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New York 36, New York

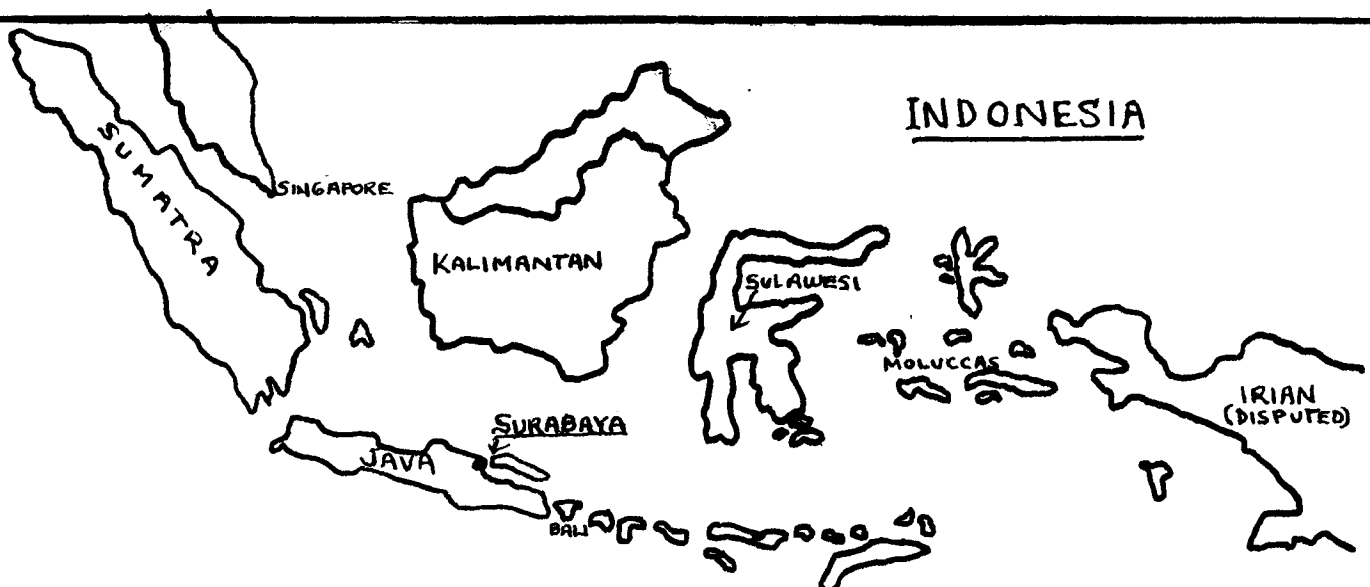
Dear Mr. Rogers:

Surabaya, the second city of Indonesia, has become the stronghold of Indonesian communism. Within the orderly grid of Surabaya's modern streets and ramshackle kampongs, its 750,000 citizens are being surrounded, pressured and led by a system of communist party cells, labor unions and front organizations. Government officials and anti-communist organizations are struggling ineffectively in the net.

The election victories of the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.) in Surabaya were duplicated in all of the major cities and a part of the agrarian hinterland of Central and East Java. The communists have found an appeal and technique which operate with great success in selected Javanese areas.

The Indonesian communist movement does not yet pose a direct threat to the state, and it need not in the future if the other major parties show increased ability to manage national affairs. But the election results showed how ready the communists are to capitalize on the failures of their opponents. The elections also indicated some of the current limits of communist expansion.

The communist vote was limited almost entirely to the area



inhabited by the Javanese ethnic group, which includes approximately thirty-five million persons living in Central Java and the adjacent areas of West and East Java. The only important communist strength in the outer islands was shown in areas of Javanese transmigration in the Medan region and in parts of South Sumatra.

In none of its important urban victories, did the party win more than fifty percent of the total vote. Its Surabaya vote was 41.9% of the total in the first election and 42.1% in the second. The communist party vote was on the whole much lighter in the agrarian regions of the Javanese area. It won impressive victories in the depressed agricultural region of Surakarta (Solo) Regency and in the traditional communist stronghold in Madiun Regency, but it fell far behind the Indonesian Nationalist Party (P.N.I.) in agrarian regions of greater prosperity or social integration.

Yet the index of communist strength in Indonesia is not its absolute strength in the recent elections, but rather the speed and purpose with which the party has organized that strength since the transfer of Dutch sovereignty at the end of 1949.

If the P.K.I. can consolidate its position in the Javanese cities and increase the scale and tempo of its village program, it could soon surpass the P.N.I. in the Javanese region and become the first instead of the last of the Big Four Indonesian parties.* Its success will depend in great part on its organizational proficiency and ability to adjust its program to local conditions.

The Surabaya victory showed how far the P.K.I. has already gone in developing the organizational skills and flexibility demanded by the Indonesian situation. Aided by imagination, purposeful leadership and great amounts of money, the communists have made a rousing success of their most important test case.

The Setting in Surabaya

When the Indonesian Revolution officially ended on December 27, 1949, Surabaya was the capital city of the State of East Java, one of the nineteen autonomous units of the short-lived United States of Indonesia. Labor organizers and young communist cadres had already

* The Big Four parties have 198 out of a total of 260 seats in the newly elected Parliament: P.N.I., 57; Masjumi, 57; Nahdlatul Ulama, 45; P.K.I., 39.

begun to work their way back into the city from the hinterland where the Dutch had driven the Indonesian republican forces.

As the young communists began to go about their organizational tasks in Surabaya, their party was still suffering from the wounds of the abortive Madiun Rebellion. The party and its allies had been crushed by the Indonesian government in late 1948. Contact with higher policy makers in Moscow--and now Peking--had been broken. In Djakarta, the group of D.N. Aidit was wrestling for control of the Politburo amid a confusion of clique squabbles and uncoordinated policy statements.

The P.K.I. seemed to be floundering in 1950, but national conditions were conducive to a quick recovery. The remnants of the party had been given an amnesty after Madiun, and nationalist leaders were ready and anxious to cooperate with the communists for the sake of national unity. The greater part of the Indonesian Chinese community was switching its loyalties to the newly triumphant Peking regime, so there were good prospects for large, voluntary money contributions to the communist cause in Indonesia. With the Dutch withdrawal, totalitarian labor policies were scrapped, and the communist-controlled S.O.B.S.I. labor federation was soon winning control of most of Indonesia's labor force. In Djakarta, confusion and passivity in government were foreshadowing the general economic decline which was to contribute so much to communist expansion in the following six years.

In Surabaya, the communist found ideal conditions.

From its position where the rich Brantas river empties into the Strait of Madura, Surabaya has grown steadily in the last four hundred years as a center of commerce and industry. When Dutch engineers diverted the greater part of the Brantas water into a new channel to create the irrigation system of the Sidoardjo delta, Surabaya's growth accelerated. It became the outlet port for the rich sugar economy which flourished on the Brantas and in other river valleys of East Java. Coffee, tea, rubber and quinine plantations grew up on the hillsides above the sugar cane fields and added to the commercial bustle in the port city. Surabaya's harbor grew and the labor force servicing its ships, docks, warehouses expanded.

The twenties and thirties brought industrial growth in the wake of commercial expansion. Machines and metal-working shops were established to service and repair the ships, trains and automobiles which came into the great trade intersection. Margarine, cooking oil, shoes, furniture, petroleum products, tiles, bricks and a large variety of consumers goods began to flow from small and medium sized factories. Industrial growth was modest, but vigorous enough to make Surabaya

the most intensively industrialized city in a predominantly agrarian country.

The working class for Surabaya was recruited from the surrounding hinterland, where peace, irrigation and all the by-products of careful Dutch rule were encouraging an amazing surge toward overpopulation. The Madurese were overflowing their small island and filling in the empty reaches of the Java coastline east of Surabaya; thousands of them ended up in Surabaya, especially in the northern sections of the city. The Javanese moved in from the west, where overpopulation was forcing young men to leave their villages in the Brantas and Bengawan valleys.

The newcomers to Surabaya in this century have been quickly assimilated into a new type of hodge-podge culture, which has had little in common with the stagnated cultures of the hinterland. The average citizen of the city is called "arek Suroboyo", Javanese for "child of Surabaya". The term connotes vigor, and a certain amount of brashness. The more refined people of the interior are apt to speak of the Surabaya people, their customs and arts, as "kasar" (crude). Accepting their aristocratic and feudal standards, they are right. Free from the tight controls and social gradations of their native villages and towns, the new citizens of Surabaya have created a style and culture which is lively, direct and unrefined. You need only contrast the boisterous, earthy ludruk folk opera of Surabaya with the refined, moralistic wayang of Central Java to see the uniqueness of the Surabaya culture in the Javanese environment.

The spirit of the arek Suroboyo has contributed to their dynamic role in recent history. In the twenties and thirties, Sutomo, Sukarno, Sartono and dozens of young Indonesian nationalists studied in Surabaya and found stimulation in its free atmosphere. When the Japanese occupation ended in 1945, the common people of Surabaya rallied around their leaders to fight the first major battle of the revolution. In the history of Indonesian nationalism, Surabaya has played a pioneer role, preceding and in a sense foretelling the movements which would later sweep through Java.

The vigor and freedom of Surabaya is especially the property of its working classes, who live along the tiny lanes and alleys of the kampong living quarters, which are hidden in huge blocks behind the modern streets which give Surabaya its deceptively western appearance. In the kampongs, the P.K.I. found the economic, social and psychological conditions necessary for its expansion.

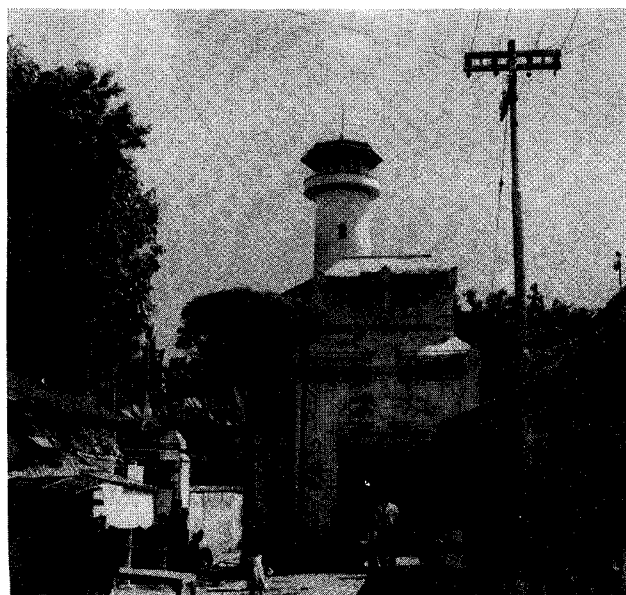
The Surabaya setting is not only favorable to communism. Large parts of its population are fervently Muslim or nationalist, but it has been the communists rather than the Muslims or nationalists who have given the city leadership.



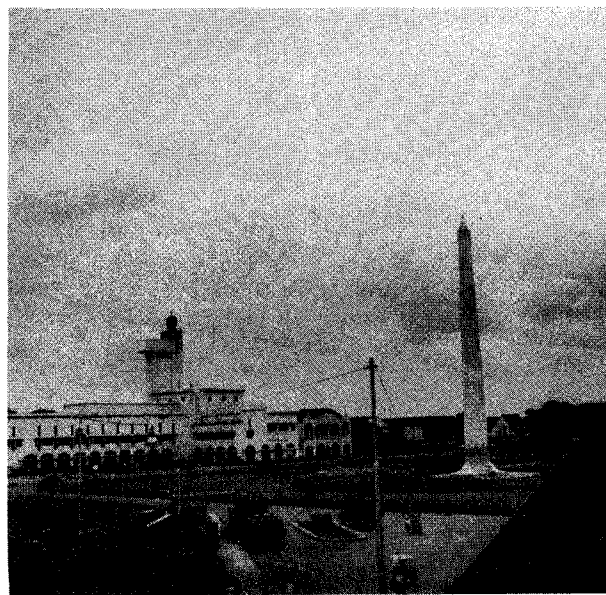
A busy street in the heart of the city.



A quiet lane in a kampong.



Mosque in a strongly Muslim district.



Spacious square in front of governor's office. Monument stands on site of former Kempeitai building.

Communist Test Case

For the first two years after their return to Surabaya, the young communists worked on the fundamentals of organization rather than immediate party expansion. This was in line with national policy, which did not call for the creation of a "mass party" until 1952.

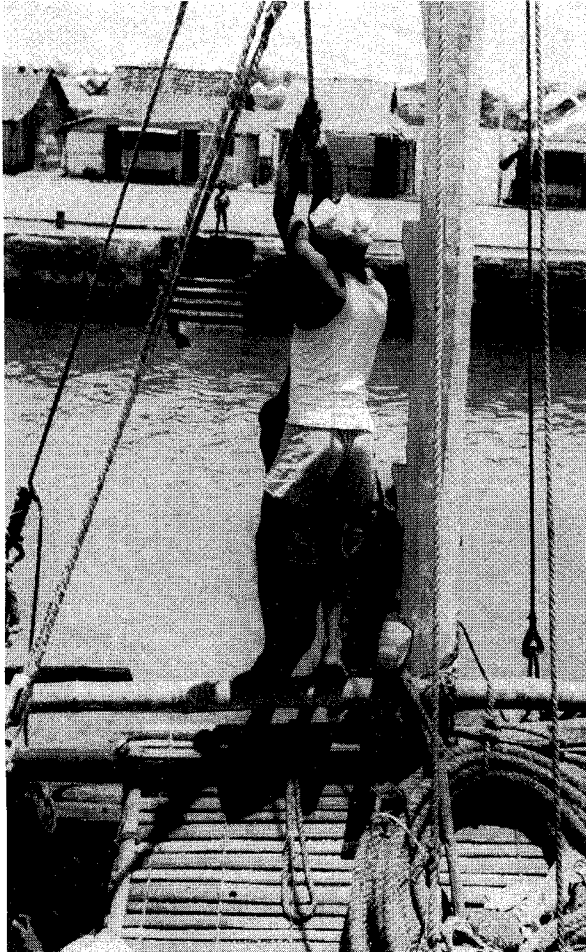
Situated as it was in the capital city of East Java, the party in Surabaya was subject to a double jurisdiction from city and provincial headquarters. Directly under the city headquarters were a number of neighborhood branches scattered throughout the city. As in any orthodox communist party, these lower-level branches were responsible for the training and direction of the party cells set up in factories, shops, schools, labor unions, and various organizations.

By 1953, enough trained cadres and printed materials were available to launch an intensive program of study and self-criticism. Building on this base, the communist party was able to carry out a successful program of membership expansion from 1952 to 1955. The final success of the internal development program of the P.K.I. was seen in the control it won over outside organizations.

The solid base of communist power in Surabaya is in the labor unions, most of which are federated with S.O.B.S.I. The unions cover all fields of endeavor. The natural targets for red labor organization were the ship yard and dock workers. On the fringes of the city, the workers in larger metal-working, machine and soap factories were organized. In the busy commercial heart of Surabaya, the workmen in the smaller wood-shops, bakeries, shoe-shops and restaurants found themselves members of S.O.B.S.I. The federation also extended welcoming arms to construction and transport workers, pedicab pushers, teachers and minor government workers. Perhaps the most difficult organizing job of all was among the hordes of household servants working for the Europeans, Chinese and wealthier Indonesians in the southern section of town.

One secret of S.O.B.S.I.'s expansion in a place like Surabaya is the training and drive of the communist party activists who guide its program. Another is the simple fact that S.O.B.S.I. has dared to press constantly for higher wages and better working conditions. Perhaps more important still is the fact that S.O.B.S.I. branch leaders are professional labor organizers, paid a relatively handsome salary for their efforts and time.

The professional character of communist activities in Surabaya is seen in all fields. A branch chairman of the party is said to receive Rp. 1000. a month. An activist in any field is said to draw a



Harbor workers belong to a red union.



High school students were asked to guard the polls on election day.



Workers in a machine shop belong to red union.



One-man orchestra belongs to no union.

basic salary of Rp. 500. It appears that no other Indonesian party can afford to pay out so much to its important lower-level workers. Impressive sums of money are also available for receptions, conferences, printing and propaganda programs. The money for such a concerted program obviously does not come from the modest party dues. Whether the difference is made up from foreign contributions or from local Chinese donations is a matter of conjecture.

Organizing party branches and front organizations, training of cadres, and gathering party funds are typical communist tasks anywhere, and the implementation of these tasks in Surabaya has proceeded according to orthodox patterns. The uniqueness and quality of the communist effort in Surabaya has not been in these fields, but in the organization of the Surabaya Community Federation (R.K.K.S.), which has brought communist policy right to the doorstep of the kampung dweller.

The Surabaya Community Federation grew directly out of the Japanese occupation. To cement Japanese control over urban areas, the people of each street or lane were organized and registered under the leadership of a street leader. The various street organizations of a kampung community were then made subordinate to a kampung organization (called rukun kampung in Indonesian, tonari komi in Japanese). The antecedents of this system can be traced back through a similar system in Japan, which appears to have been copied from the notorious pao-chia system of China. Its establishment was a major institutional change for Indonesia, where local rural and urban communities have traditionally enjoyed wide autonomy.

During the Japanese period, the several hundred community organizations of Surabaya were under the direct control of the city government, which was in turn controlled by the Japanese military authorities. Ostensibly, the purpose of the system was to act as a distribution network for various scarce commodities, such as rice, fish, cigarettes, and occasionally cloth. At the same time, it served as a mutual surveillance system for security against spies, saboteurs and dissenters in general. The multi-purpose system was also used to mobilize forced labor and semi-military guard units.

From 1942 until 1945, the community system was in fact the lowest level of government in Surabaya.

When the Japanese surrendered, the community system was set adrift. Under the four years of Dutch occupation, its form was maintained locally but no concerted effort was made to restore it as a central government institution.

In 1950, the neglected community system became one of the

first targets for communist action. On January 23, 1950, just twenty-eight days after the transfer of sovereignty, the Surabaya Community Federation (R.K.K.S.) was established under communist direction as a central organization for more than 225 local community units. The leadership of the all-city organization was in the hands of a small group of communists and neo-communists who had spent part of the revolution in Madiun. The secretaryship of the R.K.K.S. fell to Supardi, who had been mayor of Madiun during the communist revolt.

Within a short time, almost all of the community associations which had functioned in Japanese times were federated with the R.K.K.S. The local chairmen of the community associations served at the same time as headmen of their communities. Dues of Rp. 0.50 were collected from each household and community work gangs and night guards were recruited through the organization. The governmental functions of the community associations were being revived, but this time under communist rather than government control.

Between the level of the community and the city headquarters, the R.K.K.S. established district offices at the level of the thirty-seven government wards (lingkungan). At this level, the R.K.K.S. and its communist sponsors won their first victory against the passive government in 1950. As the movement for the abolition of the Dutch-tainted United States of Indonesia gained force in the early months of 1950, nationalist officials were eager to gain the support of the kampong people, who were already falling under the control of the R.K.K.S. When it came time to appoint the government officials in the thirty-seven wards, nearly blanket approval was given to candidates advanced by the local red-dominated community associations.

Before the end of its first year of existence, the R.K.K.S. had thus succeeded in placing its men in almost all important government positions below the all-city level. During the succeeding years, it was difficult to distinguish between the functioning of the R.K.K.S. branch at the ward level and the ward government itself. In 1955, the city government seemed to become more aware of the control exercised by the R.K.K.S. in governmental affairs. Ward officials were made subject to government appointment, and hence subject to removal or transfer. But this restitution of government authority had had little effect by election time in 1955; the majority of the ward officials were still closely connected with the R.K.K.S. and most of them belonged to a local communist-dominated labor union.

The social cohesiveness of the Surabaya kampongs has added to the power of the parent community organization. Each kampong has its own youth security guard, organized through the R.K.K.S. system in most cases and usually led by a member of the communist Democratic Youth organization (Pemuda Rakjat). As in most Javanese communities, the youth of the kampong are obliged to serve their turns as guards.



The mayor of Surabaya speaks to the Congress of the Surabaya Community Federation. This organization controls the lowest levels of government in the city.



Voters observe silence on election day. This precinct went strongly communist.



Communist mass meeting. The picture on the left is of Njoto, an East Javanese and number two man in the party.

When election time approached in 1955, these local guard associations patrolled and inspected all through the night, ostensibly guarding against "provocations" by "reactionary" elements. In effect, the guard units carry out an official police function in their communities and have the right to detain suspects and turn them over to the State Police.

The role of the R.K.K.S. security guards was well illustrated by the situation I saw in kampong X two nights before the first election. I had dropped in to see a friend who lived in a tiny, kerosene-lighted house on one of the lanes of the community. While we were chatting, a young man of about twenty came swaggering in the door and sat back in a rattan chair with the greeting, "Get me a beer. No, make it two. I want one for tomorrow." My friend, a member of the P.N.I., introduced the visitor as S., the leader of the local youth security guard. He explained that S. had been ordering him to serve his turn as a night guard, but that he had gotten an exemption by promising beer or coffee as bribes.

After he had relaxed with his drink, S. turned out to be a friendly, straight-forward young fellow. He explained that he had become a member of the communist youth organization as soon as he graduated from lower middle school in 1952. He had been taking a study course in Marxism for two years, from which he had apparently learned more slogans than theories. He told us about the recent kidnapping of "progressive" kampong leaders by the militant Anti-Communist Front, explaining that the people of kampong X had been thoroughly alerted to the dangers of such reactionary acts. He went on to tell me that the R.K.K.S. was a completely non-political organization, dedicated to carry out community activities such as building schools, cleaning drainage ditches, and subsidizing burials.

S. assured me that the local community associations have no real governmental function. They merely elect the kampong chiefs, maintain security, collect dues for community development, and carry out programs of education and enlightenment in their localities.

The essentially political nature of the R.K.K.S. program was highlighted during its all-city conference in April, 1955. As a succession of communist and non-communist speakers spoke to the assembled kampong headmen, signature sheets for the Stockholm Peace Petition were passed through the audience. One of the R.K.K.S. officials rose and gave a graphic description of the terrors of the atomic bomb. When the filled sheets were finally turned in, he rose again and shouted that the people of Surabaya had shown their solidarity with the peace-loving peoples of the earth who oppose the war-mongering attempts of some nations to foment atomic warfare. The audience cheered and shouted out the communist slogan, "Bebas!" (Freedom!), which has replaced the nationalist "Merdeka!" (Independence!) in



In the market, in the mosque or on the highway, "the children of Surabaya" are a special breed, noted for their independence and vigor.



communist circles in the last year.

The other speakers ploughed through the program of the Indonesian Communist Party, point by point. One told the audience that the people of Surabaya demanded that the land of Chinese cemeteries be turned over to the people. Another requested that the distribution of government controlled goods (textiles, rice) be channeled through the R.K.K.S.

As the meeting ended, visiting communists from Semarang and Djogja rose to report on the progress of the Community Association programs in their cities. The final speaker made a motion that a national Indonesian Community Association Federation be formed, but his suggestion was set aside before it came to vote.

In almost every detail, it was a model communist conference.

The R.K.K.S. has stimulated surprisingly little opposition with its successes. The P.N.I. has refused to make public recognition of the R.K.K.S. as a threat to government authority, and has only recently started to set up its own community association federation. The Masjumi has made a strong effort to establish a competing non-communist organization in cooperation with the Indonesian Socialist Party, but neither party has the money or the support to succeed. The Nahdlatul Ulama has finally awakened to the situation in Surabaya, and has begun to organize its own labor union and is making efforts to wean local community associations away from the communist parent organization. The N.U. efforts are belated, however, and most of the trained N.U. organizers have now gone to Djakarta to serve as members of Parliament.

The communist effort in Surabaya shows the efficacy of planning. The well-coordinated program of organization, propaganda, and infiltration in labor, schools, community organization and government has been well mapped out and handsomely financed. As the first national election approached, the P.K.I. was watching closely to see how the Surabaya experiment would pan out.

Election Results

The results of the elections of September 29 (Parliament) and December 15 (Constitutional Assembly) in Surabaya were almost identical. 367,799 voters were registered for the two elections; 83% voted in the first, and 79% voted in the second (both turnouts were well below the national average).

The order of the leading parties was approximately the same in both elections:

	September 29	December 15
Indonesian Communist Party	129,405	123,444
Nahdlatul Ulama	61,475	60,599
Indonesian Nationalist Party	46,176	51,751
Masjumi	17,689	16,397
Protestant Party	7,665	7,399
Catholic Party	4,947	4,232
Indonesian Socialist Party	4,549	3,663
Indonesian Republican Party	7,288	3,038
Others	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
total	308,941	293,256

If three of the eleven election areas in Surabaya are eliminated (the Arab-Masjumi section downtown and the two predominantly Madurese areas at the northeast), the communist vote comes to well over 50% in the remaining eight sections dominated by the Javanese ethnic group.

As in all of Central and East Java, it appears that the group without strong religious loyalties split its vote between the P.K.I. and P.N.I. There is good evidence that within this group, the vote was divided approximately on the basis of economic standing and social status, with the communists capturing the vote of the poor and the nationalists winning strong support from the official and white-collar groups.

Rumors say that communist leaders in Djakarta were immensely impressed with the P.K.I. victory in Surabaya, especially with the role played by the R.K.K.S. They claim that twenty of the activists who worked in the movement have already been moved--family and baggage --to Djakarta to attempt to duplicate their achievement in the stronghold of the Masjumi.

The significance of the communist victory can be variously interpreted. Above all, it showed the skill and drive of the communist leaders. It was not, however, conclusive evidence that the people of Surabaya are loyal to the communist party. Forty percent showed a preference for the P.K.I., but most of this group have no inkling of the meaning of communism and great numbers of them sincerely consider themselves Muslims.

The disturbing aspect of the Surabaya situation is that the Indonesian government has no really effective administrative control

below the city level. At present, the red-dominated kampong federation serves as an effective and loyal servant of the government. But almost nowhere in the city does the government come in direct contact with its citizens. It has not yet taken strong measures to remedy this situation, though it indicated an awareness of the problem when it refused to allow the community guard units to maintain security on election day.

No impressive non-communist leadership has appeared in Surabaya to fight the tightening hold of the Indonesian Communist Party, S.O.B.S.I. and the Surabaya Community Federation. The election results show that a large part of the city population would welcome decisive leadership from Muslim or nationalist circles. But it has failed to appear and non-communists in the city must generally bow to communist initiative.

In the Javanese area of Java, communism is not growing out of poverty but out of a vacuum in authority. The past six years in Surabaya show how willing and able the communists are to provide a firm guiding hand when it is given a chance. With a deterioration of national conditions, the lessons of Surabaya could easily be applied in other regions.

No competent observer believes that the communists can win control over the Muslim and Christian populations of the outer islands, but some think that they are slowly building up enough power in Java to cause chaos and eventually destroy the republic. They can be stopped if the government is able to develop a clearer, stronger conception of its authority without nullifying the fine development of democracy symbolized by the recent elections. Surabaya must be taken as a warning.

Yours sincerely,

Boyd R Compton

Boyd R. Compton