

MAR 17 1965

INSIDE REPORT: *Subverting Labor*

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JAKARTA.

The largest Communist labor federation in the world outside the Communist bloc operates with increasing boldness and assurance here in Indonesia.

One by one, non-Communist labor unions are being undermined by harassment and subterfuge. The obvious intent of D. N. Aidit, the head of the Communist party, is to force every independent union into the Communist labor federation (SOBSI) or into extinction, and thereby gain a stranglehold on the nation's economy.

The case history of one independent union illustrates the point. The PBKA is the non-Communist railroad union. It is still the largest union of railroad workers in the country, with a membership of 80,000 (as compared to 43,000 in the rival Communist-run rail union). U. S. labor experts helped the PBKA set up a welfare program.

To finance the plan, the union acquired several small revenue-producing concerns, including three rice mills and a shoe factory. The head of the union, a Socialist named Dr. Kusua (Indonesians seldom use a first name) was a brilliant organizer with political roots deep in the Indonesian Socialist party. His union became an outgrowth of the Socialist party, in the same way that SOBSI is an outgrowth of the Communist party.

Then three things happened: the Socialist party was dissolved by Presidential decree in 1960; the Communist party and SOBSI went after Dr. Kusua, forcing him to resign in February, 1964; and finally late last year, the union was ordered to join the National Front, an all-enveloping creation of President Sukarno that brings under central control virtually every group, organization and enterprise in the country. This National Front is unquestionably dominated by the Communist party.

When the PBKA dutifully tried to obey the order that it join the front, it discovered its path blocked by an interesting "technicality." It could not join because it had no affiliation with a political party. The reason it had no affiliation was that the Socialist party had been dissolved by Sukarno in 1960.

Thus, the non-Communist PBKA rail union is now in a cruel dilemma. Either it affiliates with a legal political party that has no tradition of socialism, and hence no appeal for its own members, or it goes out of existence.

To avoid this choice, the union has petitioned President Sukarno for special dispensation: the right to join the National Front without affiliating with an alien political party.

What is happening to the rail union is happening to other non-Communist unions in different ways. A year ago, for example, the non-Communist union of postal and telegraph workers outnumbered the competing Communist union, 20,000 to 12,000. Last fall, it joined the ill-

fated "Body for the Promotion of Sukarnoism" (the spontaneous national movement by dozens of anti-Communist organizations whose purpose was to reduce the influence of the Communist party on Sukarno).

The Communist party convinced Sukarno that the real purpose of the movement was not to support but to overthrow Sukarno. As a result, almost every organization that was part of the movement is now under official government disapproval, including the postal union.

This means that the Communist-run labor federation, which claims 1.5 million members, is bound to gain even more political influence and the one million organized workers outside it are bound to lose influence. But beyond that, the growth of SOBSI means the growth of Chinese Communist power within Indonesia because SOBSI is Peking-oriented, root, trunk and branch.

Last spring, when a Soviet labor delegation came to Jakarta for official talks with the Indonesian government, SOBSI boycotted the talks. In November, SOBSI recalled its man in Prague (the headquarters of the Moscow-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions) and sent him to Peking. It is clear then that Indonesia and the Chinese are now planning an Afro-Asian workers' organization to battle the Moscow-dominated labor federation for the control of labor in every country of Asia and Africa.

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