

A bridge to the outside world Literary translation in Indonesia, 1950-1965

Maya H.T. Liem

Literary translation has played an important role in the cultural development of new states.¹ In the case of Indonesia in the period between 1950 and 1965, matters related to culture figured prominently in the efforts of both government and civil society to construct a national identity for Indonesia as a modern, independent nation free from Dutch colonialism. Both internally and in the eyes of the world at large, cultural identity was seen as the mark of a strong and established state, and in the building of culture, the development of a national literature was an area that attracted significant attention. Models of literary expression were often drawn from foreign sources, and this meant that a large number of Indonesian writers found themselves engaged in the business of literary translation. It is noteworthy that throughout this period, the Indonesian government itself took no active role in sponsoring literary translation, leaving this aspect of cultural traffic between Indonesia and the outside world entirely in the hands of writer/translators as individuals.

The Cold War context in which the literary translations of this period took place meant that translation was not only an opening to the outside world on the part of Indonesian writer/translators themselves. It was also a means by which foreign powers were able to spread the cultural principles and ideologies that underlay their attempts to gain political advantage and influence in the newly emerging states of the post-war era. As Hong Liu (2006:186-91) has shown in his study of the PRC's cultural diplomacy towards Indonesia between 1949 and 1965, the government of the PRC

1 I wish to thank Koesalah Soebagyo Toer for his generous assistance, his constant availability for interviews and his provision of additional information during the writing of this essay. I am also deeply grateful to Shannu (Tan To or Zhan Hu) and Winarta for their willingness to be interviewed for this project.

channelled large numbers of books (including works of literature) and other printed material to Indonesia during this period, as part of its propagation of the success of the Chinese model of revolution and national development. At times the Chinese government involved Indonesian writer/translators in the work of translation into Indonesian, although most translated works came directly from Chinese translators in Beijing, adding to the efficiency with which the Chinese model was made available to the Indonesian reading public. Other prominent Cold War actors, such as the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites and Western powers like the United States, Great Britain and the former colonizing power the Netherlands, also made use of translation of literature and other types of reading material to promote their political and cultural interests in newly-independent Indonesia.

In this essay, I aim to survey the world of literary translation in post-independence Indonesia, showing how individual translators with different backgrounds and motivations approached the production of translated works of literature. As the essay shows, whether consciously or not, these individual translators were not only engaged in producing models of creative writing for modern Indonesian writers; they were also building frameworks for communication between Indonesia and the outside world within the workings of Cold War cultural diplomacy. I begin with an exploration of the overall context of literary translation, in order to construct a picture of the networks, policies and ideologies that lay behind the production of literary translations. I then move to a discussion of the work of two prominent translators of the period, Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. Trisno Sumardjo (1916-1969) was a painter and a creative writer who was an adherent of the principles of universal humanism (see Keith Foulcher in this volume), but he was also a renowned translator, best known for his translations of Shakespeare. Koesalah Soebagyo Toer (b. 1935), younger brother of the writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer, is known for his translations of novels and short stories from Russia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. He began to study Russian in the late 1950s, first in Jakarta and later in the Soviet Union.

The questions to be addressed in this essay include the types of works chosen for translation, the methods of selection, personal motivations and the networks that supported the process of selection. Also taken into consideration are the production, distribution and reception of translations both domestically and internationally.

Apart from the two translators selected for special attention here, there were also a significant number of other professional lit-

erary translators in Indonesia during the 1950-1965 period, including Asrul Sani, Siti Nuraini, Muhamad Radjab and Toto Sudarto Bachtiar. The scope of this essay does not permit a comprehensive treatment of all these translators and their works, but I hope that by choosing to focus on Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, two prominent translators with differing orientations, I will be able to give a preliminary indication of the role played by translators and their works in constructing a cultural bridge between Indonesia and the rest of the world during the Cold War period.

BEFORE 1950

Translations from foreign literature have been part of modern Indonesian culture since the Dutch colonial period. Individual translators, drawn from the ranks of specialists and government officials, writers, journalists, teachers, or those who worked in a number of these professions at the same time, began to emerge in colonial society from the 1870s. The motivations that inspired these early translators were varied, from a desire to introduce indigenous readers to the outside world through Western European perspectives, to educative intentions or pure entertainment. Most of the earliest translations were adventure stories, such as *Hikajat Robinson Crusoe* (*Robinson Crusoe*), a rendition of the eighteenth-century classic by Daniel Defoe, *Kisah pelajaran nachoda Bontekoe* (*The voyage of captain Bontekoe*), Von de Wall's adaptation of the journal Bontekoe kept of his voyage to the East Indies in 1618-1625, and the works of Jules Verne. At the end of the nineteenth century more politically motivated translations began to appear, such as F. Wiggers's translation of Melati van Java's *Dari boedak sampe djadi radja* (*From slave to king*), which showed more sympathy for a Javanese rebel than the Dutch authorities he opposed.²

It was also at this time that a number of Sino-Malay translators began to make their presence felt in the publishing world of the Dutch East Indies. They began with translations from Chinese, but increasingly moved to translations from English and French literature. As was the case with the pioneering translators of the 1870s,

2 Jedamski 2009:173-5. See also Jedamski (2002), for a discussion of translations and adaptations based on *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Sherlock Holmes*, which were highly popular in the Dutch East Indies from the end of the nineteenth century. According to Jedamski (2002:21), these translations encouraged discussion of issues related to individual responsibility, changes in morality and social norms and the position of indigenous societies in the colonial world.

they worked as individuals, establishing links with Sino-Malay magazines and the increasing number of publishing houses being established by Indies Chinese entrepreneurs (Jedamski 2009:183-8). The selection of works for translation was mostly based on commercial considerations, but the educative potential of a particular text in the transformation of the Dutch East Indies into a modern society also came into consideration.

With the establishment of the colonial government's Commissie voor de Volkslectuur in 1908 (which in 1917 became Balai Poestaka), competition ensued between the translators who worked for Chinese commercial publishers and those who worked for the government bureau, who were mostly indigenous. The government translators were not only full-time employees who received a regular stipend, but they were also given in-house training in the work of translation. They produced translations of works selected by the Dutch directors of the bureau in line with the political interests of the colonial government. Meanwhile, the independent publishers, whose loyalty to the colonial authorities was suspect, were subjected to strict supervision, which frequently resulted in their sidelining in the marketplace, or even their closure. This meant that as time went on, the business of translation passed increasingly into the hands of the Dutch East Indies government, even though the majority of the translators themselves were drawn from indigenous Indonesian society.

AFTER 1950

After Independence, Balai Pustaka came under the authority of the Republic of Indonesia, with part of its staff continuing on as employees of the Indonesian government. According to H.B. Jassin (1984:27), by 1947 there was discontent among staff over pay rates, with a number of staff who worked on the Balai Pustaka magazine *Pantja Raja* (1945-1947) resigning and going in search of alternative employment.³ Others left because they

3 In a letter to Aoh K. Hadimadja (25-3-1947), Jassin wrote that among others, Sukmono, Nurdin, Markum and Pak Darma had resigned from Balai Pustaka in protest at the levels of pay offered by the institution. ('Markum akan pergi pula, karena tidak bisa hidup dengan gaji R 150 yang sepuluh hari sudah habis. [...] Pak Darma pun sudah pindah kerja ke Merdeka kembali, di mana dia digaji R 350, meninggalkan yang R 70 di Balai Pustaka.' 'Markum is going as well, because he can't live on a monthly wage of Rp 150, which doesn't last ten days. [...] Pak Darma has already gone back to *Merdeka*, where he is on a wage of Rp 350 in contrast to the Rp 70 he was getting at Balai Pustaka.')

were unwilling to support an institution that was a relic of the colonial system. Independent art and culture magazines were springing up everywhere at this time, with publications from the revolutionary period, like *Bintang Merah* (1945-1965), *Pembangunan* (1945-1947), *Mimbar Indonesia* (1947-1966), *Siasat* (1947-1961), and *Mutiara* (1949-1950), followed in the early 1950s by other magazines like *Budaya* (1950-1964), *Basis* (1951-1982), *Duta Suasana* (1951-1956), *Konfrontasi* (1954-1960), *Zaman Baru* (1955-1965), and at the end of 1950s – early 1960s by *Pandji Masjarakat* (1959-2001), *Sastra* (1961-1969) and *Gema Islam* (1962-1967). With the advent of these outlets, all of them centred in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, intellectuals, artists, writers and translators were able to work completely independent of government interference and make their own individual contributions to the formation of a post-colonial Indonesian culture and identity.⁴

Balai Pustaka made a serious effort to revitalize itself, publishing its own new journal *Indonesia*, which, like other journals of the time made space available for translated short stories.⁵ But Balai Pustaka no longer enjoyed the pre-eminent market position it had occupied before 1945. It continued to publish literary translations, but in far smaller numbers than during the colonial period. It now had to compete with private publishers like *Pembangunan* and *Jajasan Pembaruan*, which, in the eyes of many writers and translators were more aggressive business operations and more attuned to the financial situation of their authors and translators. *Pembangunan*, which came into existence in 1940 as *Opbouw-Pembangoenan*, was one of the most important Indonesian publishing houses of the 1950s. Known as *Pembangunan* from 1949, it was a regular publisher of both classical and modern literature.⁶ *Jajasan Pembaruan* was established in 1951 and was affiliated to the *Partai Rakjat Indonesia* (PRI, Indone-

4 For detailed studies on the content of two of these magazines, including their role as outlets for the publication of literary translation, see the contributions by Els Bogaerts and Keith Foulcher to this volume.

5 The journal *Indonesia* (originally named *Indonesia, Madjalah Kebudayaan*) was published by Balai Pustaka from 1949-1950, then subsequently by Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia from June-July 1950-1952. From 1952, the journal *Indonesia* was published by the Badan Musjawarat Kebudayaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture). See further 'Notes on Indonesian journals and newspapers cited in this volume' at this back of this book.

6 In a letter to Trisno Sumardjo in 1949, Jassin (1984:61) suggested that Sumardjo send his translations of Shakespeare either to Balai Pustaka or Opbouw[*-Pembangoenan*] which was also seeking translators for the classics. One of its directors was Soedjatmoko.

sian People's Party).⁷ It was established to promote the translation and circulation of 'Marxist' and 'leftist' books in Indonesia, and included among its staff four Indonesian and foreign translators whose job was to translate from English and Dutch, and occasionally other languages as well (Ibarruri Sudharsono 2009: 704-5). Its publications included translations of works by Friedrich Engels, Maxim Gorky, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Lin Ji-Tjou, Kim Il Sung; translations of foreign literature by Boris Polewoi, Maxim Gorky, N. H. Krupskaya; as well as works by D.N. Aidit and LEKRA writers like H.R. Bandaharo, Bachtiar Siagian, and Zubir A.A. It had bookshops in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya, and agents in Bandung and Medan. Other shops in Jakarta also sold its books.⁸

In Jassin's view, literary life in Jakarta at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s was growing apace.⁹ His evaluation was based on the healthy growth of new magazines, a broadening and deepening cultural knowledge, a growing number of new young writers and a standard of writing that was 'no cause for embarrassment'.¹⁰ But the growth of literary life was taking place in highly unfavourable economic conditions. The only writers who were in receipt of a monthly income were those lucky enough to secure positions on the editorial boards of the new magazines. Even they sometimes worked on more than one publication, and those with a talent for writing or translating had to keep up a constant output of publications to be able to fulfil their basic needs, which at the time required an income of Rp 700 per month.¹¹ Honoraria offered by newspapers and magazines at this time varied considerably. In the mid-1950s a chief editor received around Rp 230 per month, while payment for a short story or a

7 Although it published work by left-wing authors, it was not associated with the Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture), which had its own publications division (Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin Dahlan 2008:465, 470).

8 See 'Jajasan "Pembaruan"', *Harian Rakjat*, 1-1-1960. Pramoedyana Ananta Toer published a positive evaluation of [Jajasan Pembaruan in *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955.

9 In this respect, Jassin disagreed with Soedjatmoko, who argued that Indonesian literature at this time was facing a crisis (Ajip Rosidi 2008:108-9). See also Hong Liu (2006:182-6) for an analysis of the 'crisis in literature' as part of the search for a national cultural identity among Indonesian intellectuals.

10 Jassin 1984:28-9. Jassin used the words 'no cause for embarrassment' ('tidak memalukan') in relation to an essay by Ida Nasution, but he also held the view that the decline of the magazine *Pudjangga Baru* did not mean a concomitant decline in the quality of Indonesian literature. He believed that good quality works would continue to surface, indicating the strength of the new Indonesian literary tradition (Jassin 1984:12).

11 Ajip Rosidi (2008:139) writes that when he began working at Balai Pustaka in 1955, his monthly honorarium was Rp 230, against a minimum monthly requirement of Rp 700.

translation varied between Rp 40 and Rp 200.¹² In the case of book length translations of literature, the translator normally received 10% of income from sales (Jassin 1984:49).

As these figures indicate, the writing of literature at this time was no basis for financial security. Readers, the government and publishers all paid little attention to creative writing. Under such conditions, Jassin's description of a thriving literary environment in post-war Jakarta seems somewhat surprising.

Throughout the 1950s, literary translators seem to have received little acknowledgement of their work. Except in the case of translators who were also prominent writers and poets, their names were often omitted from their published work. Acknowledged translators tend to be figures such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Trisno Sumardjo, H.B. Jassin, Mochtar Lubis, Asrul Sani, Siti Nuraini, Mohamad Rajab, Ramadhan K.H., Sitor Situmorang, Usmar Ismail, Hamka, Bahrum Rangkuti,¹³ who are known primarily as creative writers and essayists. In the mid-1950s, a number of writers and translators voiced their concern at the lack of understanding of their work and the value of literary translation for independent Indonesia. In 1955, the prominent writer and translator Pramoedya Ananta Toer reiterated the dissatisfaction he had expressed at the 1952 National Culture Congress in Bandung concerning the government's neglect of a call by writers for protection of the rights of authors and translators.¹⁴ Three years on, Pramoedya stated, the situation still had not improved, even though the government's own Council for Deliberations on National Culture (BMKN, Badan Musjawarat Kebudayaan Nasional) had undertaken to award prizes for the best literary works (including translations). In 1956 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer expressed the view that the work of translators was a significant contribution to Indonesian society's understanding and familiarity with the thought worlds of other nations. In his view, translation was an art, requiring not only a mastery of language but an ability to move between two different worlds. A good translator needed training, and deserved the same level of recognition as that given to writers of original prose and poetry (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1956).

12 Ajip Rosidi (2008:122) notes that the new magazine *Prosa* offered Rp 200 to a recognized author for a short story, whether original or in translation. This was a large sum, compared to what other magazines offered, like *Siasat's* Rp 40-50 and *Mimbar Indonesia's* Rp 75. Only *Star Weekly* offered Rp 200.

13 On Bahrum Rangkuti and Hamka, see further Hairus Salim's contribution to this volume.

14 See 'Pramoedya Ananta Toer tentang Jajasan Pembaruan', *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955.

Publishers too paid little attention to translation. Balai Pustaka no longer regarded translation as a significant part of its output, and among all Indonesian publishers only Jajasan Pembaruan had recognized the rights of translators and the importance of translations from world literature, regardless of length. For example, it had supported Pramoedya through his 717-page translation of Gorky's *Mother*.¹⁵ It was also Jajasan Pembaruan's practice, unlike that of other publishers, to approach translators directly with specific requests for translation, rather than waiting for translators to offer their work for publication. For example, on one occasion marking the anniversary of the founding of LEKRA, Jajasan Pembaruan's representative Samanjaya (Oei Hai Djoen) approached Shannu (Tan To or Zhan Hu in Mandarin), asking for suggestions for a translation from Mandarin. Shannu – who claims to be the only Indonesian translator at the time who could undertake literary translation from Mandarin – suggested Jang Mo's *The song of youth*, which later appeared under the title of *Njanjian remadja* in 1961.¹⁶

Similar criticisms to those of Pramoedya were expressed by a reviewer of an exhibition of translations from world literature that was held in the STICUSA building in Jakarta in February 1956 (*Pameran kesusastraan dunia* 1956). Praising the decision to stage the exhibition, the writer of the review expressed disappointment at the small number of works of world literature that had been translated into Indonesian (and published as books), which was said to total no more than 120 books. Translations available were only the works of minor writers, with the great figures of world literature like Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Dante and modern writers like Thomas Mann still unknown in Indonesian. The reason for this situation was the neglect of Indonesian publishers, the majority of whom had no systematic programs of translation and were content to leave the selection of books for translation to the initiative of the translators themselves. This meant that in most cases, translation was confined to light reading that was easy and quick to translate, and, from the publishers' point of view, most likely to attract high sales figures. This was the situation that provoked Pramoedya's admiration for Jajasan Pembaruan, as the only Indo-

15 Pramoedya also translated a novel by the Russian writer Boris Polewoi, which appeared as the 440 page *Kisah manusia sedjati* (A genuine human being) (see 'Pramoedya Ananta Toer tentang Jajasan Pembaruan' di *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955). According to Jajasan Pembaruan, 1000 copies of the translation were sold in two weeks, despite the inflated price of Rp 30 as a result of paper shortages ('Jajasan "Pembaruan"' *Harian Rakjat*, 1-1-1960).

16 Shannu, written communication, 2-2-2009.

nesian publisher prepared to commit funds to the translation of the works of major writers like Aragon, Camus and Gorky, regardless of length.

Overall, it appears that during the 1950s writers and translators took great interest in translating works of world literature into Indonesian. However the interest and enthusiasm of individual translators were often stymied by the low level of support they received from publishers, cultural organizations and the government. The only consistently available channel for the publication of literary translation was the proliferating number of independent journals managed by groups of writers and intellectuals with differing ideological and cultural outlooks. This situation appears to have been the case throughout the 1950s, and to have remained so until after 1965.

FOREIGN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

If Indonesian writers and translators in general felt that they gained no benefit from the internal cultural policies of their government, cultural diplomacy between Indonesia and the rest of the world at the time of the Cold War fostered their interest in world literature through an efficient system of book distribution from foreign publishers. Prominent Cold War actors like the PRC, the Soviet Union and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, and the Western capitalist bloc made up of the United States and the countries of Western Europe, all made use of art and culture (including literature) to raise their profiles and develop friendly relations with other countries at this time. In the case of the PRC, Nicolai Volland has written that the government made strenuous efforts to promote socialist principles and ideology through literature, and urged well-known writers to produce new works that advanced this cause (Volland 2008:53). As Hong Liu notes, these works were then translated into a variety of languages for circulation abroad, including in Indonesia. In the PRC, translation was centralized through the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, which employed a number of local translators on its staff. Books in Indonesian represented the second largest category of its foreign language publications (Liu 2006:189-90). A similar situation prevailed in the Soviet Union after 1953, with the move to a more aggressive promotion of communist propaganda both at home and abroad after the death of Stalin in March of that year (Clews

1964:119; Ibarruri Sudharsono 2009:703-12). Beginning at this time, a large number of books in Russian were translated into a variety of other languages, especially English, by state publishers such as *Izdatelstvo literatuy na inostrannikh yazikah* (Publishing House for Literature in Foreign Languages), *Knizhny Mir* (publisher and bookstore) and Progress Publishers in Moscow (publisher and bookstore).¹⁷ Distribution of books overseas was carried out through networks such as embassies, non-government organizations working with the governments of socialist countries, universities and particular bookshops. Books from the Soviet Union, mostly translated into English, reached Indonesians through a number of channels, including the Jajasan Pembaruan bookshops in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya and their agents.¹⁸ Translations from the PRC were distributed through the International Book Company in Beijing, the PRC Embassy in Jakarta, bookshops owned by Chinese Indonesians, and affiliates of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) (Liu 1995:218).

The Indonesian government took a relaxed attitude towards the distribution networks for books from all overseas countries, especially when free copies were made available to government departments.¹⁹ This meant that throughout the 1950-1965 period Indonesia remained wide open to the influences of ideas coming from abroad in the form of literary translation, especially where the socialist countries were involved.

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

Although their influence was limited, institutions representing overseas literary networks in Indonesia also played a part in encouraging translation into Indonesian, especially in the early 1950s.

17 Clews (1964:127) notes that from publications in 11 different languages intended for export in 1956, the languages of translation grew to 16 in 1958 and 25 in 1960. The number of books exported grew from 17,892,265 in 1956 to 40,113,400 in 1960. According to official figures only 4 titles in Indonesian were exported to Indonesia, a total of 34,500 books. The names of Russian publishers quoted here were supplied by Koesalah S. Toer in written communication, 27-9-2008.

18 *Harian Rakjat* regularly included Jajasan Pembaruan advertisements listing English translations of Soviet titles. These included works by Gorky, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev and Gribačov, among others.

19 Liu 1995:218. See also '507 buku pengetahuan dari Sovjet untuk Indonesia', *Harian Rakjat*, 22-1-1960.

STICUSA

Although official relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands came to an end with the acknowledgement of independence in 1949, Dutch cultural affairs continued to be represented in independent Indonesia through the activities of STICUSA (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking, Foundation for Cultural Co-operation) (see the contribution by Liesbeth Dolk to this volume). As noted above, in February 1956, STICUSA held an exhibition in Jakarta of works of literature translated into Indonesian and Dutch, entitled 'World Literature in Translation'. The exhibition aimed to draw attention to the range of translations published in books available in the two languages at that time, even though STICUSA itself had played no part in their production. In his review of the exhibition H.B. Jassin (1956:12) noted that the number of literary translations from Dutch into Indonesian lagged far behind those from English, French and Russian. The Dutch poets of the [18]80s movement, De Tachtigers, who had been popular with the Pujangga Baru generation in pre-war Indonesia, remained untranslated, and there were only a few translations of poems by the modernist poets of the 1930s, Slauerhoff and Marsman, the work of the revolution era poet, Chairil Anwar. The Dutch Indies writer Edgar du Perron was minimally represented,²⁰ as was the Flemish writer Willem Elschot, through Idrus's translation of his short novel *Kaas* (*Cheese*). Even the great nineteenth-century classic *Max Havelaar*, which had been a favourite of the pre-war Indonesian nationalists, was only known in Indonesian through Haksan Wiratusisna's translation of a single extract, the famous story of Saidjah and Adinda. As Jassin (1956:17) pointed out, Dutch, along with English, German and (minimally) French, was a source language for translations into Indonesian, with translations of literature by writers from Russia, China, India, Arabia, Italy and Spain all based on their Dutch language versions. In this way, Dutch did play a part in introducing Indonesians to world literature, though Dutch literature itself remained under-represented in Indonesian translation.

This situation appears to have changed little in the decade after 1956. A list of publications between 1945 and 1965 issued in Jakarta by the Indonesian Publishers' Association, IKAPI (IKAPI 1965)

20 Only one compilation of his short stories was translated by Sitor Situmorang under the title *Menentukan sikap* (Determining a stand) (1956) published by Van Hoeve.

suggests that there was no significant change in the number of literary translations in the period leading up to 1965. Throughout the period, the source languages for literary translation remained primarily English, Dutch, German and French, even though as noted above, Jang Mo's *The song of youth* appeared in 1961 as *Njan-jian remadja*, and a volume of short stories by Lu Xun appeared in 1963, both translated from the original Mandarin by Shannu. The former was published by Jajasan Pembaruan, and the latter by LEKRA.

Given the large number of translations of Chinese literature into Indonesian by the Foreign Languages Bureau in Beijing, it should not be surprising that there was little translation from Mandarin in Indonesia itself. In the case of Russian, the ready availability of English translations of Russian literature also obviated the need for translations from the original language into Indonesian. In fact the only Indonesian to study Russian with a view to undertaking literary translation in the 1960-1965 period was Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. As he did not complete his translations of Russian literature from original sources in Moscow before 1965, these did not appear in Indonesian before the outbreak of the 1965 coup.²¹

FOREIGN EMBASSIES

In the early post-independence period, foreign delegations played an important role in channelling information about culture and cultural products between Indonesia and their home countries. In most cases, foreign embassies employed their own translating teams, most of whose work involved the translation of general information documents.²² A number of embassies published their own magazines, as well as brochures for free distribution. Some examples of general information magazines published by foreign embassies in Indonesia are *American Miscellany*, *Pemandan-*

21 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, written and oral communication, 26-5-2008 and 11-2-2009.

22 For example, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, who worked as a translator in the Czechoslovakian embassy in Jakarta between 1957 and 1959, translated items such as descriptions of the city of Prague, Charles University, Hitler's razing of the town of Lidice after the attempted assassination of a Gestapo commander, trade between Czechoslovakia and the rest of the world, the composer Bedrich Smetana, a teacher of Indonesian in Prague named Miroslav Oplt, and Czech ceramics. Editorials from Indonesian newspapers like *Pedoman*, *Harian Rakjat*, and *Duta Masjarakat* were also translated into English (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, written communication, 31-5-2008).

*gan Inggris, India Panorama, Hongaria Baru, Tjekoslowakia Sekarang, and Negeri Soviet.*²³ In general, none of these publications included translations of literature. In this connection, the role of foreign embassies was confined to the provision of libraries open to the general public, or as distributors of books translated and published in their home countries.²⁴

Foreign embassies were also active during this period in facilitating links with Indonesian artists and making recommendations to their governments concerning the issuing of invitations to visit their countries. In the case of embassies from socialist states, there were also instances of involvement in literary translation projects. For example, as part of an attempt to strengthen relations with Indonesian writers, the Chinese embassy undertook the translation of works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Utuy Son-tani and Abdul Muis into Mandarin, while the Russian embassy supported the translation into Russian of works by Abdul Muis, M. Dimiyati, M.R. Dajoh and Pramoedya Ananta Toer.²⁵ Indonesian short stories, including works by Pramoedya and Suwarsih Djojopuspito, also appeared in Estonian translation, along with extracts from Marah Rusli's *Sitti Nurbaya* and Abdul Muis's *Suropati*.²⁶ It is most likely also that a few embassies established their own links with non-government organizations or local magazines that were in sympathy with what was occurring in their home countries.²⁷ There were also Mandarin publications in Jakarta, the weekly *Chiao Hsing* and the Jajasan Zamrud magazine *Pelad-jaran Bahasa Indonesia*, that included discussion and examples of

23 See Alexander K. Oglobin (2009:693) for information about the Soviet propaganda system applied in Indonesia.

24 For example, Winarta Adisubrata recalled in an interview (Jakarta, 7-12-2008) that he was a regular borrower of books from the well-stocked library of the British Embassy in Jakarta. On the Chinese embassy's role in book distribution, see Hong Liu (1995:217). Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Dahlan (2008:452) note that Jajasan Pembaruan was an agent for books imported from Eastern Europe and the Communist Bloc. Embassies of these countries most likely acted as distributors of these books.

25 Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin Dahlan 2008:452. Shannu (written communication, 14-2-2009) also noted the involvement of the Chinese embassy in translation from Indonesian. According to Koesalah S. Toer (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008), two of Pramoedya's novels, *Di tepi kali Bekasi* (On the banks of the Bekasi river) and *Keluarga gerilya* (The guerilla family) were translated into Russian.

26 See 'Pramudya Ananta Tur, Suwarsih Djojopuspito, Abdul Muis di tengah rakjat Estonia', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-2-1960.

27 Liu (1995:216) notes that the embassy of the PRC established links with the Indonesia-PRC Friendship Association. According to Koesalah Soebagyo Toer the same was true of the Soviet embassy's approach to the Indonesia-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau (Badan Hubungan Kebudayaan Indonesia-Sovjet), an independent body that sympathized with the Soviet Union (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008).

Indonesian literature and which were distributed in the PRC as well as in Indonesia itself.²⁸

CREATIVE WRITERS AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

As mentioned above, the intensity with which literary translation into Indonesian was pursued during the 1950-1965 period was largely due to the individual efforts of authors and writers. They were inspired by a post-colonial spirit of freedom, the will to explore the freedom of the human spirit in an atmosphere of openness that marked the end of the restrictions colonialism had imposed on them. They were driven by an urge to make Indonesians familiar with the outside world through the medium of literature, introducing the heritage of world literature and its major writers, and making the thinking of prominent writers accessible to Indonesians who did not read foreign languages (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1956). But this spirit of freedom of exploration also involved a search for models for a free, secure and prosperous Indonesia in the future. In this respect, creative writers looked to translation, as much as their own original work, as a way of conveying ideas and concepts they regarded as important for their society. Trisno Sumardjo is an example of those artists who struggled for creative and intellectual freedom and physical and mental development as the basis of an independent and prosperous nation state. By contrast, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer is a professional translator who saw translation as a way of conveying the ideas of the great writers from socialist countries as part of a struggle that was more concerned with social and political change than creative freedom. For him, translation was a part of the struggle to win freedom for the oppressed.

TRISNO SUMARDJO (1916-1969)

Trisno Sumardjo is remembered as a painter and a creative writer as well as an art critic and a translator. He established a reputa-

28 Shannu, written communication, (2, 12, 14 and 19 February 2009). Shannu worked as a journalist and editor for *Chiao Hsing* (Sadar) (under the leadership of Siauw Giok Tjhan) in Jakarta between 1957 and 1960. During this time he wrote regularly on Indonesian art and culture under pseudonyms including Shan and Hasanudin. See also Ibarruri Sudharsono (2009:711-2) for information about Jajasan Kebudayaan Sadar and the journal *Chiao Xing* or *Chio Hsing*.

tion as a translator through his translations of Shakespeare, which began in 1950 with the publication of *Hamlet* by PT Pembangunan, and continued right up until the serialization of his *Antonius dan Cleopatra* in *Indonesia Madjalah Kebudayaan* between October 1961 and June 1963.²⁹ He also translated Boris Pasternak's *Dokter Zhivago* (Djambatan, 1960),³⁰ and a collection of short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, *Death and mystery*, which is given the Indonesian title *Maut dan misteri* (Djambatan, 1969). At the same time, he also published translations of many short works of fiction in journals like *Konfrontasi*, *Indonesia*, *Sastra*, *Kisah*, *Mimbar Indonesia* and *Siasat*. The texts he selected for translation varied widely, both in terms of genre and geographic origin. They covered drama, poetry, the short story and the novel, and ranged from East and Southeast Asia (Japan, China, Vietnam, Burma, and the Philippines) to Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel), India, Europe (Italy, France, Germany, England and Russia) and the United States. The only restriction imposed on his choice of works for translation came from his knowledge of foreign languages, which was confined to English and Dutch. This meant that except in the case of original writing in these languages, all his translations were based on already translated texts.

Trisno Sumardjo was one of that generation of writers who came to maturity after the declaration of independence from the Dutch in 1945, and who were strongly committed to ideals of freedom. For him, this meant freedom from any kind of political direction of the arts, and an absolute commitment to freedom of thought and creativity. In Soekarno's Indonesia, this commitment led him to be a signatory of the Cultural Manifesto (Manifes Kebudayaan) of 17 August 1963, which directly challenged the direction of national cultural policy in the later years of the Guided Democracy period. Earlier, he had expressed a similar criticism of an exhibition of [socialist] realist art, arguing that the call for artists to take up the principles of [socialist] realism was a denial of the artist's fundamental freedom to explore the inner dimensions of human experience (Nashar 1985:22).

29 His other Shakespeare translations are *Saudagar Venezia (The merchant of Venice)* (Pembangunan, 1950), *Julius Caesar* (Pembangunan, 1951), *Macbeth* (Pembangunan, 1952), *Manasuka (As you like it)* (Balai Pustaka, 1952), *Prahara (The tempest)* (Balai Pustaka, 1952), *Impian di tengah musim (A midsummer night's dream)* (Balai Pustaka, 1955) and *Romeo dan Julia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1960).

30 The information provided by Ogloblin (2009:697), is rather confusing since it does not mention that Sumardjo's translation of the novel *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak (1960) was based on its English version, not the original Russian. The same can be said of other translations of Russian literature by M. Radjab, M. Taslim and Pramoedy Ananta Toer.



Trisno Sumardjo 1952. (Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin)

The eclecticism of his choice of texts for translation is testimony to his commitment to artistic freedom. In the introduction to a collection of translated short stories entitled *Tjerita dari Asia Afrika* (Stories from Asia Africa), published by the magazine *Sastra* in 1962, he wrote that the aim of the collection was ‘to give the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of their fellow human beings’,³¹ implicitly endorsing the collection’s non-partisan political nature and the concept of a universal humanity. At the time, this kind of approach ran counter to the political emphasis on solidarity with other newly independent states, but for Trisno and those like him, the significance of the end of colonialism was that the new climate of freedom enabled the development of ‘a humanity that was so neglected by the colonizer’³². His concept of solidarity was the solidarity of a common humanity between people who shared the same destiny, the same aspirations, and the same experience of joy and suffering. For him, literature and art in general offered a means of knowing and experiencing humanity in its fullest sense.

It was on the basis of this conception of art and literature that Trisno became a signatory of the Cultural Manifesto, at a time when he felt that social and political pressures were impinging on his freedom to write and speak out. Along with other signatories to the Manifesto, he saw the document as a protest against the subordination of culture to politics and other socially-based forces (Sukito 1988). In his article *Seni dan masyarakat* (Art and society), Trisno made clear that he rejected the use of art and culture as a tool of political propaganda (Trisno Sumardjo 1960). As early as 1957, he was one of a small number of Indonesian artists and intellectuals to return from a visit to the People’s Republic of China with very negative impressions of Chinese motives in inviting delegations of overseas writers to observe the situation of writers in the PRC. In a report of his visit (Trisno Sumardjo 1957, 1958) he wrote that there were ‘political-psychological factors’ underlying the invitation, and that the Chinese aim had been to ‘turn out’ new members of the Communist Party in their home country.

Surviving examples of Trisno’s letters, as well as his published writing, make clear that his thinking about art and literature was already well-formed by the time Indonesian cultural political debates reached their critical point in the late 1950s and early

31 ‘[m]enterjemahkan tjerita-tjerita dari Asia-Afrika adalah mengantar pembatja ke hati sesama manusia’ (Trisno Sumardjo 1962:15). For a further example of Trisno Sumardjo’s thinking about art and humanity see Trisno Sumardjo 1949-50.

32 ‘[p]eri-kemanusiaan jang begitu banyak diabaikan oleh pendjadjah’ (Trisno Sumardjo 1962:15).

1960s. Between around 1933 and 1950, when he was still in Solo, Central Java, he was already conceiving freedom of artistic expression as the freedom to explore the modern world in all its diversity. His education had opened his mind to the richness of art and literature beyond what he felt to be the confines of his immediate environment, including – from an early age – making him an admirer of Shakespeare. In a letter to H.B. Jassin, dated 7 January 1950, he complained about the feeling of being physically and spiritually ‘constricted’ in the ‘hinterlands’ of Solo and Yogyakarta.³³ He dreamed of coming into contact with the freedom of the modern world in Jakarta and overseas, dreams that he realized in 1950 with his move to Jakarta and a Rockefeller Foundation grant that enabled him to make a six months’ visit to the United States and Western Europe (London, Amsterdam, Paris and Rome) in 1952. After visiting a number of museums and artists’ exhibitions in New York, Boston and Chicago (such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum and the Brooklyn Museum), he expressed surprise at having found so much European art and so much American art that was derivative of the work of European painters.³⁴ He was also disappointed to see so much art that was a ‘statement of a sterile personality’ and so much influence of ‘an artificial way of life, full of intellectual calculations that were officially inculcated into the minds of artists during their training’.³⁵ He concluded that culture of this kind held little that was of value, and grew in his self-confidence and belief in his own strengths as an Indonesian artist. As such, his commitment to artistic ‘freedom’ was clearly based on his sense of identity as an Indonesian artist, rather than, as his ideological opponents would have it, a deracinated and politically suspect ‘cosmopolitanism’. This was the basis of his involvement in national cultural life, as General Secretary of the Badan Musjawarat Kebudayaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture) in Jakarta between 1956 and 1969 and Head of the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (DKJ, Jakarta Arts Council) between 1967 and 1969, the year of his death. It was the same commitment that he brought to his work as a translator, valuing all literary works, because the products of creative freedom always served to raise levels of human dignity and the dignity of nations.

33 This letter is part of the collection held by the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre in Jakarta.

34 Letter to H.B. Jassin from New York, 5-2-1952, held in the collection of the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre, Jakarta.

35 Letter to H.B. Jassin from Chicago, 4-3-52, held in the collection of the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre, Jakarta.

KOESALAH SOEBAGYO TOER (B. 1935)

Koesalah Soebagyo Toer has been actively involved in translation since 1952, when he was still a student in senior high school. Initially, he translated solely from English, but in 1963 he began to produce translations from Russian, and from 1978 until the present he has also translated from Dutch.

In general, Koesalah has chosen works for translation on his own initiative, publishing his translations in various magazines, including *Kisah*, *Merdeka*, *Pewart*, *PPK*, *Brawidjaja* and *Pemuda*. His serialized translation *Nicola Suhaj*, *penjamun* (Nicola Suhaj, a thief), from a novel by Ivan Olbracht, was published in the newspaper *Bintang Timur* in 1960. In some cases he has translated works suggested to him by his brother Pramoedya, or co-translated with Pramoedya, as in collections of short stories by Tolstoy and Chekhov. The Tolstoy collection, entitled *Tjerita-tjerita Sebastopol* (Sebastopol stories), was published in *Pemuda* between February 1956 and June 1957. The Chekhov collection, which existed of eight stories, was enti-



Koesalah Soebagyo Toer at School 93 in Moscow, attending 'Indonesia Day' on 9 April 1962. From left to right: I Ketut Sunatera (back), a student (front), Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, A.G. Lordkipanidze, Rusdi Harmain, Asahan Aidit, and three students from School 93. (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer)

tled *Pertaruhan* (The wager), and was published by LEKRA in 1960. After he established a reputation as a translator, various publishers, such as Jajasan Pembaruan, commissioned translations from him. Apart from the titles just mentioned, his book length translations include *Hari-hari Oktober* (October days), from the work of Nadezhda Krupskaya (Jajasan Pembaruan, 1957), *Pemberontakan dipelabuhan* (Revolt in the harbour), a collection of short stories by Rumanian writer Alexandru Sahia (1960), and *Tjerita-tjerita tjinta* (Love stories), a collection of short stories by Lin Yu Tang, which remained unpublished for unknown reasons.

As a member of one of Indonesia's most famous literary families,³⁶ Koesalah had access to the literary world through the networks that Pramoedya was a part of in the early 1950s. In 1952, Pramoedya set up a literary agency Mimbar Penjiaran DUTA with the aim of collecting articles on topics dealing with art, literature and culture and offering them to publishers both in Indonesia and in Singapore/Malaya in the form of a regular bulletin. Koesalah was asked to become secretary and general administrator of Mimbar Penjiaran DUTA, while he was still a student in senior high school. This gave Koesalah valuable experience of the Indonesian publishing world, because he was assigned to prepare each bulletin and deliver it to the offices of various magazines and newspapers in Jakarta. The contacts he established through this work facilitated his access to publication outlets for his own articles and translations.³⁷

Koesalah's upbringing in a nationalist family that took an active part in the struggle for independence – he recalls the bitterness of seeing his family home ransacked and his father humiliated by Dutch police – strengthened his early commitment to defend the oppressed and fight against those who oppressed others. Adopting Soekarno's view of the contradiction between the forces of revolution (NEFO, New Emerging Forces) and the anti-revolutionary forces (OLDEFO, Old Established Forces), he identified with those who fought for revolution and defended the oppressed, which brought him into line with the socialist world. All his literary translations were of works from socialist countries, reflecting this commitment. In the introduction to his translation of Alexandru Sahia, *Pemberontakan dipelabuhan*, he wrote:

36 Apart from his older brother Pramoedya, Koesalah has two younger brothers who also published translations and original writing during the period under discussion. Walujadi Toer's translation of a work by Liu Pai Yu, entitled *Njala api di hadapan kita* (The flames ahead of us) appeared in *Bintang Timur* between 19 May and 4 July 1960, while Soesilo Toer published several short stories in *Gelombang*, the cultural section of the magazine *Siasat*, for instance *Menderita* (Suffering) (1952a) dan *Pemukul kentong* (The gong beater) (1952b).

37 Koesalah S. Toer, written communication, 27-9-2008.

As in other countries, in Rumania there are prominent writers who do not write just to pass the time, but on a much more convincing basis. Alexandru Sahia, whose short stories are collected here, is one of those writers. He writes to defend the interests of the people. [...] Apart from short stories, he also writes essays and articles.

All his work is permeated by a strong conviction concerning the victory of the ideals of freedom, the victory of the struggle to eradicate the enslavement of some human beings by others. Sahia is aware of the negative consequences of the exploitation of workers, whatever their nationality might be. He knows about the miserable fate of the peasants. He understands a writer's duty. For that reason, his literary works go hand in hand with the desire of the majority of the people.³⁸

There were also practical reasons why Koesalah confined his translations to works by writers from socialist countries. Literature from the countries of Eastern Europe was not bound by copyright, nor was it subject to the Bern Convention.³⁹ This made it freely available for translation, bound only by the moral obligation to spread the principles of socialist revolution. The same held true for works of Indonesian literature translated into Eastern European languages, because Indonesia was also not a signatory to the Bern Convention. Another consideration was the price of books. At the time, books from Western countries were very expensive, and there were restrictions on their import into Indonesia. For example, book orders from Britain (which were mainly school textbooks) had to be made through the British Council, and could take more than six months to arrive. When books did arrive, they were marketed through particular bookshops and always sold out in a very short time.⁴⁰ The high cost of (producing) books also

38 Seperti negeri2 jang lain, Rumaniapun mempunjai penulis2 terkemuka, jang menulis bukan hanja sekedar iseng, melainkan dengan dasar perdjjuangan jang lebih mejakinkan. Alexandru Sahia jang tjerita2 pendeknja dimuat dalam buku ini, adalah salah seorang penulis Rumania terkemuka jang menulis untuk membela kepentingan Rakjat [...]. Disamping tjerita pendek, Sahia adalah djuga penulis esei dan artikel.

Sekalian tulisannja mengandung kejakinan jang teguh akan menangnja tjita2 merdeka, menangnja dalam perdjjuangan untuk melenjapkan perbudakan manusia oleh manusia jang lain. Sahia sadar akan segi buruk daripada penghisapan jang berlaku atas kaum pekerdja, dari kebangsaan apapun djuga. Iapun tahu akan melaratnja nasib kaum tani. Ia mengerti akan tugas seorang penulis. Karena itulah maka hasil2 karjanja rapat bergandengan dengan hasrat rakjat jang terbanjak (Sahia 1960:5).

39 International Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, signed in Bern in 1886.

40 In an interview (Depok, 17-9-2008), Koesalah mentioned the bookshop Pembimbing in Jalan Kebon Sirih in this connection. Rhoma D.A. Yuliantry and Muhidin Dahlan (2008:452) mention Pembimbing and Indira as suppliers of books from Western Europe and the United States.

meant that books that were translated tended to be short. A translator had to guard against rejection of manuscripts because of their length. *Pertaruhan*, Koesalah's translation of Chekhov, was specifically composed of short stories so that its page count would not be excessive.

As the 1960s approached, the flow of books from Eastern Europe to Indonesia increased significantly. Koesalah had no trouble obtaining these books, since between 1958 and 1960 he worked at the non-government Indonesia-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau.⁴¹ Many publications from Moscow were sent free of charge to this organization, which meant that Koesalah had easy access to books for translation.

In the difficult economic conditions of the time, it was common for individuals to work at more than one profession at the same time. Creative writers regularly supplemented their income working as translators or as magazine or newspaper editors. In this respect Koesalah was something of an exception, because apart from writing the occasional short story or essay, he remained primarily a professional translator. For him, the supplement to his income as a literary translator came from translating texts of non-fiction. His ideological sympathies led him to become a part-time translator at the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Jakarta where, as noted above,⁴² he translated informational texts as well as editorials from Indonesian newspapers. No literary translation was involved, but the experience enriched his skills as a translator and increased his knowledge of Eastern Europe.⁴³

His growing familiarity with the countries of Eastern Europe led Koesalah to take up the study of Russian, first at the Indonesian-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau in 1959. Finally, at the age of 24, he secured a scholarship to study in Moscow, where he was a student in the Faculty of History-Philology at the Friendship of Nations University between 1960 and his graduation in 1965.⁴⁴

41 See above, note 21.

42 See above, note 16.

43 Koesalah was introduced to the Czechoslovakian Embassy by his friend, the composer Subronto (also spelt Soebronto) K. Atmodjo, who worked at the embassy as a general assistant. Koesalah and Subronto were both members of the 'Gembira' Song and Dance Ensemble, which regularly represented Indonesia overseas (see the contribution by Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri in this volume). It was also Subronto who introduced Koesalah to Rumanian literature, and encouraged him to translate the work by Alexandru Sahia discussed above.

44 Koesalah states that between 1960 and 1965 there were 250 Indonesian students who enrolled at this university. In all, there were around 600 Indonesian students in the Soviet Union as a whole. Of these, only 30 returned to Indonesia in 1965 (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008). See also Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 2003.



Koesalah Soebagyo Toer after a Russian language class on 12 April 1961 with (left) Natella Aleksandrovna Nesperova (phonetics teacher) and Sofia Ivanovna Pavlova (grammar teacher) holding a copy of the newspaper *Pravda*. (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer)

Koesalah recalls that his time in Moscow was full of job offers that added to his study commitments. From 1963 until just before his return to Indonesia in July 1965, he worked as a translator for the Novosti news bureau, not only compiling news broadcasts but also articles, commentaries, photo essays on aspects of Soviet politics at home and abroad, as well as reports on the Soviet economy and culture and general news items on Soviet life, for distribution in the Soviet Union and foreign countries.⁴⁵ This experience served to draw Koesalah ever more deeply into a system pervaded by socialist ideology. In the Soviet Union at the time it was considered a great honour to work for Novosti, because the news bureau was one of the foundations of socialism. Its employees not only enjoyed a high social standing, they also received a more than adequate financial return for their services. By the time he returned to Indonesia, Koesalah had saved the equivalent of ten times his monthly scholarship allowance, which was itself generous. In other words, and in contrast to the situation in Indonesia, the work of a translator in socialist countries at that time was a lucrative form of employment.

⁴⁵ Koesalah was introduced to Novosti by German Belousov, a fellow journalist at the bureau who spoke excellent Indonesian and who had been a guide for the Indonesian delegation to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957.

Koesalah's skills in Indonesian and Russian were also sought after by a state publisher in Moscow (*Izdatelstvo literatury na inostranikh yazykakh*) that produced publications specifically for export. This invitation enabled him to pursue his interest in literary translation. He first translated a work by Jingsis Aitmatov entitled *Materinskoye pole* (*Ladang Keibuan*, (Maternal farmlands), in Koesalah's Indonesian translation), and then a collection of Lenin's letters, *Pisma Amerikanskim rabochim* (*Surat-surat kepada kaum buruh Amerika*) (Letters to American workers). Lenin's works were required reading for students in the Soviet Union at the time, so it is not surprising that this collection of letters was selected for translation into Indonesian. Documentation concerning its intended publication in Indonesia is unavailable, but Koesalah assumes that the translation was sent to Jajasan Pembaruan. He was paid for his work as translator, but neither of these volumes ever appeared in print, thwarted by the events of 30 September-1 October 1965.⁴⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS

After the emergence of the Republic of Indonesia as an independent nation, there was a dramatic decline in state involvement in publishing. At the same time, there was an enthusiasm among creative writers and artists for the exploration of ideas and the examination of visions for the future which the new political freedoms had opened up. Many creative writers responded to the spirit of the times by embarking on literary translations on their own initiative, and becoming part of international creative networks. Local networks formed through the large number of new magazines and newspapers that appeared after independence to give voice to particular currents of cultural and political thought. In many cases, writers and artists were represented on the editorial boards of these publications, supplementing their income from writing through involvement in the world of publishing in general. Increasingly, they became subject to the influence of the conflict taking place between the Cold War superpowers, dividing on ideological lines into mutually antagonistic groupings. This ideological division also influenced the selection of literature for translation into Indonesian, as has been illustrated above through the examples of Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. Trisno Sumardjo, commit-

46 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer himself fell victim to these events. He was detained for ten years without trial from 1968-1978 at Salemba prison.

ted to the ideals of cultural freedom, chose literary works from all over the world for translation, driven by a desire to discover the essence of a universal humanity. Koesalah Soebagyo Toer chose to translate the works of writers who were engaged in the struggle to defend the oppressed, which he conceived exclusively in socialist terms. The literary translations which these two men undertook illustrate the extent to which Cold War politics permeated the world of Indonesian literature in the decade after 1955.

No attention has been paid here to the activities of translators who provided a link between Indonesia and the United States at this time. In the second half of the 1960s these links were apparent in the number of translations of the work of American writers into Indonesian, sponsored both by the American government and American organizations in Indonesia. For example, during this period a number of works by Harold Lamb were translated by Asrul Sani, Toto Sudarto Bachtiar, M.D. Aliff, Sumantri Merdodipuro and Hazil and published by Pembangunan in cooperation with the Jajasan Penerbitan Franklin, Jakarta–New York.⁴⁷ The basis of that translation venture, and the extent to which American institutes and organizations may have been involved in supporting translations of American literature in the pre-1965 period, remains unclear.

Neither has any attention been given here to the processes which led to the translation of works by Indonesian Muslim writers, such as M. Dimiyati and Muhammad Radjab, into Russian at this time. The question of who selected these works for translation and how they were made known in Russia remain intriguing topics for further research.

It is my hope that questions such as these will be explored in future research on the subject of literary translation in Indonesia. Much remains to be done, if we are to understand the extent to which the translation of literary works into Indonesian contributed to the transmission of ideas into Indonesia and the growth of Indonesia's own literary tradition in the 1950-1965 period. This study has attempted to lay the groundwork for that research, by exploring some aspects of the context in which literary translation took place at that time.

Translated from Indonesian by Keith Foulcher

47 I thank Hairus Salim for this information.

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