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WWU - 19

INDONESIA: Bandung and The Bung

Tjikini Raya, 95 (pav.)

Djakarta

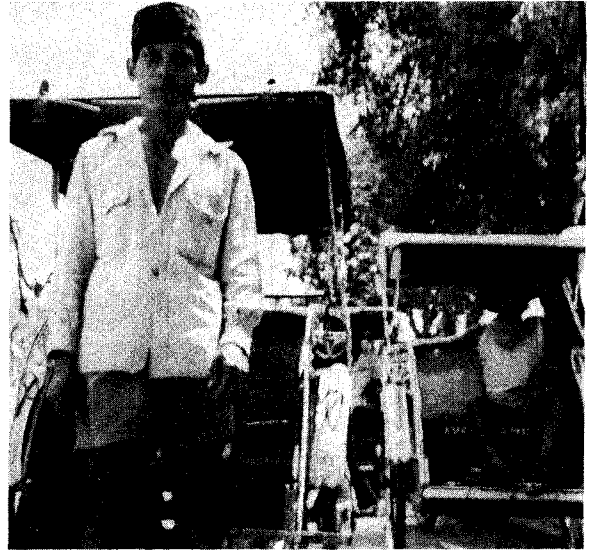
June 5, 1959

Mr. Walter S. Rogers.

Institute of Current World Affairs.
366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

In all the verbiage of the Soekarno speech before the Constituent Assembly in Bandung on April 22 the main issue was carefully never stated. That is the Rebellion which for the past several years, and more intensively for the past 16 months, has, like childhood rickets, been doing its best to see that this young Nation never grows to manhood stature. There are essentially two types of Rebel groups: The Darul-Islam element which has been mad at Soekarno ever since his decision not to make Indonesia a Mohammedan State run according to Koranic law; and the so-called PRRI-Permesta (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia, or Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia), which proclaimed open defiance of Soekarno, Javanese hegemony and communist influence in February, 1958, and ever since has been engaged in organized civil war in Sumatra and Sulawesi (Celebes). So far, the Rebels and the Central Government have each managed to be strong enough to sap the others' strength, but not to overcome it. How do you resolve this?



DJAKARTA'S MAN IN THE STREET:
the "betjak" driver

Well, Maj. Gen. Simatupong, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces until the position was abolished in 1954 and since then a highly-controversial but highly-respected "adviser" to the Defense Ministry, told me it was really he who, in a memo, first conceived of the "Back to 1945" idea. "Eighty per cent of the budget now is indirectly or directly being used for the suppression of the Rebellion. There is economic deterioration which is leading to extremism -- communism, militarism, separatism, islamism, fascism, then maybe anarchy. That is my fear. People here claim to be anti-communist, but nobody is doing anything. And the Communists are gaining. So my idea was to return to 1945 to make a way. The Rebels charge the President defied the Constitution in the present Cabinet. In my memo, I said that if Vice President Hatta is brought back then one of their claims will be satisfied. And they also want the Sultan of Jogjakarta, and he could be appointed as a Minister. But my idea has been changed. President Soekarno wants his 'Guided Democracy' which already was once rejected. So I am afraid the old problems will be continued in the Constituent Assembly. The Government needs two-thirds majority of the entire membership for the Assembly to disband and I doubt now that it can get that. The political parties are trying to block it." (My interview with Simatupong obviously was before the recent votes -- which confirmed his prediction. For

more of his views, see WWU-20.)

I had a talk with Dr. Mohamad Roem, 51-year-old lawyer, onetime Deputy Prime Minister and now Deputy Chairman and a leading spokesman for the Masjumi Party. The Masjumi is the more liberal of the Moslem factions and the party which, if any general election were held today (there hasn't been one since 1955), might prove to be the biggest in Indonesia. Roem, several weeks before the actual Constituent Assembly vote, told me his Party's 112 votes would be used en bloc "against" President Soekarno's request that the Assembly disband -- and he thought the Masjumi would be joined by another 90 votes from the more conservative Moslem Party, the NU (Nahdatul Ulama). This is precisely what came to pass and the Moslem coalition beat the President and the Army. During my interview, Roem also made several other things undeniably clear: If the Army wants to force the disbanding of the Assembly, that will be the Government's "responsibility"; the country cannot be rebuilt without settling the Rebellion (the PRRI-Permesta is led by many former Masjumi leaders); settlement of the Rebellion requires a general amnesty and the inclusion of former Vice President Mohammad Hatta and the Sultan of Jogjakarta in the Government leadership; and this last is very much opposed by President Soekarno.



ROEM

Said Roem: "Soekarno can solve many problems; You cannot solve many problems without him. But he himself is a problem for this country. Shall we solve the problems after his life -- because this country will continue to live? Soekarno is the most powerful, but the country is going downhill with his leadership. If this country depends on his will it's going worse. You cannot rebuild the country without solving the Rebellion first. And we are convinced that with Hatta in the Government you can have a compromise with the Rebellion. This is one of the very few possibilities. Hatta has been consulted and is willing. There is no objection to Hatta by anyone except Soekarno, who does not want to have a good man on his side. He is afraid that he will share his influence and his responsibility. The President wants to go back to the 1945 Constitution -- which is the Army's idea -- with Guided Democracy, his hobby. But the Constitution of 1945 didn't know about 'Guided Democracy.' Let Soekarno stay as President -- he is the most powerful -- but let Soekarno be a President in accordance with the Constitution. We may be on the weaker side. The President may get his way. But nothing good will come out of this. We are convinced that the Government cannot control the Rebellion by force only."

(In mentioning Dr. Roem, I might as well confess to committing a blooper. My handwriting is not the neatest and sometimes quite undecipherable. The other day, in trying to make an appointment with a member of the PKI, I dialed the wrong number. "Is this the PKI?" I asked. "If you mean the Partai Komunis Indonesia, thank God no!" came a furious voice on the other end of the line. And then he hung up. I looked more closely at my notes. Yes, I had mistakenly dialed Dr. Roem, one of Indonesia's leading anti-communists. I hope he did not recognize the voice as that of the American who had come to interview him a few weeks before.)

And Dr. Hatta, the hero of the Revolution, the longtime Soekarno partner who voluntarily resigned as Indonesia's Vice President in 1956 to retire in silence, what does he say now?

"I resigned because I had no power to do anything," Dr.

Hatta told me during an interview one morning two weeks ago in the study of his Djakarta home, not too many blocks from this house where I am staying. "I left because there was not a responsible Government, and I will return only if there is a responsible Government." What about the Return to 1945 and the demand from the Masjumi Party and others that Hatta be brought back? "In the Government proposal there is the exclusion of my person. There is no Vice President. There is no contemplated way to bring Mr. Hatta into the Government. The President wants all the power. Originally, the President and Vice President were equal -- in salary and all. In reality we were two in one, completely united at the time. Now there is a difference of opinion, difference of outlook. We are not the same. It is very difficult to come back into the old position. And President Soekarno feels he will be handicapped if I came back as Vice President with the same power as he. It is very difficult for him to change his attitude. There is too much question on prestige. And for me it is very difficult to come with a policy which deviates from my standpoint. There is no way for compromise."



Hatta and Middle Daughter

What will be the effect of President Soekarno's "Guided Democracy"? "It is not clear what is 'Guided Democracy.' In my opinion, 'Guided Democracy' is a strong leadership, and in Indonesia the only possibility of a strong leadership is a Presidential Government like the U.S., like we had in the past, where the President will bear the full responsibility of Executive powers. But President Soekarno doesn't accept this. The Army proposed returning to the 1945 Constitution with all the spirit. But now people around Soekarno propose the Constitution but not the spirit. And if we return to 1945, there will be no Parliament. The President has full powers."

When will Dr. Hatta be voicing these criticisms publicly? Is the time ripe now? "It depends upon the conditions. Until now, I gave him full chance. I do not attack even though people ask me to, even though I think things get worse. I give him full chance."

Dr. Hatta, at 56, is one year younger than President Soekarno. In the past, when they composed Indonesia's Diuvirate, Soekarno was the element which aroused popular enthusiasm and furthered the spirit of the Revolution. Hatta, the more intellectual and studious of the two, wrote the speeches and concentrated on the details of administration. Soekarno couldn't be less interested in the mundane business of government and only recently laughed at the suggestion that he sit in and chair those Cabinet meetings which have a habit of running into the early hours of the morning.

My impressions of Soekarno are incomplete because, aside from watching his appearance at Bandung, I had only the chance to shake his

hand and observe his performance as host at the annual Palace Lebaran reception celebrating the end of the Moslem fasting month of Ramadan. I am afraid I leave Indonesia knowing only part of the dimensions of the man and, since criticism is so rampant of Soekarno, I have failed to learn of the positive qualities which make him the unquestioned single popular figure. I have to settle for the remark frequently heard here that, like him or not, Soekarno is all you've got.



Soekarno's Djakarta Palace

However, I have met and talked with Hatta. And I am afraid that my impressions were not up to the buildup given him by those who look upon him as the counterbalance to Soekarno, as the one possibility for solving so many of Indonesia's many problems. Maybe I failed to appreciate Hatta's religious meditations, his philosophic reflections. But I found him an aging man in whom the fire of energy was flickering. He seemed bitter, but not bitter enough; conscious that things were wrong, but not sufficiently aroused to right them nor, I suspect, to come out with a really positive program to right them.

What do Soekarno's colleagues in Government say about Hatta in discussing the Return to 1945? They don't mention him.

Lieut. Gen. A.H. Nasution, Army Chief of Staff, Central Martial Law Administrator and the second most powerful man (next to Soekarno) in Indonesia, was voluble on every other aspect of Bandung, 1959. He said the Army "conceived" the move last Fall (he didn't mention his old rival and classmate, Maj. Gen. Simatupong). He said that the military is just as much behind the "Guided Democracy" objective. I couldn't help wondering out loud in front of the General whether the military role in Indonesia, particularly the promised bloc of votes under "functional" representation, was to be the same temporary trusteeship that Gen. Ne Win's group has promised in Burma. The handsome soldier who is still 40 and looks even younger (WWU-20), immediately became the General: "The Army has its share because we are not only an apparatus of the Government. We are also a part of the Revolution. When the country was in its greatest danger against the Dutch, it was the Army who saved the country. Our Army is not a technical apparatus. We are growing and the Revolution is our ideology. I can keep the Army together only with the 1945 Constitution as a base of discipline. I will restore the 1945 Constitution. By returning to 1945, only one man will be commanding, that is the President. Then we can concentrate on policy." What about the Rebels and the reports in the Indonesian papers that they are putting out peace feelers? "In their hearts they are supporting us."

I gathered that the General thought that the Return to 1945 would wipe out the Rebels' cause for complaint. Was he then willing to grant a general amnesty, as urged by some, including Dr. Hatta? "Politically, there can be no amnesty. But individually, I am doing more than amnesty. I have put back old soldiers who return. I give them some punishment and then,

if they were sergeants in my Army, I make them sergeants again. From the former Rebels in Sumatra and Sulawesi, more than 50 per cent are on our side again." (Since the Army is the only one whose press releases appear locally regarding Rebel activity, it is impossible to dispute the figure.) And Nasution was equally optimistic about getting the Constituent Assembly to cooperate with the Government's proposal that it disband: "Only the Masjumi is against it and they probably will learn later when they are accused of blocking the Revolution." Nasution obviously made this remark to me before the vote, in which the Masjumi were joined by the NU. I don't know what he is thinking today.

Prime Minister Djuanda Kartawidjaja was not quite so optimistic about the Return to 1945, in itself, bringing about a rapprochement with the Rebels: "Maybe in six months to a year and a half. First they want to see if we mean it about going back to the spirit of 1945. But I know they're getting weaker. They've cut the salaries of their foreign representatives to one-half and now one-third and one-fourth. I'm surprised they have been able to carry on this long. They've made definite peace feelers, but they want to sit at the table as coequals and with a foreign representative." Djuanda never did explain the "foreign" element in this.

I've been blithely discussing which way the Constituent Assembly was turning without mentioning my interview, the day before Soekarno's Bandung speech, with Constituent Assembly Chairman Wilopo. Wilopo, a gray-haired, soft-spoken man, was Prime Minister between 1951 and 1953. As Assembly Chairman, he no doubt had a few things to do on the eve of the President's address. Nevertheless, he made time available the moment I asked his secretary to bring him my identification card. Now I'll confess that Wilopo left me feeling happy with his acquaintance but considerably bewildered with his words. In one breath he declared it a "happy development" that the Government had asked the Constituent Assembly to disband since it had been deadlocked during 2½ years of deliberations over the old demand for giving the Indonesian Government a religious orientation under Koranic law. But in the next breath, Wilopo was telling me that the Constituent Assembly members originally voted to conclude their work by next March, just nine months away, and already had reached agreement on a number of issues, including human rights and the parliamentary parts of the Constitution. Trying to escape from the confusion of this double-talk, I resorted to native American bluntness: "Tell me, Mr. Chairman, how your group likes being asked to commit suicide?" An awkward pause. An awkward smile. And then: "Well, we have been assured that the fruits of our work will be submitted for the use of the new Government." The only hitch here, which Wilopo did not mention, is that Soekarno wants the 1945 Constitution re-invoked with no changes, no amendments.



"happy development"?

Before Bandung, I had a talk with two of Soekarno's speech writer-translators in an attempt to get a better understanding of the President's proposal. I was surprised to find one was British, the other Australian. The Briton, Tom Atkinson, a pipe-smoking ex-journalist, kept using the term "we." On questioning, he said he was now an Indonesian citizen in all but the final details and would complete these as soon as he scraped up the necessary money required by a new administrative tax. Atkinson, who is accompanying Soekarno on his present world tour, candidly said the President decided to take off immediately after delivering his Bandung proposal because "He is an extremely good public relations man. He has a message. He gives it. And then he wants

to step aside and leave it to the politicians." (Non-Government people have been as unkind as to suggest that Soekarno thought it best to be out of the country in case the Constituent Assembly did what it did -- refused to take his hint to go home -- and the Army had to step in and force the action.)

Soekarno's other speech writer-translator, Australian-born Mollie Bondan, also indicated a great sense of personal identification with the Bung. First off, she said the term "Guided Democracy" is an imperfect translation since in Indonesian the word for "Guided" carries an "impersonal" connotation. Then she conceded that it is "true" that a Return to 1945 would give Soekarno "more power than the U.S. President," allow him to select a Cabinet without opposition from political parties and altogether have "an almighty lot of power." But she hastened to add that Soekarno "has proved in the past that he is not gunning for power." Moreover, Mrs. Bondan said that if Soekarno's idea is successful "he will be limiting his own power by putting himself more at the mercy of the "People's Consultative Body." What has bothered Soekarno, according to Mrs. Bondan, is that under the present system of "liberal democracy," there has been too much "counting noses and horsetrading and no longer the honest consultations of a democracy." This, she says, is in large amount due to the great number of political parties in Indonesia (at least 45, of which 27 are represented in Parliament). What about the major role being assigned to the military, specifically the Army, in the new set-up? "There is a danger that somebody can exploit, but precisely because there is that danger we have encouraged them to enter the Government. Somebody has to push people along until they have a stronger organization. Sure there is a risk. But if we don't do anything, it is happening already."

Some American officials here are determined to find the best in Soekarno's Return to 1945 and the implimentation of "Guided Democracy." They feel it is Soekarno's way of controlling the Communists for the power of the PKI, like that of all the political parties, will be diluted with the introduction of the "functional groupings." And since the leading functional group will be the military, the Americans feel Soekarno will have a built-in counter to any Communist move. Moreover, they feel the new move promises some hope of a stable Government in Indonesia through the concentration of a few large political parties -- rather ^{than} so many parties all unable to agree -- and the representation of Indonesia's farmers, youth, veterans, intelligensia, minority, religious and regional groupings.

Not so charitably inclined toward the Government proposal is Soetan Sjahrir, Prime Minister of three Revolutionary Cabinets in the pre-Independence period of 1945-1947 and now head of Indonesia's intellectually powerful but politically powerless Socialist Party (WWU-17).

Says Sjahrir regarding the Return to 1945: "If Soekarno is criticizing the past, it means he is acknowledging that he has failed all these years because he has been the man in the responsible position. And even if all these powers go to him, we still think it is left open as to who is going to take advantage of them. In all Soekarno's doings, he is always very dependant on others and always inclined to make the decisions seem to be not his. You see, our Socialist evaluation of Mr. Soekarno differs from most of the others: We don't think he is even capable."

Here are a few more sentiments on today's Indonesia from a rather rarified vox pop:



SOEKARDJO (left), 35-year-old lawyer and Nationalist Party (PNI) member of the Djakarta municipal council: "We should never have handed the Revolution over to these older men. Soekarno is too indecisive. He makes too many compromises. This is not what we fought the Revolution for."



NOGRUHO NOTOSUSANTO (right), 27, writer and leader of the All-Indonesia Student Art Federation: "When our group opened an art exhibition at the Palace, I said art had a role in itself. President Soekarno then got up and said he wanted to correct me, 'Art should be a tool of the national development of Indonesia.'"

SOEBROTO (right), at 29, acting dean of the University of Indonesia Economics Faculty: "State planning is all in theory because Ministers go their own way. There is uncoordination going on through all directions and when



a plan is presented to Parliament only one Minister is present at a time. Our Five Year Plan is an attempt, but like a baby that dies before its birth."



DAHLAN RANUWIHARDJO (left), youthful head of the Indonesian Islam Youth Movement: "Only by going back to the Constitution is no guarantee of a better efficient Government. We can have reconstruction now and clean up the Government and the Army. There are too many corrupt Government and military officers."

SUNARIA K. SANYATAVIJAYA, Finance Minister in a pre-Independence Cabinet and now a socio-economics professor: "Soekarno abdicates responsibility by going off for two months at such a time. But we are too 'gregarious-passive' -- afraid to speak out, criticize and act."



Well, just as I said a while back, I am afraid I have an unbalanced picture of Soekarno. There are many ready to criticize. But Soekarno is not around to present the positive. And one thing particularly has me curious: Will the Nasution-Soekarno ~~Diumvirate~~, with or without the Back to 1945 and "Guided Democracy," prove any more lasting than the Hatta-Soekarno one?

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Unna", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Warren W. Unna

Received New York June 16, 1959