		1924		■	1914		1916	
Trimurti				■				1914				

	Strikes	Semaun in VSTP	Ordinance...	ISDV	VSTP joined ITF	PPP	ISDV first discusses	PPPB	ORB	ISDV attempts	VIPBOW	Treasury Union
Soekarno								■			■	
SPSI (1986)								■			■	
SPSI (1995)						■		1914				
Department of Manpower								1914			■	
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak								1914			■	
Shamad								■			■	
Kertonegoro						■		1914	■			

	SI began to organise workers directly through 'workers' groups'	ISDV split	Indische Sociaal-Democratische Partij (ISDP, Indies Social Democratic Party)	Russian Revolution (inspiration)	Verbond van Landsdienaren (VVL, Federation of Government Employees)	Radicale Concentratie (RC, Radical Concentration) formed by Serikat Islam, Budi Utomo, Insulinde and ISDP	Personeel Fabrieksbond (PFB, [Sugar] Factory Workers Union)	Spoorbond (Railway Workers Union)	Inlandsche Zettersbond (IZ, Native Printers Union)	Semaun invited trade unionists to discuss federation, only VSTP and PPPB accepted invitation	Comite van de Vakcentrale (CV, Committee of Labour Unions)	Sneevliet arrested/exiled
	1917	1917	1917	1917	1918	1918	1918	1918	1918	1918	1918	1918
Ingleson	▓				▓		▓	▓		▓	▓	
Hawkins							1917			1917		▓

Tedjasukmana		▓	▓				1919			▓	▓	
Sandra (1958)			▓			▓	1917			▓		
Sandra (1961)					▓		1917	1913				
Aidit			▓				1919			▓		▓
SOBSI			▓				1917			▓		
GASBIINDO							1919					

Hasibuan		▓					1919					
Trimurti					▓		1917					

Soekarno												
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)					1915		1917	1913				
Department of Manpower								1913				
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak								1913				
Shamad	1912											
Kertonegoro					1915		1917	1913				

	Strikes	Persatuan Pergerakan Kaum Buruh (PPKB, Workers' Movement Union)	Gurubantubond (PGB, Assistant Teachers Union)	Federatie van Europeesche Werknemers (FEW, Federation of European Workers)	Harenarbeidersbond (Dockworkers Union)	Strikes	ISDV became Partai Komunis Hindia (Later known as Partai Komunis Indonesia)	PKI joined Third International	PFB strike	Strikes	Typografenbond/Serikat Buruh Tjitak (SBT, Printers' Union)	Perserikatan Beheerders en Onderbeheerders di Hindia (PBOH, Union of Indies Overseers)
	1918	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920
Ingleson	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓	▓
Hawkins		▓										

Tedjasukmana		▓	1912				▓		▓			
Sandra (1958)		▓					▓			▓		
Sandra (1961)		▓	1912	▓			▓					
Aidit		▓	1916				▓		▓		▓	
SOBSI		▓	1912				▓		▓	▓		
GASBIINDO	1920		1920				▓	▓	▓			

Hasibuan		▓	1912				▓		▓			
Trimurti		▓					▓		▓	▓		

Soekarno		▓										
SPSI (1986)		▓										
SPSI (1995)		▓	1912							▓		
Department of Manpower		▓					▓					
Government of Indonesia		▓										
Simanjuntak		▓					▓					
Shamad		1912										
Kertonegoro		▓	1912							▓		

	PPKB split	Revolutionare Vakcentrale (RV, Revolutionary Federation)	Split in PFB, PFB failed	Strikes in Surabaya Harbour	Persatuan Vakbond Hindia (PVH, Federation of Indies Unions)	Pawnshop Workers strike	Tan Malaka arrested/exiled	Bergsma arrested/exiled	Semaun arrested/exiled	Strikes (including VSTP general strike)	161 bis. passed (made inciting strikes or encouraging strikers a criminal offence)	VSTP joined Profintern
	1921	1921	1921	1921	1922	1922	1922	1922	1923	1923	1923	1923
Ingleson	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	
Hawkins	1920	1920			■		■		■			

Tedjasukmana	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Sandra (1958)	■	■		■	■	■		■		■	■	■
Sandra (1961)	■	■		■	■	■				■	■	■
Aidit	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SOBSI	■	■		■	■	■				■	■	■
GASBIINDO	■	■				■	■	■	■	■		

Hasibuan	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Trimurti	■	■		■	■		■	■	■		■	

Soekarno												
SPSI (1986)	■				■							
SPSI (1995)				1922						■	■	■
Department of Manpower	■				■							
Government of Indonesia	■				■							
Simanjuntak	■											
Shamad	■	■										
Kertonegoro				1922						■	■	

	SSBond and Spoorbond amalgamated	Perhimpunan Untuk Kaum Buruh Onderneming Gula (later Serikat Buruh Gula, Sugar Workers' Union)	Sekretariat Serikat Buruh Indonesia Merah (Indonesian Red Labour Union Secretariat) formed under Profintern influence	Serikat Pegawai Pelabuhan dan Lautan (SPPL, Port and Marine Workers Union)	Surabaya Study Club	Strikes (especially in Surabaya and Semarang)	PKI affiliated unions banned	Aliarcham, Mardjohan, and Darsono interned, Alimin and Musso exiled	Strikes	Generall rebellion	Communist rebellion	Dutch crackdown
	1923	1924	1924	1924	1924	1925	1925	1925	1926	1926	1926	1926
Ingleson	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓	▓				▓	▓
Hawkins											▓	▓
Tedjasukmana			▓	▓						▓		▓
Sandra (1958)			▓	▓		▓					▓	▓
Sandra (1961)		▓	▓	▓		▓					▓	▓
Aidit			▓	▓		▓		▓			▓	▓
SOBSI			▓	▓		▓				▓		▓
GASBIINDO		▓		▓						▓		▓
Hasibuan			▓	▓							▓	▓
Trimurti		▓									▓	▓
Soekarno												
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)		1917		▓								
Department of Manpower												
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak												
Shamad						▓			▓			
Kertonegoro		1917		▓								

	Communist Party outlawed	Communist-influenced organisations outlawed (including trade unions)	Partai Nasionalis Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party)	Persatuan Buruh Spoor dan Tram (PBST, United Tram and Railway Workers')	Serikat Kaum Buruh Indonesia (SKBI, Union of Indonesian Workers)	SBKI joined League Against Imperialism and for National Freedom	SKBI raided on suspicion of Communism, dissolved	Persatuan Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri (PVPN, Federation of Civil Servants' Unions)	Persatuan Serikat Sekerja Indonesia (PSSI, Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions)	PVPN affiliated with the IFTU	Mutiny on the Zeven Provincien	PSSI became CPBI
	1927	1927	1927	1927	1928	1929	1929	1929	1930	1931	1933	1933
Ingleson												
Hawkins	▓							▓		▓		
Tedjasukmana	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	1930				
Sandra (1958)	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓			▓	
Sandra (1961)				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		1932		▓
Aidit												
SOBSI	1926	▓	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓		▓	▓	
GASBIINDO				▓	▓			▓	▓	▓		
Hasibuan			▓					▓	▓			▓
Trimurti				▓	▓		1930	1930			▓	
Soekarno												
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)							1930	1932	1932			
Department of Manpower		▓						1930				
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak		▓						1930				
Shamad												
Kertonegoro							1930	1932	1932			

	Federatie van Inheemsche Overheidscienaren Organisatie (1936)	Indische Partij van Werknemers (Indies Workers' Party) – PVPN suspicious (1938)	Gabungan Politik Indonesia (GAPI, Indonesian Political Association) – PVPN supported (1939)	PVPN urged government to delete 161 bis. from penal code (1939)	Pusat Persatuan Buruh Indonesia (PPBI, Indonesian Workers' Union Centre) (1939)	Panitia Penasehat Pembantu Pegawai Partikelir (P5, Advisory Committee for the Aid of Private-Sector Workers) – formed by PVPN (1940)	Rapid growth in private sector unions (1940)	Gabungan Serikat-Serikat Sekerdja Partikelir Indonesia (GSPI, Association of Indonesian Private Sector Unions) (1941)	GSPI and PVPN merge as (GASBI, Association of Indonesian Private Sector Unions) (1941)	Unions underground (1942)	No unions in Japanese period (1942)
Ingleson											
Hawkins										▓	
Tedjasukmana											▓
Sandra (1958)			1932		▓			▓			
Sandra (1961)	▓	▓	1932			▓		▓			▓
Aidit											
SOBSI			1932		▓			▓	▓		
GASBIINDO										▓	
Hasibuan				▓							
Trimurti		▓				▓		▓			▓
Soekarno											
SPSI (1986)											
SPSI (1995)			1938					▓			▓
Department of Manpower											
Government of Indonesia											
Simanjuntak											
Shamad											
Kertonegoro						▓	▓				▓

	Barisan Buruh Indonesia (BBI, Indonesian Labour Front) 1945	Lasjkar Buruh Indonesia (LBI, Indonesian Labour Army) 1945	Barisan Buruh Wanita (BBW, Women's Labour Front) 1945	Partai Buruh Indonesia (PBI, Indonesian Labour Party) 1945	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (GASBI, Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions) 1946	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Vertikal (GSBV, Vertical Federation of Unions) 1946	GASBI and GSBV joined to form Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI, All-Indonesia Organisation of Labour Unions) 1946	SOBSI joined World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) 1947	Conflict over SOBSI's endorsement of the Linggardjati Agreement 1947	Split in Sajap Kiri (left Wing) between Communists and Moderates – involved PSI, PBI, PKI 1947	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Revolusioner Indonesia (GASBRI, Federation of Indonesian Revolutionary Labour Unions) 1947
Ingleson											
Hawkins	■	■	■			■	■	■			■
Tedjasukmana	■			■	■	■	■	■			■
Sandra (1958)	■	■	■		■	■	■	■			■
Sandra (1961)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1948		1948
Aidit											
SOBSI		■	■		■	■	■	■	■		■
GASBIINDO	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Hasibuan	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Trimurti	■	■	■	1946	■	■	■	■	■		1948
Soekarno	■			■	■		■	■	■		
SPSI (1986)	■			■	■		■	■	■		
SPSI (1995)	■			■	■		■	■	■		1948
Department of Manpower	■			■	■		■	■	■		1948
Government of Indonesia	■			■	■		■	■	■		
Simanjuntak	■			■	■		■	■	■		1948
Shamad	■			■	■		■	■	■		
Kertonegoro	■			■	■		■	■	■		1948

	Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII, Indonesian Islamic Labour Union)	Ikatan Central Organisasi Serikat Sekerja (ICOSS, Central Association of Labour Unions)	Persatuan Organisasi Buruh (POB, Union of Workers' Organisations)	SOBSI implicated in Madiun Affair	Moves to reconstitute SOBSI	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (GSBI)	POB and ICOSS plan to merge	Himpunan Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia (HISSBI, Association of Indonesian Labour Unions)	Badan Pusat Serikat-Serikat Sekerja (BPSS Central Labour Union Body)	Meetings held between HISSBI and BPSS (unifying effort)	Pusat Sementara Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (PSOBSI, Temporary All-Indonesia Organisation of Labour Unions)	SOBSI revived
	1948	1948	1948	1948	1948	1948	1948	1949	1949	1949	1949	1949
Ingleson												
Hawkins												
Tedjasukmana						1949						
Sandra (1958)												
Sandra (1961)						1949						
Aidit												
SOBSI												
GASBIINDO	1947					1949						
Hasibuan												
Trimurti												
Soekarno												
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)	1947											
Department of Manpower	1947											
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak	1947											
Shamad												
Kertonegoro	1947											

	SOBSI organising campaign (1950)	Badan Permusyawaratan Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (BPBSI, All-Indonesia Labour Negotiation Body) – SOBSI opposed (1950)	Many labour leaders jailed (1951)	Badan Koordinasi Buruh Indonesia (BKBI, Indonesian Labour Coordinating Body) – included GSBI and BPSS (1951)	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Republik Indonesia (SOBRI, Central Organisation of Indonesian Workers) (1951)	SOBRI affiliated to WFTU (1951)	Pusat Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia (PSBI, Indonesian Labour Union Centre) – BPSS and POB (1952)	Dewan Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia (DSBI, Indonesian Union Council) – PSBI and GSBI (1952)	Himpunan Serikat-Serikat Buruh Indonesia (HISSBI mark two) (1952)	Kesatuan Buruh Kerakyatan Indonesia (KBKI, Indonesian People's Labour Union) (1952)	Kongres Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, (KBSI, All-Indonesia Workers' Congress) (1953)	Kusnan left KBSI, took a number of Nationalist unions with him (1953)
Ingleson												
Hawkins	▓		▓		▓	▓			▓	▓	▓	▓
Tedjasukmana				▓	▓		▓		▓	▓	▓	▓
Sandra (1958)	▓		▓		▓			▓		▓	▓	
Sandra (1961)		▓		▓	▓			▓	▓	▓	▓	
Aidit												
SOBSI		▓	▓		▓			▓	▓	▓	▓	
GASBIINDO												
Hasibuan		1951		▓						▓	▓	
Trimurti		▓		▓	▓		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Soekarno					▓					▓	▓	
SPSI (1986)												
SPSI (1995)		▓			▓					▓	1952	
Department of Manpower												
Government of Indonesia												
Simanjuntak												
Shamad												
Kertonegoro		▓			▓					▓	1952	

	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia reformed (1954)	Sarikat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia (SARBUMUSI, Indonesian Muslim Workers' Union) (1955)	Gerakan Organisasi Buruh Serikat Islam Indonesia (1955)	Kesatuan Pekerja Kristen Republik Indonesia (KESPEKRI, Union of Christian Workers of the Republic of Indonesia) (1955)	Peraturan Menteri Perburuhan No.90 on trade union registriation ('liberal' law allowing a proliferation of trade unions)	SBII General Secretary proposed agreement between Mulsim unions not to poach each other's members (1956)	Kongres Buruh Islam Merdeka, (KBIM, Congress of Free Muslim Workers) (1957)	SBII joins the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) (1957)	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Pantjasila (SOB Pantjasila, Federation of Pancasila Workers' Organisations) (1957)	Nationalisation of Dutch enterpises (1957)	Badan Kerjasama–Buruh Militer (BKS-Bumil, Labour-Military Cooperative Body) (1957)	Persatuan Organisasi-Organisasi Buruh Islam Indonesia (1958)
Ingleson												
Hawkins	▦	▦	▦			▦	▦	▦	▦	▦	▦	
Tedjasukmana	▦	▦	▦			▦	▦	▦	▦	▦		
Sandra (1958)		▦	▦			▦			▦	▦		
Sandra (1961)	▦	▦	▦				1956		▦	▦		
Aidit												
SOBSI	▦	▦	▦				▦	▦			▦	
GASBIINDO		▦	▦	▦			▦	▦	▦			1961
Hasibuan		▦	▦							▦	▦	▦
Trimurti		▦	1953	1963					1954			▦
Soekarno					▦					1956	1956	
SPSI (1986)					▦					1956	1956	▦
SPSI (1995)		▦	▦	▦	▦		1956		▦	1956	1956	1959
Department of Manpower		▦								1956	1956	
Government of Indonesia										1956	1956	
Simanjuntak		▦								1956	1956	
Shamad										▦	▦	
Kertonegoro		▦	▦	▦	▦		1956		▦	1956	1956	1959

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	Labour as one of functional groups	KBKI broke formal conection with PNI	SBII broke formal conection with Masjumi	Konfederasi Serikat-Serikat Buruh Islam (KSSBI, Confederation of Muslim Unions) formed by SBII, SARBUMUSI, GOBSI Indonesia and KBIM	Koordinasi Buruh Indonesia (KOBI, Coordination of Indonesian Labour)	Gabungan Serikat Pekerdja Keristen Indonesia (GASPERKI, Association of Christian Labour Unions)	Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia (SOKSI, Central Organisation of Indonesian Socialist Workers)	KBSI, SBII and KBIM banned	Organisasi Persatuan Pekerdja Indonesia (OPPI, United Indonesian Workers' Organisation)	Kesatuan Karyawan Buruh (KEKARBU, Union of Karyawan Workers)	Ikatan Karyawan Muhammadiyah (IKM, Muhammadiyah Employees' Association)	Gabungan Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia, (GASBIINDO, Indonesian Association of Muslim Unions)
	1958	1959	1959	1959	1959	1959	1959	1960	1960	1960	1961	1961
Ingleson												
Hawkins		█		█		█		█	█			

Tedjasukmana	█											
Sandra (1958)												
Sandra (1961)	█	█	█	█	█	█			█			
Aidit												
SOBSI	█											
GASBIINDO								█				█

Hasibuan												
Trimurti												

Soekarno									1959			
SPSI (1986)									1960			
SPSI (1995)									1959	█	█	
Department of Manpower									█			
Government of Indonesia									█			
Simanjuntak									█			
Shamad									█			
Kertonegoro									█	█	█	

	Kesatuan Organisasi Buruh Pancasila (KUBU Pancasila, Federation of Pancasila Workers' Organisations)	Sekretariat Bersama Perjuangan Buruh Pelaksana Trikora (Sekber Buruh, Joint Secretariat of the Workers Struggle for the Return of West Irian)	Gerakan Buruh Muslimin Indonesia (Gerbumi, Indonesian Muslim Labour Movement)	Konsentrasi Golongan Karyawan Buruh SOKSI (Kongkarbu SOKSI, Concentration of SOKSI Workers' Groups)	KBKI split	Kesatuan Buruh Marhaen (from KBKI splinter)	SOBSI involved in Communist Coup	Communist organisations banned
	1961	1961	1962	1962	1964	1964	1965	1965
Ingleson								
Hawkins								
Tedjasukmana								
Sandra (1958)								
Sandra (1961)								
Aidit								
SOBSI								
GASBIINDO			▨	1959		▨		▨
Hasibuan	▨				▨	▨		▨
Trimurti	▨	▨			1963			▨
Soekarno		▨						▨
SPSI (1986)		▨						
SPSI (1995)	▨		1961	1968		▨		▨
Department of Manpower							▨	▨
Government of Indonesia		▨						
Simanjuntak		▨				▨	▨	▨
Shamad		▨				▨	▨	▨
Kertonegoro	▨		1961	1968		▨	▨	▨

Appendix B: Selected Labour Histories

Four labour histories are summarised here: two written before 1965 and two written during the New Order period. The first pre-1965 account is Aidit's 1952 account of Indonesian labour history to 1926, which was used as the basis for SOBSI's 104-page volume *History of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, published in 1958, and, to a lesser extent, in Sandra's 1958 volume.[1] The second was written by GASBIINDO in 1964. This account is significant because GASBIINDO was the Muslim union federation to which Agus Sudono, the first Chair of FBSI, belonged.[2] A transitional account was written by Trimurti in 1975. Before 1965, Trimurti, who had been a communist, was a member of the Indonesian Labour Party and Indonesia's first Minister for Labour. Her account, which combines a pre-New Order analysis with the themes of the New Order, was referred to by Soekarno and used by the authors of some other New Order accounts, including SPSI and Kertonegoro.[3] The second post-1965 account is Soekarno's *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement,* published in 1979 and 1984. This text was the primary reference for New Order historiography.[4] Abbreviations are included in Appendix A and in the Glossary. Their complete forms and translations are not repeated here.

1. *An Early Communist Account*

In 1952, Aidit, the leader of the Indonesian Communist Party, published a history of the Indonesian labour movement from 1905 to 1926. Its third chapter contained a chronology of trade unionism.[5] A bold-type abstract at the beginning of the chapter highlighted the important facts of the chapter in a series of incomplete sentences:

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[1] Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.
[2] Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO;* Sandra, *Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*.
[3] Kertonegoro, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja;* Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, *Gerakan Serikat Pekerja dan Limapuluh Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*.
[4] Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*.
[5] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 36-64. Most pre-New Order histories identified 1905 as the beginning of the Indonesian labour movement. However, ILO staff, writing in 1944, identified 1908 as the year when the first union was formed. M. Schoenfeld and M. Smith, "Labor Conditions in the Netherlands Indies," *Monthly Labor Review*, No. May (1944): 988.

ISDV as the motor of the development of trade unions. 1919 umbrella organisation, PPKB, established. Strike of sugar workers in August 1920. On 23 May 1920 PKI established. In 1921, PPKB split into two, but in 1922, the Communists succeeded in reuniting it once more in PVH. Pawnbrokers' strike in January 1922 and railway workers' strike in May 1923. The disease of 'left' opportunism in the Indonesian labour movement. Peasant's revolt in 1926-1927. Liquidationism of Tan Malaka. PVH crippled.[6]

Aidit began his chronology by firmly establishing the working class at the forefront of the Indonesian revolution, claiming 'Reality demonstrates that the Indonesian working class organised themselves in a modern fashion before the other classes did'. The message is immediately repeated: 'Only after the workers began to organise themselves in 1905, the aristocratic intellectuals organised themselves in 1908 (Budi Utomo) and the merchants in 1911 (Sarekat Dagang Islam)'.[7] According to Aidit, the SS-Bond (the union formed in 1905) did not discriminate on the basis of race—the primary criterion Aidit used to distinguish between the European labour movement in the Indies and the Indonesian labour movement. Aidit gave a novel, but plausible, reason for accepting the European leadership of the SS-Bond: it was necessary, he maintained, because of the lack of leadership from the Indonesian people at the time.[8]

After chronicling the foundation of the VSTP and the demise of the SS-Bond, Aidit turned his attention to Sneevliet, who was, in Aidit's opinion, someone who 'could be trusted by the revolutionary movement and someone who understood matters of trade unionism' (even though he later 'suffered from the disease of the

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[6]   Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 36.

[7]   See also Soepardi, "Soal Djawab Koresponden Loear Negeri dengan S.O.B.S.I.," 3. and the introduction to a volume on the formation and history of the Sugar Workers' Union, where the primacy of organised labour in the nationalist movement is stated in the same terms. Serikat Buruh Gula, *Lahir dan Perkembangan S.B.G.*, 5. Organised labour's militancy and leadership was also a focus in the 1955 SOBSI Constitution, which emphasised unions' 'continual' attempts to achieve their socio-economic rights since 1905. The strikes of 1920-1923, the 'workers' important roles in the popular revolt against Dutch colonialism in 1926, the revolt on the warship 'Zeven Provincien' in 1933, the revolt against the Japanese fascists in Indramayu in 1944, in the revolution of August 1945 and the war of freedom against Dutch Colonialism' were all given as 'proof of the patriotism and leadership of the Indonesian workers'.Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, *Konstitusi SOBSI: Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (Djakarta: Dewan Nasional SOBSI, 1955), 4-11.

[8]   Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 37.

'left').[9] The ISDV was the subject of the next page, where its purpose was described as 'spreading Marxism amongst the workers and the Indonesian People'. It was, Aidit claimed, the organisation in which 'the intellectual power of the Dutch and the Indonesian nations was collected'. Its members were few, but they were 'active and clever', enabling ISDV to penetrate the Indonesian people and other organisations. Aidit used the analogy of 'fungus in the wet season'—also used by Chronos in 1948—to describe the subsequent growth of unions, which he divided into public and private sector categories.[10] He then listed attempts to unify the trade union movement in 1916 and 1918, before turning his attention to ISDV's reaction to the Russian Revolution. The list of union-related events covered in Aidit's account of developments between 1916 and 1918 was very similar to that in Chronos' account, although Aidit placed much more emphasis on the activities of the ISDV.

Having described the PFB strike in 1920, Aidit turned once more to the October Revolution, noting its power as a source of inspiration to the Indonesian people, 'particularly the workers and the most advanced of the intellectuals (*kaum intelektuil Indonesia jang paling madju*)'. Aidit documented the October Revolution's influence on the ISDV in detail, and attributed to it the formation of the Indonesian Communist Party on 23 May 1920. He then noted the party's dual function as the party of the workers and the champion of 'the interests of other classes' in the nationalist struggle against imperialism and feudalism, before turning once more to the PPKB.[11] A description of (primarily economic) strikes, and the colonial government's reaction to them, followed.[12] Aidit argued that the government actively sought to 'sharpen' the differences between the communists and the Muslims in order to destroy PPKB, describing the resulting conflict as one between

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[9]   Ibid., 37-38. Left deviation was the refusal to accept the need to participate in a nationalist revolution before attempting to achieve socialism in colonised countries.

[10]   Ibid., 39; Chronos, "Gerakan Buruh dalam Waktu Pendjadjahan." See Appendix A for details of the unions Aidit listed.

[11]   Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 44-45.

[12]   Both van der Kroef and Ingleson note that the Dutch were not entirely opposed to trade unionism, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, so long as it confined itself to socio-economic activities. Ingleson, "The Legacy of Colonial Labour Unions in Indonesia," 87; van der Kroef, "Dutch Colonial Policy in Indonesia 1900-1941." 306-307.

'revolutionary and reformist' streams in the organisation. An account of the RV followed, along with a list of unions the 'communists succeeded in attracting' to it.[13]

The next page and a half was devoted to the pawnbrokers' strike of 1922 and its outcomes. Again, Aidit noted the colonial government's reactions, particularly its limitation of the right to associate, its accusation that workers were disturbing the peace, and the exile of a 'number of workers' leaders', including Bergsma'.[14] Semaun's visit to Russia was then described, as were the discussions on the 'particular nature' of the Indonesian revolution (and its subsequent 'left' deviation) that occurred after his return. In the meantime, Aidit commented, the PKI 'was increasingly active in the attempt to unite the Indonesian workers', but 'more careful' in its execution.[15] The PKI's pivotal role in the formation of PVH, and the list of the unions that joined it, were the subjects of the next two paragraphs. Its goals were recorded as economic, namely forcing the government to reconsider its decision to stop wage rises. Aidit went on to accuse the reformists of being 'unfaithful' to the interests of workers and putting priority on their 'own safety' (*mencari selamat sendiri*) when they questioned the efficacy of strike actions. He commented that this was a 'hot' issue, at the PPPB Congress of August 1922, whose outcomes were 'unsatisfactory' because 'in a situation where the fate of the workers was threatened, the leaders provided no guidance or defence', instead supporting the bosses' wishes and suppressing strike actions.[16]

Aidit compared this stance with that taken by the communists in the VSTP and the PVH, then discussed the VSTP strike of 1923 in great detail as evidence of that difference. Again, the list of demands was economic: maintaining the promised wage increases, demands for an eight-hour day and provision of arbitration and demands for the maintenance of the 1921 minimum wage of one florin per day. However, Aidit also maintained that the government 'provoked' the strike by imprisoning Semaun on 8 May.[17] He then described the government's tactics for crippling the

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[13] Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia*, 48.
[14] Ibid., 50.
[15] The freezing of *Sarikat Rakyat* in 1924 because of its petit bourgeois constituency was later given as an example of the 'leftist' deviation of the PKI at the time. Aidit claimed it 'did not yet understand the importance of the petit bourgeoisie, particularly the peasantry, the united national front for an Independent Indonesia'. Ibid., 57.
[16] Ibid., 52.
[17] Ibid., 52-54.

PFB and the VSTP in terms of the relationship between the party, labour leaders and the rank and file, arguing that 'By limiting the right to association and forbidding propaganda, the government attempted to isolate the workers' leaders from the mass of workers'. However, according to Aidit, the communists did not falter:

> in the most difficult of situations…the Indonesian Communists, with the PKI as their Party, stood at the front to give leadership and protection, even though the Communists themselves were threatened with imprisonment and exile. The experience of the Indonesian workers themselves taught them the lesson that it is only the revolutionaries who are faithful to the struggle of the workers, in contrast to the reformists who had deserted the workers' front…The Indonesian workers learnt that the 'strong' and 'radical' talk of the reformist leaders, when there is no life-and-death struggle between workers and the bosses, cannot be taken as an indication that in the situation of struggle (*pertarungan*) against the bosses that they will side with the workers.[18]

According to Aidit, there was a 'flurry of activity in the labour movement', as 'Everywhere Communists worked to establish and lead trade unions' after the PKI's congress in 1924, when it decided to concentrate its efforts exclusively on labour. Aidit then provided a list of those unions, before mentioning the strikes of 1925, the subsequent capture of Aliarcham, Mardjohan and Darsono, and Alimin's and Musso's escapes from Indonesia. The labour movement, Aidit commented, 'lost many of its leaders', and 'the PKI lost its principal cadres' because it did not yet have an appropriate theory for the mobilisation of the People against imperialism and feudalism.[19] Consequently, the PKI and the workers were ill-placed to take advantage of the peasant revolts of 1926 and 1927—which, as a result, were 'poorly led'—and the colonial government had the opportunity to destroy the labour movement and the PKI 'with lies that the revolts were "planned by the PKI"'.[20]

Aidit then turned his attention to the 'liquidationism' of Tan Malaka, and Semaun's 'betrayal' of the communist party, noting that while the destruction of the central labour leadership 'was a heavy blow' for PVH, its member unions survived. He concluded by describing Sarikat Islam's (failed) attempts to take over leadership

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[18]   Ibid., 55-56.
[19]   Ibid., 60.
[20]   Ibid.

of the workers, which the imprisoned and exiled communists were forced to abandon.[21]

2. *A Non-Communist Account*

GASBIINDO provided a triple history in its volume, *Gasbiindo: Sokoguru Revolusi Indonesia*.[22] The book included a general history of the growth of trade unionism, a second, separate history of the growth of Muslim unionism, and a periodisation of GASBIINDO's own history.[23] In the introduction to its chapter on the general history of the growth of trade unionism, GASBIINDO identified two main periods: the colonial period and the Independence period. It attributed the birth of the labour movement in the colonial period to the difficulties individual workers faced when dealing with their employers. The authors commented that as the labour movement 'can be said to not have existed at all' during the Japanese occupation, it was 'reborn' in the Revolutionary period, when it 'gave a very large and valuable contribution to the Nation and the State'.[24]

The second section of the chapter dealt with the 'background' of the emergence of the labour movement. It situated the Indonesian experience within the context of European trade unionism, emphasising differences between the European and Indonesian contexts. It noted that in Europe the labour movement grew out of social changes following the Industrial Revolution, where workers' experiences 'against machines' encouraged the growth their consciousness of the need to improve their fate. The authors argued that in Indonesia (as in other Asian nations), the labour movement had 'different characteristics', because it grew out of the experience of colonialism. Consequently, they claimed, the Indonesian labour movement was not just involved in improving the lot of workers, but also had political motives, both in the colonial and independent periods.[25]

The third section, entitled 'other influences', dealt with Marx, Islam, Christianity and Gandhi. The bulk of it was devoted to Marx, who, in the opinion of

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[21]   Ibid., 63-64.
[22]   For details of Sudono and his role in the New Order, see Chapter Four.
[23]   Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 22-48.
[24]   Ibid., 25.
[25]   Ibid., 26.

the authors was a 'GREAT THINKER [capitals in the original]', but one who arrived 'rather too late', and did not live long enough to observe the developments of history. This was demonstrated, they argued, by the fact that there had not been a revolution, as Marx had predicted. Nevertheless, they noted, Marx's theory of 'Scientific Socialism' remained influential—particularly in the labour movement—in Indonesia. The authors contrasted this to Islam, where 'the class struggle proposed in Marxist analysis cannot be condoned (*dibenarkan*)'. The authors subsequently argued that while Islam does 'not specifically deal with labour issues', the Islamic belief that social problems should be dealt with humanely 'is a strong indication of the means in which labour problems should be solved in this modern era'. The section concluded with the statement, 'This seems the case too in Christian and Gandhian teachings'.[26]

The rest of the chapter was devoted to a chronology of Indonesian labour history. It began by identifying three sub-periods in the colonial and independence periods respectively. These were 1905–1927, 1927–1942 and 1942–1945 in the colonial period and 1945–1949, 1950–1959 and 1959–1964 (when the volume was published) in the independence period. Each of these periods was then described, using a combination of timelines and text.[27] The first colonial period (1905-1927), was characterised by 'inexperienced leadership'. It began calmly but quickly became radical. The account noted that the labour movement began at the precise time of the National Awakening. A dateline followed, on which twelve years were highlighted. The first Indonesian trade union was identified as SS-Bond (1905), and the second and third unions as Cultuurbond (1907) and Suikerbond (1908) respectively. He noted that in the same year (1908), VSTP was formed, which 'became a strong, militant and aggressive' union when controlled by the 'left socialists' after 1913. A number of Unions were then listed.[28] This was followed by a reference to the 'beginning of private sector' unionism with PFB in 1919, followed by SBO and SPPP. A text account was then given of the characteristics of different unions. It re-emphasised that the VSTP was the most militant union of the period, because 'since the beginning' the influence of socialism was 'already truly felt in it', as its leadership was 'always in the hand of socialists and communists'. The influence of

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[26]   Ibid., 26-27.
[27]   Ibid., 28-36.
[28]   See Appendix A.

Islam was then described through the influence of *Sarekat Islam* (a 'progressive revolutionary' mass organisation) in PFB, PPPB and a number of public-sector unions. The authors then noted that both the socialists/communists and *Sarekat Islam* were aware of the importance of unity amongst the trade unions, which they pursued through strike actions.

After ISDV and VSTP failed to unite the labour movement in 1920, the account argued, 'it was only with the careful preparations' of Suryopranoto and Sosrokardono, 'both from SI', that PPKB was formed. The authors commented that 'regrettably unity did not last long', and 'Semaun and his friends' left PPKB to form the RV. The period 1920-1923 was described as 'radical'. The government's repression and its exile of Tan Malaka, Bergsma and Semaun was noted, and the events of 1926-1927 were described as follows:

> The [government's] actions only increased the tension and underground actions. In 1926 the tension reached a peak and exploded. There was an armed revolt, large-scale murder and arrests of political and union leaders. In 1927, chaos spread to Sumatra. Finally the freedom to gather, organise, and express opinions were limited; and all activities considered revolutionary, for example the labour movement, were banned.[29]

The next period (1927-1942) was described as a period of reflection, after unionists realised that radical action had not succeeded. Sutomo was mentioned as an important influence. PSSI (said to be 'well-organised') and PVPN (whose association with IFTU was noted) were identified as 'holding the leadership amongst the unions around 1930'. Local unions also featured strongly, and the period between 1930 and 1942 was described as 'peaceful and progressive'.[30] The Japanese Occupation (1942-1945) was the subject of two short paragraphs, in which it was noted that all organisations were dissolved and that the organisations formed in their place were all designed to assist the Japanese war effort. The authors commented that 'Many labour leaders could not work with the Japanese, and created an underground movement.[31]

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[29]   Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 31.
[30]   Ibid., 31-32.
[31]   Ibid., 31.

GASBIINDO's description of 1945-1949, the first period after Independence, was presented as a timeline. According to its introduction, 'trade union leaders were aware of the importance of the role of the labour movement immediately after the Indonesian revolution exploded under the Sukarno-Hatta leadership'. In the timeline, the events of each year were described in some detail. The entry for 1945 highlighted the formation of BBI (and its subgroups, LBI and BBW) and its congress on 7 November 1945—in which the split between economic and political unionists was presented in reverse order, with those who 'wished to maintain BBI as a trade union' listed before those who 'wished to turn BBI into a political party'.[32] The formation of PBI was duly noted. In 1946, the adoption of the name Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia at the second BBI congress was emphasised, as were accusations of GASBI involvement in the 'July Affair' and the subsequent formation of Gabungan Serikat Buruh Vertikal (GSBV). Competition between the two was said to have 'weakened the labour movement'. The PKI's involvement in uniting GASBI and GSBV in SOBSI was then described, as was the formation of a number of local unions, which subsequently became members of SOBSI.

SOBSI's affiliation with WFTU was the major event described for 1947, followed by its acceptance of the Linggadjati and Renville agreements 'which clearly disadvantaged Indonesia', the split in SOBSI and the subsequent formation of Gabungan Serikat Buruh Revolusioner Indonesia (GASBRI). In the final paragraph, the formation of SBII was then noted,[33] as was the formation of *Serikat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia* and *Serikat Buruh Daerah Otonom* and their subsequent affiliation with SOBSI. The Madiun Affair dominated 1948, where it was noted that many of SOBSI's members left to form HISSBI and GSBI in 1949. The authors then noted that when the Dutch recognised Indonesian sovereignty at the end of 1949, 'the labour movement in Indonesia 'was reflected' in three organisations, namely SOBSI, SBII and GSBI.[34]

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[32] I did not find any other accounts that list the factions in this order, either in the pre-1966 period or in the New Order period.

[33] In the following chapters of the account, the formation of SBII was described as an important for Muslims in general, as the 'first' Muslim labour organisation (and the precursor to GASBIINDO). SBII rejected wild strikes as 'anational' because they damaged the economy. Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 40-43.

[34] Ibid., 32-34.

The years between 1950 and 1959 were only described briefly in the text. The authors called this period a 'period of liberalism', when mass organisations and political parties (again) 'grew like fungus in the wet season'.[35] The labour movement of the time was 'carried along by the times', and labour organisations from many political streams emerged. A number of unions were then listed, but no comments were made about any of them. The period 1959–1964 was described in more length, with a focus on ideology. It was noted here that 'since the beginning', the development of the labour movement was influenced by political streams in Indonesia, even amongst those unions who claimed to be independent. These streams, which were then discussed individually, were Nationalism, Islam and Marxism. Nationalism was described as the 'strong desire to recapture the dignity of the nation and free itself from colonialism'; Islam, as the majority religion in Indonesia; and Marxism, as a strong influence in the 'fight against injustice'. The chapter concluded by reiterating that the influence of these ideologies made the Indonesian labour movement different from that of Europe, noting the dual focus on the fight against imperialism and the fight for better conditions. This, the authors argued, meant that Sukarno was correct in saying that the workers were a 'pillar' of the Indonesian revolution.[36]

3. *Echoes of the Past*

In 1975, Trimurti was invited to give a lecture on the relationship between the labour and nationalist movements at the *Gedung Kebangkitan Nasional* (The National Awakening Building) in Jakarta. The history was one of a series of historical lectures organised by the Idayu Foundation (*Yayasan Idayu*), the Foundation for Historical Buildings in Jakarta (*Yayasan Gedung-Gedung Bersejarah Jakarta*) and the National Awakening Museum (*Museum Kebangkitan Nasional*). Trimurti began her short introduction by contrasting the class-based struggle in Europe with the situation in Indonesia. The countries of Europe, she noted, were already independent when the industrial revolution began. Using socialist terms that were no longer characteristic

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[35] This term was popular. See for example Aidit, *Sedjarah Gerakan Buruh Indonesia;* Chronos, "Gerakan Buruh dalam Waktu Pendjadjahan."

[36] Pengurus Besar GASBIINDO, *GASBIINDO*, 36.

of the Indonesian vocabulary, she described the fate of European workers as the capitalist system developed:

> the majority of European workers only had their physical and mental power, which they sold to the owners of capital. Production and the means of production all came to be owned by the capitalists. Those who had nothing left, no access to the means of production, were called the proletarians. The class struggle between proletarians and capitalists was clearly evident in Europe.[37]

In contrast, according to Trimurti, Indonesia remained agrarian, and workers still owned the means of production. Workers' struggle was thus not a struggle of the proletariat, but a struggle of the poor (*rakyat miskin*) against colonialism. Workers' commitment to independence meant that their 'struggle was always side by side with the struggle for independence'.[38]

Having signalled her nationalist line of argument, she shifted her attention to the 'Workers' Struggle before Independence' in the second section of her lecture. She divided this period into three sections: 'the situation before 1908', 1908–1918, and 1918–1945. Significantly, Trimurti focused on the rise of the nationalist movement rather than the labour movement in the first part of period before 1908. Here, she noted the effects of the opening of Indonesia to international capital in 1905 and the influence of the Ethical Policy on the level of education of native Indonesians, claiming that the 'pioneers of Indonesian nationalist struggle' emerged from schools established to educate the native 'employees of the Dutch and foreign capital'. Yet while Trimurti argued that '*The awakening of the Indonesian national struggle influenced the awakening of the workers' struggle* [italics in the original]' and that the 'first to be mobilised were the educated government employees', she identified the formation of the *Staatsspoorbond* in 1905 (rather than the VSTP) as the first labour union in Indonesia.[39]

In the section, 'Between 1908 and 1918', Trimurti described how the Indonesian people's struggle 'matured', and nationalist organisations were formed.

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[37] Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional*, 6.
[38] Trimurti noted here that the colonised poor were called the *Marhaen* by President Sukarno and the *Murba* by Tan Malaka. See Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 7-8.

She argued that the 'development of the workers' struggle' progressed 'side by side with (*sejajar*) the nationalist movement/political struggle', and that the nationalist movement organisations had a 'large influence' on the workers' organisations of the time.[40] A list of unions formed before 1918 followed. Of note is Trimurti's acknowledgment that the European *Suikerbond* was established after 1908. In the New Order accounts that included *Suikerbond*, it was listed as being established in 1906.[41] Trimurti then shifted her attention to the World War I, the positive effects of the Indies' isolation from the Netherlands on the confidence of Indonesian nationalists, and the growth of labour unions.

Trimurti began the next section (1918-1945) with a description of how the 'struggle of the Indonesian people moved further to the left'. Here she noted the communist influence, and their 'infiltration of organisations, so that they split', giving the example of SI; the rapid increase in strikes, particularly amongst railway workers; the divisions in the nationalist movement between the cooperators and non-cooperators; and, finally, the Communist Rebellion of 1926. Having set the political scene, Trimurti turned her attention to labour affairs. In contrast to Soekarno and the authors of all the other New Order accounts examined for this study, Trimurti's description of the PPKB emphasised both its socio-economic focus and its political struggle.[42] She blamed its subsequent split not on its political function, but on 'foreign influences' and 'domestic splits…between the right and the left'.[43] She then mentioned the subsequent formation of the RV by 'Semaun and his friends' in a tone that is more matter of fact than condemnatory.

Instead of dwelling on the split—which is one of the primary events described in New Order labour histories—Trimurti moved directly on to the strikes of the 1920s and the reaction of employers and the government. Here, she noted the passing of article 161 *bis*, the subsequent arrest of 'labour leaders who were considered to be of the left' (specifically Bergsma and Tan Malaka), and the reunification of much-

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[40] All New Order accounts mentioned *Boedi Oetomo*, but, besides *Sarekat Islam*, the other organisations included in this list were not mentioned in the vast majority of the accounts.

[41] See Appendix A.

[42] New Order accounts generally emphasised the split between economic and political factions in PPKB, but did not make reference to the PPKB's dual economic/political function before the split.

[43] Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional*, 11.

weakened RV and the PPKB in the new PVH.[44] The arrest and exile of Semaun and its effects on the VSTP were described in some detail before Trimurti noted the desire 'before and after the PKI revolt' to form 'a union federation free from political influence or at least a union federation free from the influence of communism'. This was achieved, according to Trimurti's account, with the formation of SKBI in 1928. She noted its dissolution, the formation of PVPN and the mutiny of workers on the warship *Zeven Provincien,* before turning her attention to the formation of the Disputes Resolution Commission in 1937. Trimurti then described the effects of the Great Depression, before noting the establishment of a labour party called *Indische Partij van Werknemers* in October 1938. Details of PVPN and GASPI are then given before she shifted her attention to the Japanese occupation, during which, she said 'there were no trade unions'.

In the third part of her lecture, Trimurti described the 'Workers' Struggle after Indonesia's Independence'. Again, she divided the period into three sections: 1945–1950, 1950–1959 and 1959–1969.[45] In contrast to other New Order accounts examined for this study, Trimurti dedicated a considerable section of her historical account to the 1945-50 period, in which she, personally, was active in labour politics.[46] After a general political introduction, she noted that BBI was 'established to mobilise (*menggerakkan dan mengerahkan*) the workers' as part of the struggle for independence—'so, at first after the proclamation, the workers' struggle was not for their own interests, but to defend independence, to take companies from the hands of the enemies and deliver them to the Republican Government'. As the allies arrived, BBI took a leading role (*mempelopori*) in the people's struggle for power. The workers 'were yet to feel the need to divide themselves into trade unions, because what was needed at that time was defence of independence together with all the people'.[47]

Cracks in the wider political alliance led to divisions in the Indonesian labour struggle. Differences of opinion arose within BBI between those who wanted it to

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[44]   The formation of PVH is mentioned in some New Order accounts, but it is never described as a reunification of PPKB and RV.

[45]   Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional.*

[46]   Ibid., 14-20.

[47]   Ibid., 15.

become a workers' party and those who did not.[48] In May 1946, BBI 'was replaced with' (*diganti*) GASBI, while the Indonesian Labour Party was formed 'in the same year'.[49] Both, Trimurti noted, were led by Syamsu Harya Udaya. She then returned to a discussion of the political situation which she felt 'needed to be described first, because it had a large effect on the labour movement at the time'. Next, she described the subsequent split in the GASBI leadership (between those who supported Prime Minister Sjahrir and those who did not), the formation of GSBV, and the reunification of GASBI and GSBV with the formation of SOBSI. Here, Trimurti noted that SOBSI declared itself not to be a political party, while in fact being 'unable to free itself from political issues'. These included SOBSI's affiliation with the World Federation of Trade Unions, its support for the Linggarjati agreement and its acceptance of the Government's Political Manifest on the return of Indonesia's national assets. This led, Trimurti argued, to a split in SOBSI, with those who disagreed with its direction withdrawing from it. After describing events leading up to the Madiun Affair and the Dutch offensive of 1949 in some detail, Trimurti returned to the problems of labour. In contrast to other New Order labour histories, no explicit mention was made of SOBSI in the context of the Madiun Affair. Instead, SOBSI's demise was attributed to the 'political climate' and its failure to distance itself from the 'differences in political opinions and attitudes between the political parties'. She then ended the section with details of the formation of Muslim labour unions, the establishment of ICOSS and POB, and their desire to unite, which she argued was frustrated by the Dutch action of 1948.[50]

Trimurti started the section on 1950-1959[51] by describing a series of 'upheavals' (*pergolakan*), which she said demanded national unity. Rather than responding to that demand, the government encouraged 'unlimited formation of parties', and, as a result, 'the strength that should have been united was divided'.

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[48]   Ibid., 16.

[49]   An article by Sarli written in May 1950 gave an interpretation of these events closer to the other New Order accounts examined here than to Trimurti. Sarli, "Beberapa Tjatatan Tentang: Susunan Organisasi Sarekat-Sarekat Buruh," 25.

[50]   Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional*, 19-20.

[51]   Ibid., 20-26.

This influenced the unions, as those political parties gathered support for the 1955 election. Her judgment of the state of trade unionism at that time was firm:

> There were trade unions that did not want to become part of a Political Party, but in reality they became satellites of particular parties, either directly or indirectly. It was not surprising that if there was tension between the political parties, there was also tension between the trade unions.[52]

However, efforts to unify workers' organisations continued, which Trimurti described in some detail.[53] By the end of 1949, she noted that there were three federations besides HISSBI, namely GSBI, GASBRI and SOBSI. HISSBI arranged a General Congress for workers in June 1950, which SOBSI did not attend, that resolved to form a single union federation. According to Trimurti, SOBSI rejected the holding of the Congress because 'it was considered undemocratic'. BKBI was finally formed in February 1951, but it failed, both because of SOBSI's refusal to participate and 'many other factors', on which she did not elaborate. A new federation of nineteen unions, eventually called SOBRI, was formed in April 1951. Shortly after, BPSS and POB amalgamated to form PSBI, which then, along with GSBI, formed DSBI. Trimurti noted the DSBI's refusal to become 'an arena for political disagreements' and its rejection of the influence of either the WFTU or ICFTU. She concluded her description of the period before Guided Democracy by noting that 'the reality was that in the Indonesian community at that time there were two different opinions, that is the first wanted to affiliate to International Labour Federations (WFTU and ICFTU), while the second did not want to affiliate to parties or ideologies'. Having devoted her attention to further discussion of the general political situation in 1959, Trimurti completed the section with a list of ten labour organisations that were 'driven and guided by political parties or groups', namely SBII, SOBRI, HISSBI, KBKI, KBSI, SOB *Pancasila*, GOBSII, SARBUMUSI, KBIM and PORBISI.[54]

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[52] Ibid., 21.
[53] Ibid., 21-23. The events she described are summarised in the relevant section of Appendix B.
[54] Ibid., 25-26.

The final section of the lecture, which covered the period from 1959 to 1969, was much shorter. Trimurti maintained that the situation was very different from the preceding period, with 'almost all power in the hands of the President'. *Konfrontasi* was mentioned, as was the rising political tension and the improving fortunes of the 'pro-communist group'. SOBSI's progress 'made its opponents increasingly suspicious', which led to emergence of new labour organisations. Nine of these new organisations (KUBU *Pancasila*, SOKSI, KONGKARBU SOKSI, GERBUMI, KESPEKRI, IKM, PERKABI, KBM and *Federasi Buruh Transport Indonesia*) were then listed. After a brief description of the events of 1965, which brought a 'change in the situation of the Indonesian labour struggle/organisations', Trimurti noted that non-communist unions continued to develop, while the 'pro-communist unions were all disbanded.' In contrast to the majority of New Order accounts, she described the government's attempts to encourage the unification of the labour movement as its own—rather than the unions'—'establishment of MPBI', the precursor to FBSI.[55] That agency is attributed to the state, rather than to unions itself, is a telling rejection of the New Order's attribution of agency to unions in the formation of FBSI.

4. *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*

The first chapter of *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, entitled 'Patterns of the Labour Movement in Indonesia', was structured as an historical overview. In it, Soekarno proposed a periodisation rather different from that used by Trimurti.[56] He divided Indonesian labour history six periods. These were: the colonial period (1908–1945); the physical revolution (1945–1949); the years between 1949 and 1959; Guided Democracy (1959–1965); a section called 'From the Birth of the New Order (1966) until the General Election (1971)'; and, finally, the post-election period (post-1971). Each period, except for the colonial period, had a section dealing with the political situation of the period and a section that explained 'its influence on the labour movement'. The relative length of the sub-sections varied from period to period.

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[55]   Ibid., 27.
[56]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 1-11.

Soekarno began this first chapter with a strong statement about the relationship between the Indonesian labour and national movements, which constituted the *de facto* introduction to the volume. In the literal translation given in the English version, this statement was rendered as:

> The development of the labour movement in Indonesia since the colonial period up to now has been going through very tortuous ways in accordance with the ups and downs of the national struggle. During the colonial period the Indonesian labour movement posed [sic] itself hand in hand with the national independence movement, while in the independence period it could not free itself from the struggle of giving meaning to the freedom, so that in its growth it had always to experience shiftings of position and role in the national struggle.[57]

Soekarno's historical narrative is one of failed attempts to unify and the dichotomy between 'real' socio-economic unions and politicised unions such as the PKI. As demonstrated in Appendix A, this narrative was achieved by a very selective inclusion of events described both the communist and conservative labour histories of the pre-New Order period.

Soekarno's description of the colonial period began with what was to become a standard, New Order claim: that colonial trade unionism 'could not be separated from the growth of the Nationalist Movement', and that the first trade union 'came into being' in the same year as *Boedi Oetomo*. After giving a short list of unions established in the early decades of the century, Soekarno noted that the labour movement was split along the lines of the 'three political currents' which 'marked' the nationalist movement of the time (Nationalism, Islam and Marxism) in 1919. The labour movement desired unity, but 'when it came to formulating the unification, things got stuck' because the parties could not agree whether 'the term "Revolusionary" [sic] should be used in the name of the new body'.[58] Soekarno then emphasised that the divide lay between the proponents of political and economic unionism, who disagreed on whether the new body should 'involve itself in the

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[57]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 1.
[58]   According to Ingleson and McVey, amongst others, a debate about whether to use the term 'revolutionary' took place, but an organisation called the PPKB was nevertheless formed. The organisation subsequently did split. See Ingleson, *In Search of Justice;* McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*.

political struggle or rather confined [sic] itself to the pure struggle of a labour organisation'. He reinforced the link between politicisation and disunity by stating that 'the labour movement's pattern at that time culd [sic] not be separated from the impact of the political movement, while among the labour unions themselves no agreement could be reached in determining the united pattern of their [struggle] in the societdy' [sic].[59] Notably, however, he did not record the political affiliations of the organisations involved.[60]

Events between 1927 and 1945 were completely omitted from Soekarno's account. Instead, he turned his attention immediately to the proclamation of independence and the establishment of a 'parliamentary democratic' or 'liberal' system, which he maintained was inconsistent with the 1945 Constitution. During this period, when political parties 'were thriving', 'the life of the labour movement could not free itself' from the 'political climate'. The first event he noted after Independence was the formation of the BBI, which he stated was established 'for the purpose of taking part in the defence of the national freedom'. Soekarno blamed the split in the BBI only months after its formation on the desire of one group to 'merge with the political movement' (who formed the PBI) while the other 'preferred to separate itself from political influences' (who formed GASBI). He did not mention that both organisations were headed by Syamsu Harya Udaya. Likewise, he omitted the subsequent split between GSBV and GASBI—the group he claimed chose 'to be active only in the socioeconomic fields'. Instead, GSBV simply appeared in the text when it merged with GASBI to form SOBSI in 1946. Soekarno immediately tainted SOBSI's validity as a unifying organisation by referring to its links with international communism in 1947 and its involvement in the 'Muso Communist Revolt' in 1948.[61] Soekarno's description of the physical revolution concluded with the statement that the labour movement 'more or less inherit[ed] the characteristics' of the colonial labour movement 'in the sense that there was a group advocating [sic] the labour movement to be active in polities [sic], and the other one preferring the labour movement to be non-political'.[62]

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[59]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 2.
[60]   Ibid.
[61]   Musso and Muso are alternative spellings.
[62]   Soekarno MPA, *The Renovation of the Indonesian Labour Movement*, 3-4.

Soekarno then re-emphasised the speed with which political parties (and, subsequently, trade unions) grew under the 'liberal system' of the 1950s in the section on political developments between 1949 and 1959. In the labour arena, rapid growth in the number of unions was promoted by the 'very liberal character' of Ministerial Regulation No.90/1955, under which 'the requirement for the formation of a labour union was very easy'. As a result, political parties established unions as *onderbouw* (translated as '"wings" or parts' in the English version) 'to strengthen their positions in the general election' of that year. Soekarno argued that 'As the General Election's [sic] Law was also of liberal character', the growing awareness of the need to simplify the political system could not be realised. He then added that the 'need for unity or simplification in the field of politics' affected the 'life of the labour movement'. In 1956, 'responsible' labour leaders responded by establishing the *Badan Kerjasama–Buruh Militer* (BKS–BUMIL, The Labour-Military Cooperative Body) at the time of the nationalisation of Dutch companies. Soekarno noted BKS-BUMIL's impermanence, but heralded it as a demonstration of the 'spirit of unity' amongst labour leaders. In the next section, Guided Democracy was proclaimed as a return to the 1945 Constitution. Having described the composition of the *Gotong-Royong* Parliament, Soekarno turned his attention to the effects of Guided Democracy on the labour movement. Here he described two events: SOBSI's refusal to support the government's suggestion of unification through the 'immediate formation' of the OPPI and the subsequent formation of SEKBER BURUH. He then described SEKBER BURUH as proof that 'the unity flame of the workers was burning all the time, although the unification itself could not yet be brought about'.[63]

The section on the politics of the early New Order period began with the attempted coup of 1965 and the banning of communist ideology.[64] On the labour front, the simplification of the political system was complemented by the formation of KABI, whose purpose was 'to struggle hand in hand with the other New Order forces to eradicate the remnants of the Communist G.30.S./PKI/Old Order' while SEKBER BURUH dealt with workers' socio-economic concerns. The desire for

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[63] Ibid., 8.
[64] Sukarno briefly referred to the fallout of the anti-communist campaign of 1965-66, claiming that '62 persons who were members of the Communist Party and its mass organisations as well as its sympathizers, lost their membership'. Ibid.

unity came once more to the fore when the MPBI was formed on 1 November 1969 as the result of a 'long cherished desire to cure [sic] (*menyehatkan* in the Indonesian version) the life of the labour movement'. The MBPI, according to Soekarno, was a 'step forward', but was weak in 'structure' and 'leadership', primarily because 'sovereignty was still in the hands of the membership'. After the 1971 election, labour unions previously affiliated with the now-defunct political parties 'lost their political mother organisation' (*induknya* in the Indonesian version). This left them 'free' to decide upon their 'direction and policy', and thus to achieve 'their long cherished ideal for unity'. The result, according to Soekarno, was the Declaration of Unity and the formation of FBSI on 20 February 1973.

The second (very short) chapter of Soekarno's book was devoted to the development of the unity concept.[65] In the first part of the chapter, attempts to achieve the long-held ideal of unity featured once more. Sukarno categorised 'failed attempts' to achieve unity in two groups. The first series of attempts to achieve a unified labour movement included '1919 efforts', BBI and SOBSI, which were all said to have failed because of political issues. In 1919, the problem was the political ideologies of the leadership. BBI failed because of conflicting views about whether trade unions should be involved in politics. Finally SOBSI failed because it was under communist (political) control. These failures did not, however, 'break the unity spirit in times to come'. This 'unity spirit' led to a second series of attempts, namely BKS-BUMIL, OPPI, KABI and MPBI, culminating in the successful formation of FBSI at a time 'when the situation was very favourable for realising the unification of the labour movement in Indonesia'. In the second part of this chapter, Soekarno provided details of the questions considered before FBSI was established. The first paragraph was devoted to the fate of existing unions and the form the new union should (a single union, federation or confederation). The second asked 'whether [FBSI] would be active in the political field or confined [sic] itself to the socio economic field' and 'whether [it] should link or allow itself to become a part of an outside political party or should it be free and uncommitted to any political party'. A third paragraph emphasised the importance of these issues in the past. In it, Soekarno argued that 'the success or failure' of attempts to unite the labour movement was

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[65]   Ibid., 12-14.

connected 'directly or indirectly' to these questions of politicisation and union form. The final part of the chapter described the outcome of these deliberations: that labour organisations 'all over Indonesia' would be restructured to form a new national federation. It was not until well into the third chapter of the volume that Soekarno argued the 'long cherished unity ideal of the Indonesian workers' was realised through the physical renovation of the labour movement, while in the 'mental-spiritual field', the 'most important renovation' was the shift from a philosophy of class struggle to one of *Pancasila* and the refocusing of the labour movement from political problems to 'matters relating to the workers' socio aconomic [sic] improvements and their increased participation in the national development'.[66]

After two chapters on the mechanics of the process of unification, Soekarno returned to the question of history in a chapter called 'The Discovering of Identity'.[67] He once more emphasised the 'workers' ideal to unite into one body' before embarking on a section entitled 'Learning from History'. Like Sudono and Moertopo, Soekarno argued that in order to achieve physical and mental-spiritual renovation, 'the Indonesian labour movement should learn from experience, namely the experience of its own history'. He then posed a series of questions that should be asked of Indonesia's labour history: 'Why in the past, was the Indonesian labour movement divided? Ehy [sic] was it not free from certain political ideological ties? Why was the emphasis of the struggle on the political field etc?'[68] The rest of the chapter was structured around a series of statements about how FBSI has learnt from the answers to these questions. These included its adoption of a new foundation (*Pancasila*) and its eschewal of all other ideologies; its reflection of national aims; its shift from disunity to unity, from 'political orientation' to 'development orientation' and from 'political ideological commitment' to 'freedom'. The divide between political and economic trade unionism and the rejection of 'outside ideological commitment' were recurring themes throughout.[69]

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[66] Ibid., 23.
[67] Ibid., 31-38.
[68] Ibid., 31-32.
[69] A final chapter dealt with the challenges facing the labour movement. Ibid., 39-50.