

RURAL ORGANIZATION  
AND  
VILLAGE REVIVAL IN INDONESIA

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## PREFACE

An outstanding characteristic of the policy of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has been the important role it has given to the village. It is the village which is being made the basic agent of change in attaining the improved social and economic order for that 75% of Indonesia's 80 million people which is still overwhelmingly agrarian-based. By combining the traditional indigenous village-level cooperative approach (gotong-rojong) with modern agricultural technology and credit and marketing organization the Indonesian Government is making its major effort to raise the level of living of the agrarian population.

Despite the importance of this development there is virtually no material describing it in English. It is because of this that the Cornell Southeast Asia Program sought permission from Dr. Ch. J. Grader to issue in translation his illuminating article on this subject which appeared in the 1951 issue of the Sticusa Jaarboek, recently published in the Netherlands. The Cornell Southeast Asia Program wishes to acknowledge its indebtedness to Dr. Grader for his kindness in permitting it to bring out this English translation.

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by  
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A New Structure.

Indonesia is seeking a new structure. These words have been spoken so often that they are in danger of losing their significance. For this reason it is well from time to time to be reminded how in all spheres of life the struggle for separate forms and for individual ways of expressing national aspirations is actually going on.

In this regard the first issue of Cultureel Nieuws (Cultural News), the official publication of the Foundation for Cultural Co-operation at Amsterdam, which appeared in October 1950 for the first time, contains interesting material. The concept of a National Indonesian Culture is there analyzed more in detail.

The issue mentioned contains full details in regard to the Cultural Congress which met at Jakarta from August 5 to 7, 1950. As a final result of the discussions that were conducted, the Congress formulated a resolution, in the first two subdivisions of which it is stated that since the culture of a people generally forms an organic whole, Indonesian society, now that Indonesia has become a free and independent country, is trying to attain a culture with a form and content which will conform to the desires of society and the requirements of modern times.

Moreover, this striving for indigenous forms of development becomes very apparent in the various measures taken for the re-organization of public instruction. What is sought is a system that more nearly meets the needs of one's own community. During the time of the Dutch rule, it is stated, education was in general not rooted in Indonesian society, for which reason the schools were never regarded by the people as a possession of their own. Only if a national culture is taken as the basis, and in addition the instruction is conducted along democratic lines, will it be possible to reach the hearts of the people. During the colonial period the process of social growth was in many respects disturbed by outside influences. Therefore, it is no wonder that Indonesia must now go through a period of rapid evolution toward a healthier and more balanced structure, in which she will be restored to her own true nature. This is the trend of thought contained in the explanation of the Law of 1950, establishing the basis of instruction, a law which was enacted at Jogjakarta by the then Republic of Indonesia.<sup>1/</sup>

The idea is widespread that the free development of society has been interfered with for decades or even centuries. The urge to be freed from the dominating influence of the Netherlands as soon as possible must be viewed in this light. It is with a background of such sentiments that currents aiming at the complete termination of the Round Table Agreements manifest themselves.

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1. See Lampiran Berita-Negara Republik Indonesia (Jogjakarta) nr 1/1950 pertaining to law No. 4/1940 establishing the bases of the system of instruction (Berita Negara nr 14/1950).

It is even noticeable how in the field of international affairs and in regard to the great world problems, the solution of which will tip the balance in favor of war or peace, public opinion leans toward an attitude of neutrality because of the instinctive feeling of overwhelming need for consolidation of the domestic order.

#### Indonesia: an Agrarian Country.

As far as the domestic order is concerned, one peculiarity immediately strikes the eye whenever one compares Indonesian society with that of a country such as the Netherlands. As is known, Indonesia is primarily an agricultural country; a larger percentage of the population than is usually the case in European countries is engaged in agriculture. Society is relatively very little differentiated. It is of course true that one can detect changes rapidly taking place, but this does not detract from the fact that the Indonesian middle class continues to be of relatively little significance, while for a nation of 70 million people, the number of intellectuals must be considered very small.

In the general picture of Indonesia the rural areas predominate; there are no really "large" cities, although the number of inhabitants in these residential centers is at times quite large. Indonesia is a country where the village assumes a prominent position.

#### The People's Economy as the Center of Interest.

It is to be expected then that this peculiar structure should have noticeably influenced the national aspirations. It is the "people", the little man, the worker and, above all the farmer who occupy the center of interest. It is felt that it is these common people, the rakjat djelata, who have been deprived of the most, for whom inadequate opportunities for education have been available, who have fallen prey to foreign big-capital interests, and who because of unfavorable agricultural conditions and the all-too-long neglect of the possibilities in the field of industrialization have had their striving to better their lot needlessly curtailed.

Justly or unjustly, the situation is regarded by the more socially conscious part of the people as described above. It is well to keep in mind the existence of this viewpoint, because only then do such concepts as the "people's will", and "democracy", expressions which in present Indonesian society are bandied about excessively, acquire added significance; for we are too prone to ascribe the use of these terms to frequently inadequate concepts and applied ideologies imported from the West.

It is sympathy for the rakjat that is most prominent; this rakjat constitutes about 90 percent of the population and it is therefore not without significance that all political parties, those based on creeds or on nationalism as well as those that are oriented in the direction of Marxism, devote a great deal of attention to promoting the welfare of the people. The fact that what is meant by this enhancement of the "people's welfare" is in general not only the national economy in its total aspect, but more particularly the mass of the population, consisting of small farmers, becomes apparent from the fact that in all the political programs the people's economy is emphasized.

#### The Economic Program of the Parties.

As an example, attention may be called to how the economic program of the powerful Moslem Party, the Masjumi, mentions in particular as an objective the promotion of rural welfare (kemakmuran rakjat désa-désa), among other things



by means of the extension of the village credit system. The Partai Sarékat Islam Indonésia devotes particular attention to the agrarian sphere in a separate "agricultural section". The program of the Catholic Party (P.K.R.I.) also contains such passages; it is noteworthy that among other things a guarantee is given of the promotion of a national economy containing assurances of increasing popular welfare.

It is not possible to take up all the other parties here one by one, and we are making a purely arbitrary choice.<sup>1/</sup>

As far as the Partai Nasional Indonésia is concerned, in a lengthy agricultural section agriculture is called the principal source of the income of the people, while the agricultural class is termed the backbone of the people. However, so the party declaration states, this class has in the course of history been very much neglected; this is blamed on the colonial rule, on feudalism, and the fact that society is still tailored to the capitalistic pattern. Although the P.N.I. is based on nationalism, as may indeed be inferred from its name, the democratic principle and above all a collectivist attitude inspired by the family relationship, together with a constructive nationalism, are regarded as the only means capable of arousing the agrarian community and by so doing raising it to a higher level. It is in connection with this that the P.N.I. shows a great interest in the co-operative system in the economic field.

However, in its preference for collectivism and the great emphasis placed on the promotion of co-operatives, the P.N.I. does not stand alone. It is of course mainly the Marxist parties that believe in similar ideas or even aim to go much further; still, for that matter, the other nationalist groupings too are not lacking in the realization that only by organizing and uniting the forces inherent in the people can their economic level be raised.

The principle is not new and was put into practice already before the outbreak of the Second World War. Without minimizing what has been done also by other movements and currents in this regard, it may be mentioned how the Parindra (Partai Indonésia Raya), which was founded on December 25, 1935 at Solo, had inscribed on its banner the improvement of the condition of the people, and in order to achieve this objective, sought strength principally in the promotion of farmers' unions (rukun tani) and in the organization of co-operative credit.

#### The Collectivist Principle.

As far as community feeling and natural aptitude for co-operation is concerned, one is accordingly on familiar ground in the Indonesian world. This may be more apparent in one district than in others; the hurried tempo of modern life has also often not benefited community life, although mutual and reciprocal aid (gotong-rojong) has been rather well known up to the present time, in addition to the neighborhood associations (rukun tetangga) and the kampong associations (rukun kampung), in which this social aid is ministered.

From the Western individualistic standpoint this collectivist attitude is often regarded as a hindrance to progress. This standpoint is now gradually being abandoned. What has already been said in regard to the objectives in the economic field that are to be found in the various political programs is characteristic. Furthermore, it is typical that in regard to the basis for the

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1. See: Kepartaian di Indonésia, a publication issued by the Ministry of Education, May 1950, p.17 (Masjumi); p.45 (P.S.IrI.); pp.90-91 (P.N.I.); p.120 (Parindra).

creation of a national economy it is specified in the Constitution that the welfare endeavor is to be developed on a collectivist basis supported by the family ties. 1/

Here too the striving for a new structure, or rather the revival of old and trusted forms, though in modern guise, is apparent.

It is thought desirable to seek affiliation with the viewpoint--which still finds expression in popular customs--that the community and not the individual should be emphasized. Although it may be true that these ideas originating in olden times are derived from religious concepts and are based on a particular philosophy of life, at present the preference for the principle of collectivism is based on more consciously rational considerations. Lack of knowledge, capital, and organization is recognized as being the principal obstacle to rapid progress in the struggle for rural welfare, and it is thought that by united organization and through joint endeavors the rural population will be in a better position to cope with these difficulties.

#### Initiatives Originating in Society.

Now that five years have elapsed since the surrender of Japan, it becomes more and more apparent that the principle enunciated in the Constitution regarding the collectivist nature of the welfare efforts does in reality constitute a living idea in popular thinking. The number of associations and corporations in which social and economic life is organized has increased very much, especially in recent years. People's co-operatives of various kinds and for various purposes are springing up like mushrooms. Still more important are all manner of phenomena that point to a revival of what was already known in the social order in earlier times. In this regard particular attention is directed to the manner in which the community feeling within the village group has been given renewed impetus and the way in which social aid in the more modern sense is being administered.

The temptation is great to give a description now of the most striking forms of social revival in the various districts of the Archipelago and to make comments on the remarkable fact that not only the Government but also private individuals want to furnish guidance and encouragement to this process of growth.

It will suffice to report how in numerous places in widely separated localities local "welfare committees" are being established, the purpose of which is the promotion of welfare efforts and social development. These committees are known by various names, such as for example, Panitia Pembangunan Masyarakat. At times they may be regarded as the result of the activity of a particular political party, but then also often not. They form a means for the local progressive elements to express their need for activity.

Necessity compels us to be brief and we shall for this reason hereafter limit ourselves to village revival in the narrower sense and to the agricultural

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1. Undang-Undang Dasar Sementara Republik Indonesia, Article 38, par. 1. This Article was taken over literally from Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia at Jogjakarta. The provisions contained therein are considered to be an essential part of the original Constitution, which was drawn up after the declaration of independence on August 17, 1945. See Professor Dr. R. Soepomo: U.U.D. Sementara R.I. (Noordhoff-Kolff, Jakarta, 1950).

organizations connected therewith, which are called rukun tani in Indonesian. In addition, something will be said concerning the way in which the Government goes about furnishing guidance.

The Government Declaration of the Natsir Cabinet.

For this the Government declaration made before the Representatives of the people in September 1950 by Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir, whose Cabinet came into power at the creation of the Unitary State, may be taken as a starting point.

The detailed economic section of this declaration begins by emphasizing the necessity for finally arriving at a more evenly balanced economic structure of indigenous national character. Too often, it is stated, the influence of the colonial administration had the effect that in the economic system of the country the principal emphasis was placed on the production of agricultural export crops. As a result of historical development most of the Indonesian people belong to the group of small producers, whose economic security is severely limited. The essential part of the economic program will then also have to be "the development and strengthening of the economic power of resistance of the people as the basis for the formation of a sound national economy". As long as this basis has not been achieved, the making of more extensive welfare plans and the carrying out of economic measures will remain part of a world of wishful thinking.

The only possibility of obtaining results is thought to be intensification of the economic organization of the people by spreading the idea of co-operation by means of education, training, and the granting of credit. In this connection attention is called to the fact that social progress in general and economic progress in particular are in the first instance dependent on the activity of the members of the community itself. The stimulation of initiative is therefore a prime requirement. 1/

So much for the Natsir Government Declaration.

The great force of the ideas set forth in this declaration is that they are as it were the formulation of the ideas in regard to economic strengthening which are inchoate in the minds of the people.

The Economic Principle of the Constitution.

The strengthening of the national economy by social organization has<sup>as</sup> its direct background the collectivist principle embodied in Article 38 of the Constitution and paraphrased and elaborated in the programs of the various political parties. In point of fact, Indonesia, especially as far as the rural areas are concerned, is in an era of social regeneration, of modernization of the forms of social organization present in the indigenous structure, and of conversion of the ancient village system into social communities fully capable of undertaking the management of their own affairs.

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1. See: Ichtisar Parlemen, Friday, September 29, 1950, No. 116, pp. 426-430 (Publication of the Ministry of Education at Jakarta); also, Economisch Weekblad voor Indonesië / Economic Weekly for Indonesia, of September 30, 1950, pp. 767-769: "De Economische Paragraaf uit de Regeringsverklaring van 21 September 1950" / "The Economic Section in the Government Declaration of September 21, 1950"; Supplement to the Economic Review of Indonesia, Vol IV, No. 3, July-August-September 1950.



### From a Technico-economic to a Socio-economic Attitude.

The new viewpoint is regarded by public opinion as being in principle different from the attitude of mind dating from the period before Second World War. During the colonial rule, it is maintained, the various measures that were to promote welfare were technically oriented in an altogether too one-sided degree. The result of this was that numerous attempts, however well intentioned, were frustrated by the fact that the people were inadequately prepared to adapt themselves to a higher level of prosperity. At the present time attention is primarily directed toward man and society. The soil for continuing the development of new ideas must be prepared, and in this regard social adjustment may be considered as one of the most effective means. By himself an individual can do but little, but this changes when he enters into co-operation. For the general dissemination of knowledge and understanding in rural districts, or for the proper functioning of village credit, it is also necessary first to have a proper regulation of the system of associations.

The plotting of the new course is characterized as follows by the Dewan Ekonomi Indonesia Pusat at Jakarta, a semi-official advisory agency and study center, in which a large number of leading personalities in Indonesian economic life are associated: "With regard to the economic system to be introduced, the fundamental ideas which are now in vogue are no longer representative of a technico-economic standpoint, but rather fundamentally a socio-economic viewpoint."<sup>1</sup>/

### Social Reconstruction as a Basis for the Welfare Efforts.

It is desired--in accordance with the social structure of this country--to promote the growth of the economic system from the bottom to the top. The mass of the small producers cannot be sufficiently drawn into the struggle for progress and modernization if they do not develop more fully, if relief from the acute shortage of capital is not given by means of well-managed credit extension, and if initiative and organizing ability are not further developed.

It is apparent, therefore, that what is proposed: making the rural communities active and dynamic, forms a task of extraordinary magnitude and enormous scope. The problem is many-sided and must be tackled from many angles simultaneously. For this reason it is not possible to entrust the execution of all the necessary regulations to a single agency; rather it is the entire governmental apparatus that must be brought into play. Consider only, to take a single example, problems of public safety, the nutrition and hygiene of the people, and education and instruction. Nevertheless, in the promotion of national welfare some ministries and services are brought into play more than others.

### The Autonomous Village Community.

The organization of the modernized autonomous village community plays a prominent part within the scope of the various plans of development. This is in itself a many-sided work, if only for the reason that, as far as the village system is concerned, there are in the various regions of the Archipelago characteristic varieties of a general basic theme. In law No. 22/1948 originated

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1. See Dewan Ekonomi of September 25, 1950, No. 8, p. 1 (periodical issued by the Dewan Ekonomi Indonesia Pusat at Jakarta; the above-mentioned issue contains an explanation on pages 4-5 of what this organization has in mind).



by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia at Jogjakarta the division of the territory of the State into autonomous regions was regulated anew. <sup>1/</sup> In the future there were to be three groups of autonomous districts (daerah's): provinces, kabupatèn's, and désa's. In Java the kabupatèn's, as far as extent of territory is concerned, coincided with the former regencies, but comparable districts outside Java are also called kabupatèn. Village communities are included under the term désa, as they appear in various forms scattered over the Archipelago. The new regulation indicates a strong urge toward unification, greater perhaps than appears to be warranted by actual conditions. The main criticism heard in recent years is to the effect that this or that has been patterned too rigidly after the Java model.

The great significance of the new regulation is that the administrative system is changing diametrically. While formerly the Civil Service played a large role, now the corps of administrative officials, down to the head of a sub-district, is doomed to disappear at a rapid rate. Instead the executive power is placed in the hands of the elected administrative agencies of different autonomous districts.

One can understand what an exceedingly extensive evolution all this signifies, especially for the village communities. There were already autonomous provinces and regencies before the war; however, there was still very little talk about the development of village autonomy in the modern sense.

The difficulties are by no means minimized, but one is confronted with the necessity of carrying out the reform, if there is ever to be a rural community capable of taking an active part in carrying out a welfare policy in the sense contemplated in the Natsir Government Declaration.<sup>r</sup>

The criticism which, according to present opinion, may be made of the former regime is that it had relegated the village mainly to an administrative unit without any real life of its own. Whatever the reasons for this may have been, they must now be passed over without comment. It suffices to remark that at the present time efforts are being made on various sides to bring about a change for the better.

A prominent feature of this effort is that a newly created division of the Ministry of the Interior has been entrusted with the task of what is called "development of the village community", or in Indonesian, pembangunan désa. In the provincial and kabupatèn office similar divisions have also been established. They are not only supposed to see that the village community is better equipped as an administrative unit, but attention is to be given especially to making the institution of the village more efficient in administering its own affairs, in connection with which the social and economic aspects of the question are not to be forgotten.

#### The Organization of the Agrarian Community.

While the problem of village reform as a whole is entrusted more particularly to the Ministry of the Interior, various other ministries play an auxiliary role, which certainly should not be considered less important.

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1. Undang-Undang Pokok tentang Pemerintahan Daerah nr 22 tahun 1948. Published with commentary by the executive committee of the Parindra (Jogjakarta, March 1950).

The Ministry of Agriculture has at least two divisions engaged in organizing rural areas, which as such also have to do with village revival. They are the Gerakan Tani division, which deals with the trade-union movement in agriculture and in addition the Balai Perantjang Tata Bumi, the Office of Land Management or the Agricultural Planning Section.

The task of the first-named division, the Gerakan Tani, is the development of an agrarian society in line with modern standards. It seeks to attain its objectives mainly by promoting the establishment of efficient farm organizations, while it furnishes guidance and advice also to the labor movement in agriculture.<sup>1/</sup>

Among the farmers' organizations mentioned above are also the associations designated by the term rukun tani. These rukun tani are not seldom differently organized in various localities, but they may all be described as tailored to the co-operative pattern.

This, however, must not be interpreted to mean that they may be regarded as co-operative associations in the Western sense. For in many cases the principle of social aid or gotong-rojong, concerning which something has been said earlier, plays a big part. The purpose for which a rukun tani is established as a rule embraces a good deal. The foremost objective sought is: the collective sale of products and the joint purchasing of all sorts of things necessary for farming. Furthermore, it may happen that the granting of mutual credit plays a part or even constitutes the main purpose. Besides, it is often customary for the people to help one another whenever the occasion demands it: for example, during the harvest, and above all in times of disaster such as a rat plague or a flood. At times they go still further and the rukun tani become active even in social and cultural fields. To mention only one thing, there have been instances when a rukun tani as such organized a course for its members to combat illiteracy! Elsewhere again the campaign against unemployment is conducted in one's own circle.

In practice the activities of the Gerakan Tani division will frequently be carried on in a sphere which actually comes under the Co-operation Service of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. For that matter, this will also before long be the case with the Native Agriculture and Small Industry divisions, which are both very much interested in the development of the co-operative system.

Good co-operation between the various services engaged in promoting rural welfare is also necessary. In order to bring this about a co-ordinating body, the Panitya Perkembangan Usaha-Usaha Tani (Commission for Rural Development), which at the same time has its own special fund at its disposal for granting credit, was established in the beginning of December 1950.

The Gerakan Tani division and most of the other above mentioned services approach the problem of the organization of rural administration mainly from the point of view of agriculture, while the efforts of the Ministry of the Interior take the village community as the point of departure. However, the points of contact between the two spheres of interest are many.

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1. See the joint instruction of December 7, 1950, No. 8461/S.D. issued by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, and of Agriculture, bringing about co-ordination between the various divisions of these ministries, which are devoting themselves to the problem of rural improvement.

### Village Organization and the System of Associations.

This is also not to be wondered at, for in many villages the percentage of the inhabitants who are not in one way or another connected with agriculture is negligible. When one or more rukun tani are established here, everybody or practically everybody is a member, and because it is the same persons who are involved, the difference between a farmers' association and the village or district association, that is, between rukun tani and rukun kampung, is vague. In areas where there is a strongly developed village organization as in Bali it is a common occurrence that the kampung association (called bandjar there) at the same time functions as rukun tani. Furthermore, it is not only the small differentiation existing within the village as regards economics and occupations which facilitates the merging of the two kinds of organizations, but in addition, in the smaller village communities, the principle of solidarity is still well developed, as a result of which the entire village community is readily involved in every social phenomenon.

If the rukun tani limits its membership to residents of the same district or village, this frequently constitutes a guarantee of stability. Still many occasions for conflict may occur. This is all the more true if the rukun tani assumes the character of a co-operative association established along modern lines. For a co-operative is after all not to be compared in scope and purpose to a village association. The co-operative is by nature based on private law and designed to promote the interest of its own members; the village, on the other hand, is an institution based on public law which is administered by the village government, wherein tradition and principles of authority play a part. However, as has already been stated, in the rural communities people are less inclined to make sharp distinctions than in an environment that is oriented more in the direction of Western rationalism.

Ordinarily conditions will arise in which the rukun tani will continue to exist under the auspices of the village organization and develop further. The village government furnishes guidance and grants support and facilities; frequently they exist together in a certain degree of symbiosis.

The endeavor is to make the new autonomous village community slowly but surely capable of giving conscious direction to the social order within the society which it comprises. The last word has not yet been said regarding how far the efforts of the village are to go in all this. The many differences in local circumstances alone, not to mention other factors, are too great for a general statement to suffice.

There are currents of opinion in favor of keeping the village organizations and co-operative societies completely separate from each other. Others again are thinking of a condition in which there is only one all-inclusive co-operative in every desa (village). They deem this to be more in conformity with the needs of an Indonesian village community, which is like a "social organism" in which the idea of solidarity, expressing itself in the well known gotong-rojong or system of social aid, predominates.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Ir Kaslan A. Tohir: Peladjaran Koperasi (pp. 119-120); Balai Pustaka, Jakarta, 1950.



However that may be, the quest is to find a form for the various organizations used in developing the economy of the people which will be as much as possible in conformity with the structure of the agrarian village community. As the Dewan Ekonomi Indonesia Pusat expresses it, there is need of a form which while maintaining the gotong-rojong principle is still able to operate in a flexible manner without being hampered from above by bureaucracy and also without necessity of obtaining for all measures the approval of the illiterate mass of people, which is difficult to get.<sup>1/</sup>

#### The Rural Development Center.

The problem of rendering the rural areas socially and economically self-sustaining is a complicated one, which, as has been stated, is being tackled from many angles. At the same time the problem is enormous in scope because of the vast extent of the territory.

Of the means used to attain the desired goal, only the interesting project of a rural development center can be mentioned here. It was put forward for the first time in the welfare plan of November 1947 of the Ministry of Agriculture at Jogja, with which project the name of the then Vice Minister I.J. Kasimo is associated.<sup>2/</sup> This plan envisages the establishment of a large number of propaganda centers scattered all over the country, to be designated by the name Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Desa.

In these centers, which are to be modest in size, all the services which have anything to do with the rural community find a point of departure for reaching the people with their information. Now whether it is a question of combatting illiteracy or of hygienic measures, cattle raising or agricultural information, popular credit or irrigation, the meeting facilities of the propaganda center are equally available, while its personnel offers its services for convening the right groups of people and also stands ready to perform other services.

The center furnishes opportunity for giving demonstrations and staging expositions. Seed for sowing, artificial fertilizer, agricultural implements, and other materials may be stored there before being distributed or sold.

With the establishment of these centers it is hoped that by the spreading of information better ideas will find acceptance and a new state of mind within the village community will thereby be promoted.

The Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Desa teaches the value of experiment, seeks to put society in a position to attain higher efficiency and should foster social consciousness.

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1. Cf. Dewan Ekonomi, September 25, 1950, p. 1.

2. Rentjana Produksi Kementerian Kemakmuran-Penerbit Kementerian Kemakmuran dan Kementerian Penerangan (Jogjakarta, November 1947). See further the reports regarding the Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat of Ir M. Subiarto and R.M. Kamsah in Informatie en Documentatie, III, Nos. 6 and 7 (Publication of the Department of Agriculture, 1949). See at the same time the Government Reply in the first term to the questions of I. Gusti Gde Raka (Ichtsar Parlemen No. 127, pp. 489-490).



It is further expected that above all the development center will be able to create exactly the right environment for the establishment of a well-organized system of associations in the social and economic fields.

#### Cadre Formation.

The great difficulty at the present time is the problem of personnel. Where is capable and adequately trained help to be obtained to staff the large number of development centers?

Although the special purpose of these centers is to appeal to what already exists from olden times in the village community in the way of solidarity and the system of gotong-rojong based on it, still the guidance of a social reconstruction based on this foundation cannot be entrusted to just any person. It is certainly not intended to put persons with a higher education in these positions; for the most part it will depend on qualities of leadership. In conjunction with all this there must be a certain amount of previous training.

The lack of personnel is the reason for provisionally limiting the number of Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Désa. The intention is, until more experience is obtained, not to go further than upwards of a hundred centers for both Java and Sumatra.

#### Co-ordination and Agricultural Planning.

There is another great difficulty in the administrative and organizational field. For the time being the development centers are administered by the Ministry of Agriculture. Will it be possible to leave it this way if other services utilize the Balai Pendidikan to an increasing extent? For example, what sort of connection is there going to be with the Ministry of Interior, which is likewise actively engaged in regenerating the village community?

The solution may perhaps be sought in the direction of the organization of rural planning, as advocated by the Balai Perantjang Tata Bumi, the division for Agricultural Planning.

This division advocates the establishment of district planning commissions, that is, agencies having as their task the coordination of all measures in the field of welfare promotion for any particular district. In areas where such district planning commissions are established this will be important for successful co-operation between the various government services with the system of the Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Désa.

By means of these district planning commissions a better opportunity will be afforded than hitherto for the various tendencies and forces arising within society to make themselves heard. For members of the local representative council (for example, those of a kabupaten) will also be admitted together with government officials and technicians, while at the same time the farmers' trade-union movement, agricultural enterprises, and other important groups may be represented on the commission.

#### The Spirit of the New Era.

It has already been mentioned how the spirit of modern times also manifests itself in rural areas in more or less fruitful initiatives, resulting in the establishment of local welfare committees, the leadership of which for the most

part is in the hands of the younger intelligentsia. In order to attain their objective these committees often apply a combination of the most diverse means.

They are mostly interested in fighting illiteracy and in opening small reading rooms in the villages, in a more conscious inclusion of women in modern life, in sports and youth organizations, in centralized buying and selling, in co-operative credit and co-operative enterprises, in better regulation of the kampung organizations, in the collecting of money for new schoolhouses, and in the granting of scholarships. Occasionally a committee of this kind also establishes valuable connections with government services or commercial interests.

Although much of this activity subsides after flourishing for a short time, this phenomenon as a whole does, however, constitute an important symptom of a new life and of the existence of a dynamic state of mind which can be attributed to the achievement of national independence.

The system of development centers and district planning commissions may also have a stimulating effect as far as these initiatives originating in society are concerned.

### Summary and Conclusion.

We have come almost to the end of this survey. The starting point was the new complex pattern everywhere arising in the field of social life. It was impossible to consider more than a few motives in detail, namely those pertaining to rural administration, and no more than a few phases of these could be followed. The entire situation is still obscure, but it is apparent that the picture will rapidly become more clear.

It is an absolutely undeniable historical fact that the period of foreign rule led to a lack of proportion in the social evolution. Although the National Revolution has only gone through its first lustrum, there are nevertheless unmistakable signs at present that point to a readjustment and a development of much that is rooted in the ancient soil. A strongly developed sense of social solidarity is part of a background of ancient ideas and is expressed in the gotong-rojong system in characteristic Indonesian form. The collectivist principle in its modern aspect also plays a large role in the new Indonesia, as is shown by the fact that this fundamental principle finds expression even in the wording of the Constitution.

The interest in co-operative systems is accordingly very deeply ingrained in Indonesian thinking. In the economic programs of the various political parties --and certainly not least of all in the government declaration of the Natsir Cabinet--a good deal of attention is given to the co-operative system as a means of strengthening the national economy.

The great majority of these people belong to the group of small landowners whose economic strength may be said to be exceedingly small. In organizing these masses within a variety of co-operative associations, it is believed that the means has been found of strengthening considerably the position of the agricultural community in the economic sense. What the individual farmer lacks in knowledge, capital, and organizing ability is to be compensated for by the joint efforts of the entire co-operative set-up.

What form these co-operatives are to assume, however, is at this stage still a disputed point. A pattern is sought which can combine Western efficiency with retention of the spirit of gotong-rojong. Here too a striving for an individual Indonesian style may be noted.

There is also no agreement yet in regard to whether the various kinds of co-operatives are going to co-exist and be independent of each other, or whether it would be preferable to devise a structure in which the village organization functions as a roof organization.

In view of the fact that the question of rural improvement can be approached with hope of success only when all aspects of the problem are simultaneously taken into account, its solution is complex and the number of governmental agencies involved is large.

In the field of co-ordination of the activities of these services there are also pitfalls and snares.

In this connection two important projects attract attention. They are the effort to create the framework for a more far-reaching rural betterment by raising village autonomy to a higher level, while a system of local development centers, which for the most part finds its points of application in agriculture, is also brought to the fore.

The difficulties in carrying out plans are increased by the numerous local differences in circumstances and the vast extent of the Indonesian rural areas. It will be possible to contribute to the development of more flexible relations by an integral extension of the district planning system, since by the creation of local planning commissions the problems are localized and thus made more easy to grasp.

The most important factors in the tremendous problems of rural betterment are, however, the people and the state of mind that prevails in the community. In this field hopeful notes can now be heard which make it worth while to make every effort at this particular time to bring about social reconstruction.

If there was one thing that was brought out by the events of the war years and the period immediately following, it was undoubtedly the fact that the state of mind of the people cannot be regarded as a constant factor. The traditional labeling previously in vogue in connection with everything Oriental, is now no longer popular. A new spirit has come over all strata of the people. The political successes achieved, the attainment of national independence, and the appointment of a large number of Indonesians to jobs in offices which were formerly for the most part staffed by Netherlands have served as activating stimuli in bringing about an increase in self-confidence, self-respect, and display of initiative. International recognition and the creation of a unified state have widened the horizon of intellectual interest incomparably.

Indonesia looks about her and observes more and more how much she has in common--as far as the fundamental problems in her economic and social situation are concerned--with her neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, the Far East, and a number of Pacific areas.

Interest is directed principally toward India, the country from which in olden times profound cultural influences were exerted over a large part of the Archipelago. In India experience has been accumulated for a longer period of time and over a larger area in regard to rural co-operation and the promotion of rural welfare. The Anglo-Saxon terminology containing such expressions as "social uplift", "rural reconstruction", "social and community development" are to a considerable extent derived from Indian practice.



With respect to the deeper motives that predominate in agrarian welfare efforts India is however not the only country where it is possible to obtain material for comparison with Indonesia. In this respect important data are furnished regularly by a number of international organizations whose task it is, either directly or indirectly, to study welfare efforts in tropical regions. First place must here be given to the FAO and the UNESCO<sup>1/</sup> and in addition the South Pacific Commission, for what more particularly pertains to the island world of the Pacific Ocean.

It is apparent, as far as the great questions and also the means recommended for their solution are concerned, that Indonesia is no exception, so that an international exchange of ideas on a large scale may lead to beneficial results.<sup>2/</sup> Thus, to give an illustration, the Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Desa is related to and presumably inspired by the "cultural and educational center" which is being promoted in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands as well as in various regions in Africa and Latin America.

Although in different territorial and local circumstances the emphasis is differently placed, great value is ascribed in practically all tropical regions to what we have called above "rural organization", as a basis for a real and lasting improvement in the welfare of the people.

The international assistance rendered in technical, economic and financial fields soared to tremendous heights in the postwar years. Various Southeast Asiatic countries, among them Indonesia, are also included in this. As an example in this field the activities of the ECA (Economic Co-operation Administration) may be mentioned.

To an increasing extent, particularly in regard to the new states of Southeast Asia, the statements made by the various experts who have been enlisted in the organization for this international aid are based on the conviction that any plan of development must be drawn up with a clear understanding of the revolutionary changes which have taken place in the political, social, and economic fields. Only thereby can the basis for international co-operation be found.

Furthermore, the idea is gaining ground more and more that the rapidly evolving social and economic relations are factors of fundamental significance in determining the form of welfare management to be used, and that for this reason international co-operation cannot be limited to technical aid.

The receptiveness of large elements of the population to modern ideas and technical progress--in particular where an agricultural community is concerned--must be increased beforehand.

This requires a simultaneous attack on the problem from very different sides, devoting attention to instruction and popular development in a general sense as well as the organization of the community. As one of the practical consequences

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1. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations); UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). See, for example, as far as the objectives of the FAO are concerned: The Story of FAO (Washington, 1949).
  2. See among others the following publications: FAO: Essentials of Rural Welfare (1949); Training Rural Leaders (1949); UNESCO: Fundamental Education (1950); Co-operatives and Fundamental Education (1950).



may be mentioned the necessity of proceeding on a large scale with the formation of social cadres and the training of rural leaders.

The expectations aroused by the attainment of national independence are pitched high and clamor for quick results. As has been frequently stated, the people demand measures that are effective, efficient, and clear. Social problems are usually too complex however to make possible any spectacular experiments, while insight into the constantly changing conditions can be gained only by strenuous efforts. But there is no means pointing the way toward promotion of the welfare of agricultural communities other than an understanding of the realities of life.

Bogor, January 1951.