AN INDONESIAN SHORT STORY

CONTRACT COOLIES

by Mochtar Lubis

translated by A. H. Johns

[*This short story by Mochtar Lubis was first published in the Djakarta weekly* Siasat Baru *on November 25, 1959. Artistically, it is lightweight, but it illustrates the allegorical style Lubis developed during his period of house arrest and imprisonment. His narrative is set in the thirties, but his target is the early period of Guided Democracy when the story was written.* —A. H. Johns]

THE lights in the verandah and the front room were out. Father was writing in his study and we, the children, were in our parents' bedroom, listening to a story from Mother before we were sent off to sleep. She was telling us a ghost story about a vampire which devoured people and could change itself from human form into a tiger and back again at will. To recognise such a vampire one had to look at its upper lip, which had no philtrum beneath the nose, and at its heels, which were foremost when it walked. Mother's story was fascinating and fearsome, and we children sat around her, huddled in our blankets, terrified but enjoying it tremendously.

While we were listening there was suddenly an uproar from without and the watchman began shouting for Father. We were all startled. Mother interrupted her story. Father, hearing the disturbance, came out of his study and went straight out on to the verandah. "Heavens! Perhaps something's happened in the village," exclaimed Mother, and we followed her to the verandah.

At that time Father was a *Demang** at Korinchi. During the twenties and thirties the region was just as it had been in the Middle Ages, because questions such as the distribution of water for rice irrigation, depredations of buffaloes and the like often led one village to declare war on another. The most popular weapon in these petty wars was a stone the size of a hen's egg, hurled in the direction of the enemy with a sling just for this purpose. Only the week before, Father had gone to Sungai Deras to halt such a war, and had been hit by a stray "bullet" which knocked the helmet from his head. Fortunately he wasn't badly hurt, and the incident left him with only a slight bruise.

The violence did not stop until the police fired several salvoes into the air, and the headmen of the two villages concerned had been brought together. When they heard that Father had almost been injured by a stray stone from their warfare, the pair of them promptly apologised and begged his pardon, saying they had had no intention of hurting him. Eventually, because of their regret for the mis-aimed stone it was fairly easy for them to accept Father's peace proposals, and to divide the water for the irrigation of their rice fields amicably. When the watchman came shouting for Father it was almost nine o'clock at night. Several police constables and a sergeant were standing below, but at first I could not hear what they were saying to Father.

Father quickly ordered us back into the house again; a moment later, he came in himself and quickly got dressed. He put on his jack-boots, slipped his pistol into its holster, donned his helmet and then swiftly went out. Not long afterwards, Mother came in and said "Now children, all go to sleep. Father has to go. Some contract coolies have run away." She seemed concerned.

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* District chief.

The following morning we heard from Abdullah, the watchman, that five coolies had run away from the Kaju Aro estate after stabbing a Dutch overseer.

When we came home from school at twelve o'clock, Father still hadn't returned. As evening approached, and Father still hadn't come home, Mother became worried — every now and then going to the front to look to the road. Several times I heard her talking to Abdullah, and Abdullah telling her not to worry.

FATHER arrived home after dark and we were all sent to bed. I heard him talking with Mother far into the night, and then the house was silent.

The following morning we heard that all the contract coolies had been captured and had been taken to prison. The prison was situated at the foot of a little hill at the back of our house. From the fruit and vegetable garden behind our house, if we climbed an orange tree, we could see the prison yard where defaulters were lined up daily for punishment.

From the garden could be heard the voice of a lunatic locked up in the prison, shouting and singing or cursing. Why at that time a madman should be put in a prison and not in a mental home was a question that never occurred to me. Sometimes I was fascinated by his plaintive singing which at times became loud and violent and then broke off into filthy oaths. It was a delight while small to be able to listen to such forbidden words.

Then Mother told us that Father and the police had succeeded in recapturing the three coolies who had attacked the Dutch overseer. There were only three of them — not five as had originally been thought. They were captured in the forest, not far from the estate, hungry, cold and frightened. They offered no resistance, and when they saw Father they gave themselves up at once saying "We put ourselves in your hands and ask for justice." According to Mother, who heard it from Father, the Dutch overseer had been stabbed because he was always importuning their wives; apparently the coolies had become so desperate they could no longer control themselves, and had decided to attack him together. "You can't blame them," said Mother, obviously very bitter to see them recaptured. "It's the wicked supervisor who should be arrested," she added.

"Then why isn't he arrested?" we children asked.

Mother looked at us and said in a gentle voice: "Because it is the Dutch who rule us. And the Dutch can do no wrong." "But he is the wicked one," we insisted.

"I don't understand it myself," Mother replied, "but don't you go asking Father about it. He's been in a bad temper ever since he came back from the estate."

When Father came back from the office and had eaten, we were all called to his study. His expression was gloomy and obviously something heavy was weighing on his mind.

After we were assembled, he said: "No-one is to go there. I forbid any of you children to go to the garden behind the house. I will be very angry with anyone who disobeys me." "Why Father?" we asked. "Just do as I say," Father said briefly.

We understood. When Father was in that mood there was no point in arguing, but our hearts were full of all kinds of questions. Why were we forbidden? What was it? We immediately rushed towards Mother who eventually, in order to keep us quiet, told us that on the following day the three contract coolies were to be punished. Before the case was brought before a magistrate they were to be flogged because they had attacked a Dutch overseer. I felt alarmed at Mother's story. My body went cold and I shivered. And after I went to bed it was a long time before I could sleep. I could not stop thinking of the contract coolies who were to be whipped at the prison the following morning. Fear alternated with a curiosity to see how one man flogged another.

EARLY the next day my older brothers who had to go to school set out, and we youngsters were again warned not to go to the back garden.

From the watchman I learnt they were to be whipped at nine o'clock in the morning. As nine o'clock approached I felt increasingly anxious and restless. My longing to see the flogging grew, and when it was almost five minutes to nine I could no longer restrain myself. I called out to Mother that I was going to play at the house across the road, and then dashed across the front yard to the main road, followed round behind the house, and went into the hospital compound. I carried on to the rear of the hospital which bordered on our back garden, climbed the barbed wire fence, leapt down the other side, and then panting, climbed the orange tree, scrambling to the highest branch on which I could sit, and then looked right down into the prison yard.

The yard was covered with gravel. Three wooden benches had been set in a central position. A detachment of police armed with rifles stood to the left in a row. Then I saw Father come out from the corridor heading for the yard and beside him was the Dutch inspector, the assistant police inspector and the hospital doctor. And then from another corridor came the three men who were to be flogged. They wore only shorts and their hands were bound behind their backs. They were followed by the prison governor and two policemen.

My heart pounded and fear caught at my stomach. But I didn't want to leave my hiding-place. I wanted to see what was going to happen. When the coolies were stood in a row beside the benches they were ordered to squat down; the prison governor read something from a piece of paper and I saw the inspector nodding. Father stood stiffly, motionless. Then the hands of the three coolies were untied and they were laid face downwards on the benches and their hands and their feet were bound to the centre-piece. Three prison officers then came forward and stood about six feet from each bench; each held a long black whip. Then the prison governor barked "One!" His voice was loud and harsh. The three warders swung their arms back — the long whips cracked in the air like black snakes about to strike, and this was followed by the sound of the whips biting into human flesh, quickly followed by the screams of the coolies who jerked their heads back, and from their gaping mouths came screams such as I had never heard before, screams which split the air and filled me with horror. My body went limp and a great fear and darkness came upon me; I held as tightly as I could to the orange tree, terrified. "Two!" barked the prison governor — the whips again hissed through the air and bit a second time into the coolies' backs. At the second stroke the three of them again screamed with pain. I did not dare to look again. I closed my eyes tightly but I could not shut my ears to the hissing of the whips through the air — the sound of whips with their myriad sharp teeth clawing into flesh and agonising screams splitting the air, begging for mercy. Heaven knows how long I was alive and dead together with the three of them on the benches.

When I opened my eyes again, I saw the doctor examining the three coolies; he nodded to the inspector — the inspector nodded to the governor and the governor barked "Twenty-one!"

Once again the whips hissed through the air, their coils biting into backs which had dissolved into a red mess. Only now the men screamed no longer. They had fainted.

After the twenty-fifth stroke the inspector gave a signal. The governor stepped forward, gave an order, and the three warders who had carried out the flogging stepped back, wound up their whips, red with blood and fragments of human flesh, and went back into the prison. The doctor examined the coolies again and then they were untied. I saw the inspector look at Father and say something. At that moment I was so affected by what I had seen I must have made a mistake.

As I moved to climb down the tree I misplaced my foot and slipped. I fell, screamed and struck the ground. For a few moments I lay there crying with pain. Abdullah, who was in the kitchen, ran out. He saw me lying there and carried me back into the house. My elbow was very painful. Mother examined it and said: "You've twisted your elbow." And added: "Your Father is going to be very angry because you disobeyed him. What were you doing in the garden?" I only cried.

I was quickly taken to the hospital and after a nurse had given my arm a jerk, which only made the elbow more painful, and had bandaged my hand, I was told to lie down and not allowed out to play.

IN the afternoon Father came back from the office. I had been terrified waiting for his return. After he had eaten I heard Mother talking. She's telling on me, I thought, frightened. Not long afterwards, Father came in to see me. He sat at the edge of my bed. He looked silently into my face until I was forced to look down. "You saw everything?" he asked. "Yes, I did wrong, Father" — my voice trembled with fear.

Father took my hand and then said, very gently and very seriously: "When you grow up, whatever you do, never become a Government official. Never join the Government Service. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Father," I answered.

"You're still too young to understand," said Father, "but as a Government official there are many things you must do which you hate — which go against all your instincts — merely to serve those in authority; right becomes wrong, wrong becomes right."

It seemed he was about to say something further, but he checked himself and said: "Go to sleep then!"

THE AUTHOR: *Mochtar Lubis, a Sumatran, is one of Indonesia's leading literary figures. Formerly Editor of the Djakarta daily* Indonesia Raya, *he was selected in 1958 to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism. Except for a brief period in 1961, he was either in prison or under house arrest from 1956 until he was released some months ago.*

Professor Johns, who translated the story, is Head of the Department of Indonesian Languages and Literatures at the Australian National University.

SPOTLIGHT ON INDONESIA

Achdiat K. Mihardja

THIS year's Summer School conducted by the University of New England at Armidale, New South Wales, had a special importance for Indonesians, since it was the first time that Indonesia had been discussed as a topic at one of the University's seminars.

Ten papers, covering Indonesian history, geography, national resources, politics, economics, language and literature, customs, religions, philosophy, etc., were delivered during the five-day seminar by seven lecturers. Three of the lecturers, Mr. J. H. Holmes, Dr. E. R. Woolmington and Dr. T. K. Tan were from the University of New England; three from the University of Sydney (Dr. F. van Naerssen, Mr. H. W. Emanuels and Dr. R. C. de Iongh); and myself from the Australian National University in Canberra. The Indonesian Cultural Attache, Mr. Ali Marsaban, who attended by special invitation, gave a brief talk on Indonesian culture.

Mr. Holmes opened the discussion with a rather gloomy account of "Indonesia Today" projected on a geographical background. He said that perhaps 90 per cent of the land area could be classed as having a low farming potential. In mineral resources, too, Indonesia's known reserves were very few and ill-balanced for industrial growth; and further, the utilisation of agricultural, mineral and other resources was handicapped by disease, pests and other problems common to equatorial regions. Mr. Holmes said that Indonesia suffers from problems of excessive fragmentation, resulting partly from the scattered nature of the archipelago and various ethnic, religious, economic and cultural patterns. He asked: Can Indonesia be regarded as one of the world's richest countries in respect of natural resources? Is current poverty largely the outcome of past colonial exploitation or is it related to environmental problems? Has Indonesia sufficient national resources to aspire to world power status? Have ethnic, religious, economic and cultural differences and strong regional ties handicapped the development of a unitary state? Is the unitary state being imposed by Java on reluctant populations in the outer islands?

Successive papers provided, in one way or another, answers to these questions. At least, they provided some background knowledge to enable the questions to be seen in their right perspective. In relation to the final question, for instance, one may think of the Youth's Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) to which Mr. Emanuels referred in his paper on the historical aspects of the Indonesian language both as a *lingua franca* and as a strong unifying element in the form of a national language. One may also think of Dr. van Naerssen's account of the origin of Indonesian peoples and ethnic groups; or of that part of Dr. Tan's paper which gave a more direct answer on the question of Indonesia's natural resources. And so on. However, I do not intend in this brief report to keep my notes of the seminar along the line of Mr. Holmes' questions, even though they may cast some light on the issue.

Dr. van Naerssen's paper on "Mediaeval Java" was not as closely linked to "Indonesia Today" as the other papers. Still, the period he dwelt upon has undoubtedly some kind of a direct connection with present day problems in that it belongs to the "great past" which continues to inspire Indonesians. Of special interest to students of Indonesian history, however, was Dr. van Naerssen's stand in the controversy about the end of the classical Hindu-Javanese culture in Central Java and its shift to Eastern Java. He rejected the idea that human life in that part of the island had become extinct because of an enormous flood, volcanic eruption, epidemic or other catastrophe, claiming that enormous temples like the Borobudur, Mendut, Kalasan, and Lara Djonggrang, which were erected by the Cailendras and other kings had placed such a burden of labour and taxes on the largely peasant population that whole villages shifted to Eastern Java. This process of depopulation was no doubt furthered by wars during the early eleventh century. On the other hand, with the mass movement to Eastern Java, followed by the disappearance of the *kraton* (king and his court) in Central Java, other *kratons* emerged eventually in Eastern Java; and the process of building temples and waging wars was repeated. This, then, leads to another query whether these renewed activities and oppression of the people again led to mass migrations—this time back to Central Java.

A more rounded picture of Indonesian history would have been gained at the seminar if, in addition to this important lecture, the ensuing periods, especially the colonial period and the emergence of Indonesian nationalism, had also been dealt with in special papers. These papers would have provided the necessary historical background to Dr. de Iongh's "Aspects of Indonesian Political Development from Independence to the Present Day"; in fact, to all of the papers dealing with contemporary Indonesia.

As might have been expected, Dr. de Iongh's paper provoked questions about what has been happening since the coup of September 30. However, everybody was ignorant about what really had happened, owing, in large measure, to tendentious speculations and interpretations in the press. Dr. de Iongh's paper included an assumption that if the Netherlands had given more decisive powers to Indonesian political leaders before independence and had voluntarily acknowledged independence (instead of having been forced by world opinion), it would have had a great impact on the attitude of present day Indonesian leaders towards "Western" countries on the one side, and the "communist world" on the other. Although there might be good grounds for this assumption, it should not be forgotten that in the early 1920's leaders like Sukarno, Hatta and Ali Sastroamidjojo, as well as communists like Semaun, Tan Malaka and Alimin, took positive stands against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. This stand was further emphasised by Dr. Sukarno at his trial in Bandung in 1930, and was later to be formulated as the five principles of the *Pantja Sila* ideology, which is in contrast to the "isms" allegedly or actually upheld in "Western" countries.

Although it was obvious that until recently Indonesian attitudes to the "communist world" (especially towards communist China) differed from its attitudes towards the "West", one should not err in identifying Indonesia with the communist bloc. In his address to the U.N. General Assembly in September 1960, President Sukarno reacted against Bertrand Russell's division of mankind into two groups, one following the teachings of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and the other adhering to the teachings of Marx and Engels. The President insisted that there was a third group, the *Pantja Sila* group, upholding the five principles of belief in God, humanism, nationalism, democracy and social justice.

In this context it is interesting to review Dr. Woolmington's lecture on "The Australian looks at Indonesia", in which he lucidly outlined Australia's paradoxical behaviour as a nation in Asia. Australia's geographical proximity to the densely populated and economically less developed countries of Asia gives rise to apprehension among those Australians who appreciate the vulnerability of their prosperous but sparsely populated continent. Many of them recognise that good relations with their Asian neighbours are vital to their national welfare. Others express the hope that Australia, by virtue of her unique position, is well qualified to act as an interpreter between East and West. But Australia was discovered and settled by Europeans, and its affinities and sympathies lie with the (capitalistic) West. This basic orientation (that determines Australia's policies and practices in economic affairs, migration, defence and foreign relations) often appears to Asians to obstruct, rather than advance, Australia's chances of becoming a "bridge" between East and West. Unless Australia's basic orientation changes, the country will find itself a cultural alien in this part of the world. Fortunately, however, as Dr. Woolmington observed, there seems to be a growing awareness among Australians, particularly among the younger generation, of Australia's geographical proximity to Asia, which in the long run, somehow, must have some vital effect on her orientation as a nation.

The social and, more specifically, the economic concepts of Indonesia were treated intensively by Dr. Tan. He said Indonesian leaders strongly believed that economic liberalism, which had given rise to colonialism and imperialism, was not appropriate for Indonesia. Indonesians had adopted a concept of their own, called "guided economy"; perhaps a better term was "Indonesian Socialism", since "guided economy" as a general concept, was nothing new. "Indonesian Socialism" was supposed to function as one of the main vehicles that would result in a "prosperous and just society" in which the five principles of the *Pantja Sila* would be fully carried out in daily life.

In contrast to Mr. Holmes' opinion, Dr. Tan said Indonesia possessed great natural wealth. Hunger, as understood in India, was unknown. Big irrigation projects were not needed, since there was plenty of water. Yet no one would deny that the present economic situation was unsatisfactory. Dr. Tan quoted from an official memorandum recently released by the M.P.R.S. (Provisional Parliament) in which it was said that economic growth was being hampered by the deteriorating monetary situation, slackness in production and distribution, stagnation in development of land, sea and air communications, mismanagement and misplacement, and corruption and harmful bureaucracy. In this respect, however, one might recall the statements that "nation building" must be given priority over other (including economic) affairs. One might wonder whether nation building could not go together with "economic building"; whether "nation building" would work without a strong economy?

In the more "cultural" part of the seminar, Dr.

de Iongh talked about "Education as a Factor of Development in Indonesia". The talk did not deal much with ideological facets of education as such, nor with the historical and national aspects. Yet all are essential to a proper understanding of present day Indonesia, especially in relation to the emergence of a Western-educated elite of Indonesian nationalists who, during the first decades of the century, provided leadership for the masses, using Western methods of approach but at the same time rejecting certain values of Western (bourgeois) cultures. These aspects are also important with respect to national identity; to the realisation of the *Pantja Sila* principles in an educational context; to "indoctrination", etc.

The bulk of the paper concentrated on the system and function of Indonesian tertiary education, which, since independence, has expanded more rapidly than anywhere else in South-East Asia. There are at present about two hundred and sixteen thousand university students, forming 0.2 per cent of the total Indonesian population; but in 1963 President Sukarno ordered that the percentage should be increased to 1 per cent in 1973. Some years before, the Minister of Education, the late Professor Mohamad Yamin, aspired to establish one university for every million citizens.

Dr. de Iongh saw some danger in this kind of aspiration—the development might ultimately lead to unemployment of graduates; frustration; a lowering of educational standards; lack of a sufficient supply of lower and middle groups of technically skilled people; and stagnation in economic and social development. Indonesian educationists, of course, are well aware of such hazards. But the problem is generally regarded as one for the future. For the present there is a pressing need for academics and graduates. Side by side with university expansion, the Government has established special new courses and colleges at the secondary level, and a special department of mass education has introduced simple courses in various handicrafts and agricultural vocations for the less educated village people.

In his "Religions and Customs in Modern Indonesia", Mr. Emanuels described some characteristics of Christmas and New Year celebrations among the Bataks in North Sumatra, and those which mark *Lebaran,* the end of the Muslim fasting month, *Ramadhan,* among the Menangkabauans in West Sumatra. His second paper, "Glimpses of the past of Bahasa Indonesia", showed how a regional language became a *lingua franca* before being developed as a modern national language which binds more than a hundred million people together as one nation.

Perhaps the most noteworthy study group discussions took place on literature, especially poetry and the problems of translating literary works. One poem by Amir Hamzah, a Muslim poet, and another one by Rendra, a Catholic, were critically discussed. What struck the group commenting on the poems was the use of similar metaphors about wrestling with God's image, and the note of resignation: "God is inscrutable". One of the members remarked that it was reminiscent of the Judaic approach (Song of Songs; the Psalms), while another mentioned the Book of Job, saying that the personal approach was akin to the Old Testament. This was attributed to the fact that both the Muslim and the Christian as well as the Judaic religions worshipped one God and that the dilemma of these poets was the reconciliation of the All Loving and All Powerful with suffering and cruelty.

Lively discussions arose around the diversity of interpretations in the translation of Indonesian poems into English. The first poem to be examined was one by Chairil Anwar, *Tjintaku djauh dipulau* (My Love's on a Far-away Island), in which the translation by an American scholar and poet, Burton Raffel, was compared with that of Professor A. H. Johns, of the Australian National University. The group commented on the two translations line by line, and, on balance, preferred Professor Johns' rendering. Further discussion brought out the following points: To achieve a translation as near as possible to the ideal, the translator must have a command of his own language, a command of the language from which the translation was made, and a command of the subject; and, in the case of literature, the ability to express artistically the thoughts and images of the original, after "soaking in" the atmosphere of the poem. It was agreed that a translation must remain an approximation, although it was pointed out that there was a difference between what purports to be a translation (transferring the beauty, imagery, rhythm, tone, variety of sounds, etc.) and a rendering (conveying the meaning, without attempt at poetic re-creation). It was commonly agreed that literature was the master key to better understanding. The study group thought that Indonesians and Australians should translate each other's literature, thus contributing to mutual understanding.

The seminar was expertly organised and did much to give Australians a wider knowledge and a better understanding of the Indonesian people and their current problems.

THE AUTHOR: *Mr. Achdiat, a leading Indonesian author, is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Indonesian Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Australian National University.*

Indonesian Writers and Politics

Achdiat K. Mihardja

THE start of Indonesian nationalism cannot be precisely dated, but its organised form had clearly begun when the cultural movement *Budi Utomo* was established among educated Indonesians in 1908. It cannot be denied, however, that the introduction of Western education to the Indonesian people was one of the most stimulating and decisive factors in the emergence and growth of Indonesian nationalism as we know it today.

Western education was particularly intensified by the end of the nineteenth century, when the Dutch carried out the so-called 'Ethical Policy', which was a result of the growing influence of liberal and socialistic ideas in Europe in general and in the Netherlands in particular.

Indonesians soon became aware of the great importance of the Dutch language, not only because knowledge of it represented a key to better salaried jobs, which also meant higher prestige, but also because it opened doors to higher education and to the modern Western world's advanced civilisation and progressive ideas. It was not surprising that at its first congress, held at Jogjakarta in October 1908, *Budi Utomo* demanded easier access to the European schools for Indonesian children, or establishment of special schools for Indonesians to study Dutch—a demand that was not met by the Dutch until 1914.

Western education had another, more important impact. Contact with the West made the Indonesians more able to look at their own world and conditions objectively, both as individuals and as a people, and to assess them critically as had never been done before. Their criticism was directed in two ways: inward, towards their own people and culture; and outward, towards the foreign colonisers with their alien and dominating culture.

This was the time when the first signs of national awareness and the struggle for national freedom took shape. Later they would be reflected in the literature, and particularly strongly in the poetry, of the twenties and thirties. In fact, already in Kartini's many letters written at the beginning of the century, national sentiment was quite clearly discernible. We know from these letters to her Dutch friends that she was not only striving for the emancipation of Indonesian women, but also of the Indonesian people as a whole: the one could not be achieved without the other. Thus, the writer here anticipated politics.

But later, when national awareness had become stronger and expressed itself in the form of political parties, mass organisations, labour unions, social and religious movements, all claiming national independence, either immediately and completely or gradually in the form of a dominion status, writers were often also politicians.

During the second and third decades of the century, short stories, serials and poems appeared in journals portraying the people suffering under the colonial yoke and struggling for freedom, or merely levelling straightforward criticism at the colonial government.

Prominent among these early writers was Mas Marco Kartodikromo, who wrote both in Indonesian and Javanese. In 1919 he wrote *Student Hidjo* ('Hidjo, the Student'), a simple story about an Indonesian student who spent some time in Holland and fell in love with a Dutch girl, although he was already engaged to an Indonesian girl back in Java. The local Dutch *controleur* (supervising district officer) fell in love with this girl, despite his love affair with a Dutch school teacher who was already expecting his baby. The story ended with a happy solution for Hidjo: he returned home and married his Indonesian fiancée. The *controleur* married another woman, not the teacher.

Marco's intention in the story was quite obvious. A second story, *Rasa Merdeka* ('Feeling Free'), appeared in 1924 and was a criticism throughout of feudalism and colonialism. To some extent Marco also dealt with various aspects of labour unionism and Marx's theory of surplus value.

That Marco's writings were later banned by the colonial government was quite understandable. He himself, being such an ardent revolutionary journalist and politician, was several times imprisoned and he died in exile at Upper Digul, Dutch New Guinea, in the late twenties.

Another writer, the communist leader Semaun, wrote *Hikajat Kadirun* ('Kadirun's Story') when he was in gaol for libel against the government in 1919. This quite simple story told of a brilliant young public servant who was forced to choose between his job and his sympathies with the communist movement: he chose the latter.

These stories were more significant as propaganda than as literature. One might classify them as 'class literature' which incidentally went parallel to the general aspiration for national freedom. That this trend in Indonesian literature would have its offshoot in later developments was to be expected.

In the meantime, national feeling was spreading more and more widely and becoming more and more intense, especially after Sukarno founded the P.N.I. (Nationalist Party) in 1927; this was followed by the historically not less important 'Youth Pledge' in the following year. The young people solemnly declared that they belonged to one nation, the Indonesian; that they had one fatherland, Indonesia; and that they acknowledged one language, the Indonesian language. It was also on this occasion that *Indonesia Raya* was first introduced and adopted as a *lagu kebangsaan* (national song); after Independence it was made the national anthem of the Republic. Likewise, the red and white colours, with or without the popular Nationalist Party emblem in the form of a black bull's head, were adopted as symbols of national unity and freedom.

This period (the twenties and thirties) was very prolific in poetry, generally permeated with strong national sentiment expressed in a very lyrical and romantic way. Romanticism has always been a kind of escape. But the escapism of Indonesian poets and writers of this period was not there just for its own sake. It had a definite national political purpose which was lucidly formulated by Sukarno in his defence before the court in 1930. He said there were three ways to arouse and strengthen national feeling among the people: to explain to them that they had a great past, to make them aware that their present condition was intolerable, and to suggest that their future was brilliant and glorious.

Sukarno had assessed that the Dutch were inculcating a feeling of inferiority in the minds of the Indonesian people. He concluded that three methods were being used to keep the Indonesians colonised as long as possible: the policy of divide and rule; the people were kept in constant mental backwardness; and the belief was implanted in the minds of the people that their interests ran parallel to, instead of contradicting, the interests of imperialism.

With all this in mind, poets and writers reacted to the political situation accordingly. Beside expressing a romantic nostalgia for the great past and the glorious future, they expressed love for the fatherland by glorifying its natural beauty. Even poems expressing love for a girl or for a mother might symbolise love for the fatherland or people. The dawn and the rising sun were meant by the poets and understood by their readers to signify the emerging national spirit and awareness which heralded the coming freedom of the people. Th Indonesian language, only recently proclaimed b youth as a national language, was extolled in poem as a strong unifying factor for the culturally divers nation coping with the divide and rule policy.

A good example of this kind of 'purposefu romanticism' was a collection of poems, entitle *Indonesia, Tumpah Darahku* ('Indonesia, m Fatherland') by Mohammad Yamin, the well know political leader, scholar and poet who late functioned as a cabinet minister. He extolled th greatness of the past, the beauty of the country, an the golden future.

With the same purpose of glorifying the past historical novels and plays were written. Yami wrote the novel *Gadjah Madha* about the 'Bismarck of the mighty kingdom of Madjapahit (fourteent century), and a play, *Ken Angrok dan Ken Dedes* set in the thirteenth century kingdom of Singasar and Kediri. While in gaol for libel against th government, Yamin wrote a couple of sonnets whic again glorified the beauty of the country.

Symbolism and allegory were two of the mos commonly used literary devices during the perio Rustam Effendie wrote the first Indonesia allegorical verse-drama, *Bebasari*, published i 1926. The first Indonesian to become a membe of the pre-war Dutch parliament in The Hague, h represented the Dutch Communist Party. Althoug the setting and the names of characters in the pla were borrowed from traditional *wajang* stories, th purpose and message were too obvious to escap the eyes of the colonial censorship and it wa eventually banned. The plot involved a princess Bebasari, who was kidnapped by a giant and late rescued and freed by a young prince.

Sanusi Pane, a teacher and member of Sukarno' political party *Partindo* after his release from gaol differed from other poets of the period in tha he combined nationalism and romanticism wit mysticism. One of his best poems, *Sjiwa Nataradja* is set in India, where he was searching for happiness, which he thought could be found by visitin one temple after the other, remembering the golde past of his country. When he saw a statue o Sjiwa Nataradja, the god of the dance, a voice tol him to give up wandering and seeking oblivio and consolation in outward beauty, and to kno that happiness lay waiting within himself—in hi spirit—for it was this that linked him to the creato to mankind and to the universe. As a microcosm h was one with the macrocosm, and he danced th same dance, following the same rhythm tha governed the whole cycle of the universe an existence.

But in dealing with political themes, such as th predicament of the *marhaen* (underdog), Sanus became suspicious and doubtful about God: 'God has forgotten us/ We *Marhaens*, children of misery/ Toil on, only barely alive/ While those who enjoy life, enjoy laughter// If you really exist/ O God, why/ are we bound in prison/ Although we have not sinned?'

Sanusi also wrote several plays set in the great past. One of these was about the fall of the mighty kingdom of Madjapahit, owing to the demoralisation of the religious and the ruling feudal classes. In another play, *Manusia Baru* ('The New Man'), he said that labourer and employer should understand each other's position and co-operate with each other for their mutual benefit. This was typical of Sanusi's philosophy; he regarded harmony and unity in man, both as an individual and as a race, as the highest ideal to be striven for. This implied that oppression and exploitation of man by man should never happen.

This stand for harmony and unity among mankind was again put forward when he debated the crucial problem of the mingling of Eastern and Western cultural values. In contrast to Takdir Alisjahbana, who advocated unconditionally taking over such values as individualism, intellectualism and materialism from the West, Sanusi contended that the soundest basis for a modern Indonesian culture was a harmonious unification of Faust, symbol of the Western man, who was willing to sacrifice his life in his effort to exploit and study nature for the benefit of mankind and scientific truth, and Ardjuna, symbol of Eastern man, who went to the mountain Indrakila to practise asceticism in order to purify his soul and heart from evil intentions. In other words material and rational values should be balanced by spiritual, moral and mystical values for life to be sound.

Indonesian literature now entered a new phase, especially after the appearance of *Pudjangga Baru*, the first literary magazine to be published in the modern Indonesian language, in 1933. If so far nationalism had expressed itself almost exclusively in glorifying the past and future, now writers started to reflect and discuss the more crucial and profound problem of culture. They also became more conscious of the significance of literature as an aspect of life and culture. Some decades before, Kartini, as a 'lone' writer, had done this, but now many writers were being more realistically critical of their own and alien cultures.

But these activities were soon dismissed as irrelevant and unnecessary by a younger generation of writers who claimed that they had learned to see the universal nature of man and of all the problems of life. They asserted that the East was not better or worse than the West, and *vice versa*. The problem they were facing was no more the contrast between East and West, but the problem of man facing man.

This kind of pronouncement, which was expressed by Sitor Situmorang, a member of the so-called *Gelanggang* group of the '45 Generation' of writers who proclaimed themselves upholders of 'universal humanism' as a philosophical basis for art, aroused a strong reaction from writers who felt that Indonesian literature should be 'committed art and designed for the people'. In 1950 these writers established the *Lekra* (Institute for People's Culture), a sub-organisation of the Indonesian Communist Party, which to a great extent was also a reaction to the establishment of the *Gelanggang* group a couple of months earlier.

Bujung Saleh, an exponent of the *Lekra* group, traced the beginning of the difference between it and the other group not further back than the years of revolution (1945-50). He stated that writers living in cities occupied by the Dutch had a different development from those living in the *de facto* area of the Indonesian Republic. The former, he said, were upholders of universal humanism; this was quite clear from their '*Gelanggang* Declaration of Faith' issued in 1950. For them, all men were similar, regardless of origin, race or class. On the other hand, writers living in the *de facto* area were more patriotic. Some sections among them even dropped their pens for a rifle occasionally. Here 'committed art' was the adage.

That was, of course, a generalisation and exaggeration, as if all writers in the occupied cities were adherents of universal humanism and less patriotic than those in the *de facto* area, such as himself.

Since the establishment of *Lekra*, a clear line had been drawn separating the two opposing groups of writers—the communists on one side and the non- and anti-communists on the other.

If during Kartini's time the writer preceded politics, during the second decade until the war Indonesian writers and politicians went hand in hand, playing more or less an equally important role in facing political and cultural problems, with national freedom and cultural emancipation as their sole and mutual objective. Since independence, however, politics has become the most important and decisive factor dominating all walks of life. It is occasionally felt as a handicap to the sound development of culture if it is too restrictive in respect of creative activities.

In his *Manifesto Politik* of 1959, better known by its acronym *Manipol*, President Sukarno voiced a warning that there was cultural imperialism as well as economic and political imperialism. He proclaimed his concept of USDEK, an acronym standing for *Undang2 Dasar 45* (Constitution of 1945), S*ocialisme ala Indonesia* (Indonesian-style Socialism), D*emokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy), E*konomi Terpimpin* (Guided Economy), and K*epribadian Indonesia* (Indonesian identity). The K for *Kepribadian* was most important, since that was claimed to be the essence that gave the shape, characteristics and quality to the other concepts of state and society. Thus, guided democracy was assumed to be the right form of democracy, true to the Indonesian identity.

In his pamphlet *Demokrasi Kita* ('Our Democracy'), the former Vice-President, Mohammad Hatta, said that, in addition to the elements mentioned by Sukarno, there was one most important principle in the indigenous democracy which was completely embezzled by Sukarno: the right of the people to protest and leave the area ruled by the king, if one or other law or rule was felt to be unjust. The principle of protest and criticism of authority, of the government, was of no concern or interest to Sukarno; this he demonstrated convincingly by banning Hatta's pamphlet.

That this kind of democracy would raise difficult problems among creative writers was to be expected, and particularly among writers representing universal humanism, who adopted a broad and liberal attitude towards life and literature.

The framework of guided democracy included the concept of *Nasakom*, again an acronym, standing for nas*ionalis* (nationalist), a*gama* (religion) and kom*unis* (communist). It means simply that every cabinet should be composed of ministers representing the three main groups of political ideologies current in the country: the nationalists, the religious groups, and the communists. The inclusion of the communists, however, was strongly opposed by the non-communists, except the P.N.I. and some smaller nationalist parties which all supported *Nasakom*.

In the meantime, the L.K.N., the cultural body affiliated to the leftist P.N.I., and the communist *Lekra* moved closer and closer together, but further and further away from the group of universal humanist and other non- and anti-communist writers.

Sitor Situmorang, once an adherent of the doctrine of universal humanism, had become the head of the leftist L.K.N. and turned into an ardent advocate of committed art—art for the people. In 1961 he attended a conference of Afro-Asian writers in Tokyo and paid a short visit to Red China. Soon afterwards he published a number of verses called *Zaman Baru* ('New Era') as a tribute to the host country he admired. In his introduction to the collection he demonstrated his change of doctrine, and stated (obviously criticising exponents of universal humanism) that it was irresponsible to stick to the idea that the artist's function was to indulge in some sort of a personal experiment with life. The universal aspect of art and culture should lie in the hope of the majority of people, that is in the hope and ideals of the people and the revolution.

The close relation between the leftist L.K.N. and the communist *Lekra* was but a natural reflection of the closer collaboration between the Nationalist Party (P.N.I.) and the Communist Party (P.K.I.) in supporting the concept of *Nasakom* and Guided Democracy, and later of the Djakarta-Phnom Penh-Peking axis, blueprinted and eventually materialised by Dr. Subandrio.

The tension between the two opposing camps of writers worsened as quickly as President Sukarno increased his power and finally became president for life.

After all the press and political parties opposed to the government were banned and their important leaders imprisoned, there remained only two groups of writers and intellectuals who still had the means and forum at their disposal openly to oppose the restrictions on freedom of thought and expression imposed by the government and its supporting groups, *Lekra* and L.K.N. The two remaining groups were those artists attached to the National School of Drama (*Atni*) in Djakarta, and another group of writers whose forum was the literary magazine *Sastra* ('Literature'), edited by the critic H. B. Jassin, also in Djakarta.

In August 1963 a number of these groups published a *Manifesto Kebudajaan* (Cultural Manifesto), which soon became popularly known as *Manikebu*; it was obviously a protest manifesto. First of all they declared that they did not put politics above other cultural sectors. Each sector strove, together with the others, towards the goal of culture in accordance with its individual character. (In fact, with this they rejected the *Lekra* view that politics should be 'the commander in all fields of life, including literature.)

They adopted the five principles of the state philosophy *Pantja Sila*: belief in God, humanity nationalism, democracy, and social justice. They dismissed the communist idea that 'the end justifies the means' as a non-cultural attitude contradicting the *Pantja Sila* moral code. Fetishism was denounced as a sign of impotence in creative thinking. The rise of a personality cult was such a fetish with men driven by desire to praise an influential man (This was obviously referring to the adulation o President Sukarno by the communist and leftis writers.)

Socialist realism was rejected as a modern fetish in art with Stalin as the fetish. They likewise rejected the notion that art should derive its content from and be dedicated to an official conception. (Through the mouth of the Minister of Education and Culture, the Stalin Prizewinner Professor Prijono, the government prescribed some directives for the 'right' literature within the realm of guided democracy, saying it should be dedicated to the workers, the peasants and the army; that it should be didactic for the people; that it should be realistic and optimistic, and in accord with the taste and ideals of the people.)

The *Manikebu* further explained that they adopted the principle of universal humanism, in the sense that culture and art could not be entirely national in character but needed universal elements. In this sense, universal humanism was seen as a force to end the conflict between man and humanity, to free every man from bondage, to prevent the exploitation of man by man.

A storm of anger and condemnation burst out from the camps of *Lekra* and L.K.N. On the other hand, a stream of letters flowed from supporters all over the country. Nevertheless, in May 1964, President Sukarno banned *Manikebu* by a decree which stated that the action was taken 'in the name of conformity and the straight road of the revolution and the complete defence of the Nation'. The decree claimed that there was no other manifesto that could be based on *Pantja Sila* beside the *Manipol* of Sukarno himself.

With *Manikebu*, the literary magazine *Sastra* was also banned. Two days later Jassin, Trisno Sumardjo and Wiratmo Sukito, the three protagonists in the *Manikebu* affair, forwarded a letter of apology to President Sukarno, pledging obedience to the ban, and beseeching his guidance in matters of culture. One could easily condemn their action as cowardly, but such letters simply showed how menacing and depressing the whole scene was.

But that was not enough. *Lekra* and P.K.I. continued their instigation to destroy completely the *Manikebu* idea and its adherents. They called for Jassin's dismissal from his position as a university lecturer; eventually this was implemented—he was 'retooled', as the term went. A general purge among the supporters followed. Then, the non-*Lekra* and non-L.K.N. writers and intellectuals went underground. In May 1965 they managed to publish a brochure illegally, to commemorate the first anniversary of the banning of *Manikebu*.

A second anniversary, however, was prevented by an abortive coup which took place on September 30 of the same year. Since then, the respective roles of the opposing groups have been reversed. The hunter has become the hunted.

The turn now came for the communist newspapers, books and journals to be banned. New ones have emerged to replace them. *Sastra* has been republished, and a new literary magazine, *Horison*, affords another forum for the non- and anti-communist writers.

A new generation of writers arrived in the Indonesian literary arena and introduced themselves as *Angkatan 66* ('the Generation of 1966'). They had suffered the same bitter experiences as the older non-*Lekra* and non-L.K.N. writers. Among them were signatories of the *Manikebu*. They joined or led student demonstrations against Sukarno, and played a significant role within the ranks of the so-called *Orde Baru* (New Order) in confronting the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) which was composed of people who had supported Sukarno's regime.

They published a number of collections of verse during the turbulent time of the coup, with titles that spoke for themselves: *Tirani* ('Tyranny'), *Perlawanan* ('Resistance'), *Benteng* ('Fortress'), *Pembebasan* ('Liberation'), and the like. It is surprising how strikingly similar these verses are in tone, style, diction, theme and spirit, to those written by *Lekra* writers in their heyday. Both showed a monolithic point of view, and confronted the same world painted in black and white; the only difference being that what was white for the one was black for the other, and *vice versa*. Both were equally bombastic, and often employed the same abstract nouns—justice, freedom, peace, truth, oppression, despotism, victory, and so on—with again the same contradiction, that what was truth, justice, freedom, for the one was the opposite for the other.

But that seems characteristic of all 'protest literature'; fortunately, it represents only one aspect of writing as a whole. Life has never been composed entirely of protests and politics.

The young writers of the Generation of 1966, and even *Lekra* writers, wrote poems, stories and plays with a scope of themes wider than protest and politics. The difference lay, perhaps, in degree. *Lekra* writers were more 'class-conscious' than the other writers, particularly the writers of universal humanism, who tried to think more in terms of similarities among mankind than of class differences.

It might be clear from this short survey that literature in Indonesia has always been closely following the development of politics, reflecting it, reacting to it, and to some extent also exerting its influence upon it and being influenced by it.

THE AUTHOR: *Achdiat K. Mihardja, author of the Indonesian novel* Atheis, *was until recently a senior lecturer in the Department of Indonesian Languages and Literatures at the Australian National University.*

The author and his family at their Jakarta home before setting out for Australia in 1961.

ANOTHE

MY WIFE was jubilant when, that evening, I told her about the offer of the job. Without asking me for more details, she cheerfully summoned our four children to the sitting-room, where I was talking to her. The kids quickly gathered around us, anxious to hear what news their mother had to tell.

'Look, kids,' she said, 'we're all going abroad soon. Daddy is going to lecture at a university overseas. How do you like that?'

'Abroad, mum?! Going abroad?!' And suddenly cheers burst out. 'Hooray! Hooray!' And they clapped their hands, and drummed on the top of the table. 'Beaut! Beaut!'

'Where to, mum?' asked Wati, the eldest one.

'To Oom Tom's country', my wife replied. A second burst of hoorays! 'To Oom Tom's country! To Oom Tom's country! Great!'

The children called him Oom Tom, using the Dutch word *oom* for 'uncle'. He was an Australian in his mid-twenties who grew a bushy beard and moustache to disguise his disproportionately tiny face. He had gone back to Australia recently, having worked as a Volunteer Graduate in Jakarta for two years, while doing post-graduate study in Indonesian economics at the University of Indonesia. He had lived opposite us in a government boarding-house, and used to visit us almost every afternoon for a chat. We were all very fond of him, especially because we noticed that he really did his utmost to know and understand us as people with a different culture. He spoke fluent Indonesian and moved about the house in a typical Indonesian *sarong plekat* and singlet instead of a dressing-gown; smeared hot *sambal* over his bread at breakfast; and tried hard to squat or sit cross-legged on a mat when visiting a poor Indonesian family. Quite often we saw him having a drink by the light of kerosene lamp in a side-walk coffee-stall with th *becak*-boys (pedicab drivers) with whom he used to cha about their problems. This sort of encounter with th underdogs of society was very useful to him as a 'cor cerned' student in the economics of developing countrie In so doing he had a good look at the other side of th Indonesian medal — the murky one.

Disappointment suddenly dropped our children's hilarit to a low key when I told them that going abroad wa only a possibility; it was by no means certain yet whethe I would take the offer or not. 'There are so many thing to be considered', I said. 'I'll think it over tonight. Which I did: I could hardly sleep that night.

The trouble was that I had, since childhood, alway been discomforted by a sort of inferiority complex whic was mainly due, I assumed, to the peculiar condition o the colonial society I had lived in and to the educatio system in which I had been brought up. In kindergarte and at primary school we were taught to look up t Europeans as a 'super-race' — neat, clever, beautiful rich and powerful; in contrast with the 'natives' — dirty dumb, lazy, miserable and ugly. On the other hand during my formative years, nationalism, with some aspect as negative as colonialism, was flaring up. This, too, ha a great impact on me.

My whole being was unavoidably influenced by these two 'isms', whose effects were still strong upon me when many years later, I went travelling in Europe and the United States, and later in Australia. I found myself stil in the grip of the same complexes which at times made me feel quite uneasy, as if I was an ugly duckling surrounded by graceful peacocks and ferocious hawks.

The next morning I was still undecided. Over breakfast I was locked in argument with my wife, who was rathe impatient. She found me stupid, and insisted that should take the job straight away.

'Look, Nan,' I cut in, 'can't you see that it's an entirely different country? That the climate, the people, their customs, their culture, in short practically everything is different altogether, so that we'll have to espouse a completely different way of life. You will never feel at home there Never at ease. Everybody's rushing all the time, like

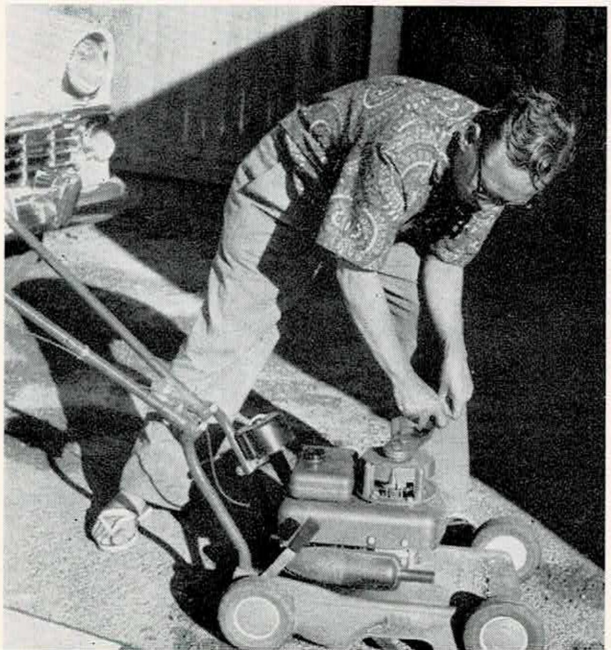
HUMAN RACE

Achdiat K. Mihardja

dogs with their tails on fire. And no servants. No friends. No relatives. Nobody to talk to. For, you know, these people don't talk to strangers, especially not to foreigners. Even neighbours don't talk to each other. How could they, if they don't even know each other? If they talk at all, it is about the weather. Or their new car, their new T.V. set. Terribly boring. And if they have something or other to complain about — the dogs barking too much, for instance, or the radio on too loudly, or other such trivial things — they wouldn't discuss the matter peacefully. No. They just ring the police!' And I repeated emphatically: 'How could we be happy there? I don't think we could. We'll get terribly lonely.'

When I said that, I remembered dead week-ends I used to spend on my own in my hotel room when in 1956 I was visiting the country for some study. Most vividly I recalled the long hours of a train journey from Sydney to Canberra. In the half-empty compartment I sat opposite a couple in late middle-age — the man, as fat as a bag of Saigon rice, his face flushed with drink, flicking through a magazine listlessly; and the woman beside him, snugly in the corner by the window, busily knitting a jumper. The ice between the couple and me didn't break during the seven- or eight-hour trip, except for a husky 'Thank you' from the woman's puckered lips when I picked up the wool-ball that had dropped from her lap, and an 'Excuse me' when the man grabbed my knees as he stood up from his seat and staggered along to the toilet.

'And no servants'.



I couldn't rid myself of the impression that Australians were isolated Himalayas — cold and inaccessible. They seemed to be happy as prisoners of their own privacy.

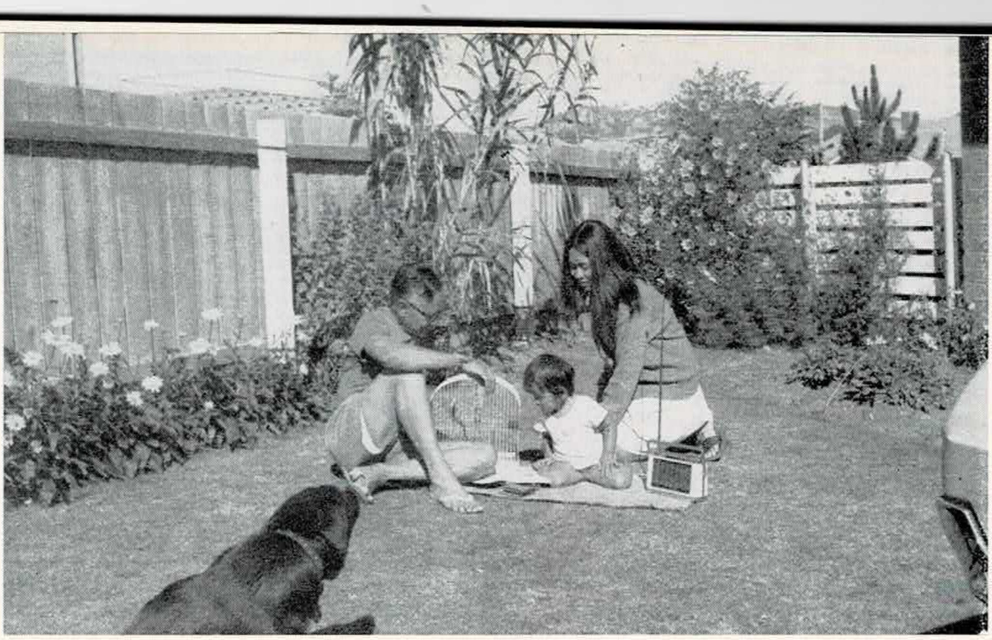
The following days, I was still vacillating about the offer. The 'White Australia' policy then operating was, of course, a worry too. And text books on political ideologies and cultures had taught me that bourgeois individualism and rationalism regarded mankind not as a totality but as a collection of individuals; that one was obsessed by the will and passion to possess earthly things; that one lived in a world of constant competition in every walk of life; that in such a world the pick of the basket, with all its comfort, wealth, power and happiness, was only for energetic, dynamic, materialistic, and often shrewd, cunning, unscrupulous individuals. All of this was patently in contrast with the *gotong-royong* (co-operation, mutual help) and *keke-luargaan* (family system) ideas of the indigenous Indonesian way of life.

Above all, lack of English, I thought, would be a great handicap, especially for my wife and children. I was particularly apprehensive that, because of our inability to carry out a conversation properly in English, people might think that our tongues were abnormally short or long, and thus unfit to pronounce the phonetically 'sophisticated' sounds of that language. Even worse, they might regard us as being unintelligent or uneducated, or simply deaf. And for these reasons people would take us for granted, and patronise us, which I would hate.

'No, it could not possibly be any good', I repeated when my wife kept insisting that we should try, at least for a year or so.

'I've never been abroad', she complained. 'Everybody goes abroad nowadays. All my friends have been abroad—Hanny, Titi, Fatimah — to Europe, to the U.S., to Japan. I am the only one who hasn't been overseas. Not even to Singapore.'

'Yes. Yes. I know, I know', I said, rather annoyed. I often felt very irritated by the behaviour of these



Resting in the garden of his Canberra home, with a daughter, Patria, and grand-daughter, Shanti.

friends of my wife, who prided themselves on being so-called H.B.A. (Has Been Abroad), a sobriquet once coined by a jealous cynic who got sick and tired of listening to the tedious twaddling of these women about their travels. 'But, dear,' I countered, 'your friends went on holiday. That's different. Australia, or any country for that matter, is nice to spend your holiday in, especially when you can afford to scatter your money about the way they did. But to live and to work there. . . ? No! I'm really scared, Nan.'

'Why? Because everything is different there? What about Tom living here? Isn't our country different from his? Yet, he survived. He was even happy here, wasn't he?'

I still insisted that Tom's case was different. And naively I said: 'He belongs to a "super-race"; don't forget that. Nowhere would he find himself being patronised or held in contempt because of colour.'

'But what about our own daughter Ita? Wasn't she happy when she was studying for a whole year in a "bourgeois-capitalistic and decadent" country, as you once called the U.S.?'

'You can't compare a young single student with a whole family, can you?'

But in the end I yielded. Mainly because of my boss, who suggested that I had nothing to lose and much to gain if I took the job. 'If you are not happy over there, you still can come back to our department', he said kindly.

The last weeks before our departure were hectic: packing, purchasing all that we thought would be needed in my new post, fixing passports, health certificates and other papers, attending farewell parties organised relatives and close friends. My children and my wi tried to pick up some useful phrases and words English. At the last moment I saw fit to teach my sc some common Australian swear-words, so that would recognise them immediately when someone fire them off at him. He could then lash back with th same bullets. (In retrospect, I found that quite unnece sary; I realise now that it was only an indication over-sensitiveness on my part, sparked off again by kind of inferiority complex.)

In spite of the late hour, quite a number of relative friends and colleagues from the department turned up the airport to see us off. I'll miss them, I said to myse as I shook their hands or kissed their cheeks — the friendliness, their accessibility, their easy-going way Tears were shed.

It was nearly midnight when the plane took off. A we were airborne for the rest of the night.

Sydney was already in the full swing of the daily ra race when the aircraft touched down at Mascot. V had a couple of hours to see the city before we proceede to Canberra. My children were amused at the sight two policemen on horseback controlling the motoris traffic. Another delight for them was riding on the t floor of a double-deck city bus, and watching people, white-skinned, fair-haired, and neatly attired, rushing and down the crowded pavements beside the car-conge ted streets. They were struck by the absence of *becak* army trucks, bicycles and the noise which made the bu streets of Jakarta so much more lively and colour to them.

We did some shopping, and had lunch at a Chinese restaurant. Then went back to the airport, where a domestic plane was waiting to put us down at the Canberra airport after a flight of about forty minutes.

Not one of us liked the house where we were to be accommodated by the university for at least a year. My wife and the children found the old furniture appalling. Accustomed to Jakarta's crowds and noise, they all found the back-water atmosphere of the ghastly neat suburb choking — 'Dracula-like', as Tria, my third daughter characterised it. She stared and sniffed as if she was locked up in a musty, forbidding prison. Looking at the unkempt garden, I was stifled by the thought that I'd have to mow the vast lawns every week in summer and to chop firewood in winter. That was a dreadful prospect. Suddenly I thought of my loyal servants. How I missed them! Four altogether. And now, not a single one here with us.

In fact, the neighbourhood seemed to be a prestigious one. We were sandwiched between a professor and an admiral of the navy. And I noticed later that the spruce suburb was adorned with academic pundits and high Pharaohs in officialdom. It appeared terribly 'classy' to me — an *haut monde* with a life-style alien to me. It would, I thought, oblige me to be cautiously on the alert lest, in my way of reacting or behaving, my inferiority complex should express itself in a kind of over-compensation.

The first day in the house was quite interesting to me. In the morning my wife's voice rang from the bedroom straight to the kitchen, calling 'Annie! Annie!' Of course, no answer. For Annie, the maid-servant who used to make coffee and *nasi-goreng* (fried rice) for our breakfast had been left behind in Jakarta. My wife reluctantly pulled herself out of bed with a stretch and a long yawn, and did Annie's job, which she'd have to do herself henceforth. How we all missed the servants!

The second surprise awaited Irfa, our only son and the Benjamin in the family, who screamed delightedly when he noticed that the running water 'was hot like in Cipanas', a volcanic hot spring on the road to Bandung.

But most interesting of all was that the wives of some of our dignified neighbours came in to welcome us, each bringing a present and a seraphic smile on her wrinkled face — one with a bottle of milk, another with a jar of jam, still another with a bundle of flowers, and another with a pot plant. Quite strange for us. But still very pleasant, and unexpected.

'It promises a good relationship with the neighbours', said my wife. I added: 'I hope it also symbolises friendliness for the rest of our life in this country.'

Our hope was not frustrated. A couple of days later two sons of the naval dignitary helped me with mowing the lawn and tidying up the rugged parts of the garden. My wife was invited to a tea-party organised by the wife of another neighbour who, the day before, had given me a new jumper which, she said, was too small for her husband. Contrary to expectation, life went on very smoothly and we made a lot of friends. Perhaps that was also due to our being gregarious, accessible and extroverted, like most Indonesians. As in Jakarta, we kept open house for everyone, especially for my students and friends, to drop in, regardless of time and situation.

There were, of course, disappointments too. And the worst ones always had something to do with racism. These were, however, very rare, thank God. It was evident that prejudice and ignorance were always the basic causes.

I noticed that a common misconception provoked fear among Australians, especially the older generation and some sections of the labour unions. They assumed that Indonesians were craving for an exodus to Australia. That was, of course, far from true. It might be true that some university graduates and other people with some skill would like to migrate, for the simple (perhaps the only) reason that they were unemployed or under-paid. But by far the great majority clung to the traditional ideal: they wanted to be buried in the place where they were born.

After having lived in Australia for some years, I felt that I had rid myself of prejudice and negative complexes towards the Australian people. I knew them better. I had been able to understand and to recognise them as just another nation, another race, defined by its strengths and weaknesses in the same way as was any other nation, any other race, by its own. And one day my wife said: 'How great is the difference between the world created by prejudice and the real one.' She realised that not all was as bad as the image I had once conjured up for her and myself.

I nodded in wholehearted agreement. 'Indeed,' I said, 'prejudices are adamant enemies of friendship; only knowledge and understanding will destroy them completely.' As I said that, Tom's image emerged in my mind. He was so happy living with us — a race quite different from his in many ways; but still basically the same — a *human race*. And this fact was obviously deeply felt and fully understood by him. . .

THE AUTHOR: *Achdiat K. Mihardja, formerly Senior Lecturer in Bahasa Indonesia at the Australian National University, is the author of the novel* Atheis.