

**LABOUR EXPLOITATION, SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION AND
VIOLENCE IN PALM OIL PLANTATIONS IN
NORTH SUMATRA**

*A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF THE
TRADE UNION*



Susan de Groot Heupner

Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian
Studies (ACICIS)

Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Universitas Katolik Parahyangan
Bandung, Indonesia

May 2016



HALAMAN PENGESAHAN

Nama (*Name*): Susan de Groot Heupner
NIM (*Student ID*): 2015331211
Judul (*Research Title*) : Labour Exploitation, Systematic
Oppression and Violence in the Palm Oil
Plantations in North Sumatra: A Marxist
Perspective on the Role of the Trade Union

Penulis

Susan de Groot Heupner

Telah diuji dalam Ujian Sidang Skripsi Program West Java Field Study Research dari *The Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS)* di Universitas Katolik Parahyangan Bandung pada Jumat, 20 Mei 2016, dan dinyatakan **LULUS**

Tim Penguji

Prof. Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata, Ph. D.
Ketua sidang merangkap anggota

Dr. Sylvia Yazid, Ph.D
Anggota Penguji I

Dr. I Nyoman Sudira
Anggota Penguji II

Adrian M. Budiman, Ph.D.
Deputy Resident Director ACICIS

Mengesahkan,

Dr. Pius Sugeng Prasetyo, M.Si.
Dekan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Acknowledgments	4
2.	Introduction	5
3.	Methodology	6
4.	Marx's theory	7
	4.1 The Foundation	7
	4.2 Exploitation	8
	4.3 Alienation	9
	4.4 Class consciousness	10
	4.5 Mobilisation	11
5.	Theory in practice	13
	5.1 Exploitation	13
	5.2 Alienation	14
	5.3 Class consciousness	15
	5.4 Mobilisation	16
6.	The plantation labour movement	18
	6.1 A brief history	18
	6.2 The union	19
7.	A system of violence	22
	7.1 Violence	22
	7.2 The system	23
	7.3 The plantation	24
	7.4 Structural intimidation	25
	7.5 Oligarchical structures	26
	7.6 Past and current governments	27
	7.7 Trade union	28
8.	Conclusion	30
9.	Bibliography	31

1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I like to thank SERBUNDO's chairman, fellow trade unionists and OPPUK staff for all their efforts, time, knowledge and trust. All these words are no more than a collaboration of their voices. A particular thanks to the many members who welcomed me in their homes despite the obvious concerns and implications.

Secondly, special gratitude to Dr. Ian Wilson from Murdoch University, Australia, for his guidance, honesty and encouragement. Also to Professor Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata from Parahyangan University, Indonesia for his feedback and facilitation of the research.

Thirdly, I like to recognize the help of the many other individuals from NGOs, trade unions, institutions and corporations as well as the countless Indonesian friends along the way for their insight, support and friendship.

Lastly, a very special thanks to my beloved Indonesian family in Jakarta, who have once again included me in their lives unconditionally and support and care for me beyond limits.

May these words contribute to the improvements of the lives of plantation workers.

2. METHODOLOGY

Since the thesis explores motions of human development and consciousness, it is clear it applies a qualitative method for its investigation. The study fits within an ‘interpretivist’ paradigm considering the theoretical and analytical position of the literature on which it relies, and incorporates a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology.¹ That is, interpretations take form on the basis of the assumptions that reality is socially constructed and that knowledge and understanding cannot be separated from the interrogator. The limitations of the research are found in the nature of this approach. I am by all means aware that the findings and analysis are a reflection of my own interpretations and essentially influenced by my worldview.

Since the research relies heavily on critical theory it includes an extensive literature review on the particular theoretical perspective. Besides providing clarity on its theoretical foundation, the study incorporates a context-specific historical background, based on past and recent writings and archival research undertaken in state archives of the Netherlands. Seeing the nature of the study, the fieldwork component applies a naturalistic approach with most data collected from direct participation with and engagement in the lives of the subjects. In order to explore the complex structures of reality and capture behaviour, perceptions and language the following methods are applied:

- Participant and direct observation
- In-depth (informal) conversations
- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- First-hand participation
- Case studies

Because of both the historical and current significance related to the research topic, case studies are deliberately limited to the area of North Sumatra. Based on the target groups and fieldwork activities, data collection can be divided into the following three categories:

- I. The plantation and the plantation workers
- II. The labour movement and the trade unionists
- III. The wider context and civil society, NGOs and institutions

First-hand fieldwork has been carried out in nine plantations, with secondary data ranging from at least twenty plantations across North Sumatra.

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project* (Princeton: New Jersey, 2008).

3. INTRODUCTION

Sumatra's landscape is undergoing a drastic change. In recent years, Indonesia has taken full opportunity of the global shift to palm oil, now being the number one producer of the world's most used vegetable oil.² After Central Kalimantan, North Sumatra counts the highest number of palm oil plantations in Indonesia, with hundreds of trees burned, cut and planted every day for further expansion.³

Reason for the growing demand of the oil can be directly attributed to the labour that produces it. In her study on Sumatra's plantations during 1870-1979, Laura Ann Stoler reflected on plantation workers as a "cheap, socially malleable and politically inarticulate" labour force.⁴ Not much has changed since Stoler's writing with exploitation, domination and oppression remaining the standard. Domination and oppression in the plantation system is multidimensional, facilitated by a carefully designed web of economic, social, political, cultural and even religious arrangements.

This study aims to shed light on the workings and effects of the capitalist mode of production in the plantation system, and explore realities of labour exploitation, alienation and oppression on which it depends according to the theory of Karl Marx. As point of illustration, the study examines the ways in which the independent plantation trade union operates within this system and to what extent it has the power to emancipate workers. The study concludes with an elaboration on the proposed argument that the plantation is a system of violence that leaves workers with no other recourse than to remain passive and submissive subjects of labour, and become victims of intimidation, coercion and force.

² Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism, *Indonesia's Palm Oil Industry* (Waltham: Brandeis University, 2014).

³ Tania Murray Li, *After the Land Grab: Infrastructural Violence and Indonesia's Oil Palm Zone* (Chiang Mai University, 2015).

⁴ Laura Ann Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt. 1870-1979* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1985), 1.

4. MARX'S THEORY

4.1. *The foundation*

Dialectical materialism is at the core of Marx's analysis. As followed from Hegel, Marx's dialectical method reveals every social form to be a product of the past, to have been undergone a process of gradual change and radical transformation. In a dialectical situation, change occurs from conflict between opposing, yet inseparable elements that form the nature of a thing. As the totality of a thing or situation develops, these intrinsic elements sooner or later come into conflict with each other. At a particular phase in the process of development, "the equilibrium is destroyed", and the opposites transform the very nature of the whole.⁵

By applying the dialectical method to materialism, to the conviction 'objective truth' is found in actual human practice, Marx discovers labour is the driving force behind social change.⁶ From the moment people start to collectively produce their means of subsistence, there develops definite forms of social relations and structures. It is from these forms people ultimately define the conceptions, ideas and thought processes of their time. In the course of history, the development of tools and instruments sooner or later changed the productive, and hence, social relations of society. It is, for instance, not feasible for a slave society to maintain an industrial, capitalist mode of production. In this instance the productive relations lag behind the development of the forces of production, and, in fact, disrupt the system of production as a whole.

So while particular social ideas, theories, conceptions are necessary to maintain the relations of production, it is precisely these subjective forces that engender radical change. Social change is not render possible if practice did not construct the subjective forces for its own existence, nor if theory stands in isolation as an arbitrary force.⁷ From these points it appears the 'motor' of social change can be explained in two-fold.⁸

The debate between Cohen and Habermas clearly illustrates the interpretative divide within Marxism. In his analysis, Cohen alludes historical change lies with the economic base, and in particular with the continuity of technological advancement of the means of production.⁹ In Cohen's technological explanation, the economic base must reach its maximum level of productivity in order for a new structure to appear. On the opposite spectrum, Habermas argues social history can be reduced to social consciousness, that transformative change only occurs from human rationality.¹⁰ For Lukács, it is precisely the level of social consciousness that determines radical social change, or its lack of.¹¹ The failure of the Mensheviks in

⁵ Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1968): 67.

⁶ Karl Marx, *Thesis on Feuerbach: VIII* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1845).

⁷ Bahman Azad, *Marxism, Science, and Class Struggle: The Scientific Basis of the Concept of the Vanguard Party of the Proletariat* (Nature, Society, and Thought 18, no. 4, 2005).

⁸ Anthony Smith, *Two Theories of Historical Materialism: G.A. Cohen and Jürgen Habermas* (Theory and Society 13, no. 4, 1984): 513.

⁹ Anthony Smith, *Two Theories of Historical Materialism: G.A. Cohen and Jürgen Habermas* (Theory and Society 13, no. 4, 1984).

¹⁰ Joseph Heath, *Habermas and Analytical Marxism* (Philosophy and Social Criticism 35, no. 8, 2009).

¹¹ Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1971).

20th century Russia to “grip the masses” was partly due to the fact that it did not recognize the need for spreading social consciousness.¹² The Mensheviks did not realize that its practice must include bringing full consciousness to the proletariat, to reveal to them the truth of social reality and their place in it.

4.2. *Exploitation*

Exploitation of labour is at the starting point of Marx’s theory. The theory is constructed on the presumption that labour under capitalism is not merely *a* substance of value, as presumed by Smith and Ricardo, but rather the *only* substance of value.¹³ According to Marx, labour is the “only substance of products considered value”,¹⁴ since it is the only common element embodied in all products from which a qualitative and quantitative measurement can be extracted. It follows that a distinction must be made between the dual expression of value, or to use Aristotelian terms, between use-values and exchange-values.¹⁵ In a market economy use-values, or the object of wants, are transformed into exchange-values, which is the value expression of objects of wants. Labour as the embodiment of use-values represents the most natural productive human state necessary for all forms of society, whereas exchange-values indicate the commodification of this human activity. Thus, even though labour is the substance of both use-values and exchange-values, it is only endowed with a quantitative value once it is commodified. That is, labour can be no source of value, and therefore contain no value in itself, unless the thing produced constitutes of both a qualitative and quantitative value.

According to Marx, the value of the commodity of labour, coined as labour-power, is determined by the amount of time socially necessary to produce it.¹⁶ Or in other words, the labour-time required for the production of any use-value (the predecessor of exchange-values) under particular social conditions. The value of labour is thus identical to the value of what is necessary for its own reproduction, or to put differently, to the value of the means of subsistence of the worker. It is important to point here that the value of labour-power is neither fixed nor constant. The value of labour-power is equivalent to the time socially necessary for production, which is an ever changing and fluctuating constituent of the labour process. For example, a decline in the costs of the means of subsistence also provides the means for a reduction in the quantity of the necessary labour-time. Because the amount of necessary labour-time is ever changing, the commodity of labour is considered the variable constituent of capital. The constant constituent of capital refers to the part of the means of production that does not undergo any alteration in magnitude of value.

It is this two-fold nature of capital that is directly related to the two-fold nature of labour-time. During one part of the labour process time is allocated to produce the value equivalent to the value necessary for the reproduction of labour-power. In the remaining stage of production, the worker produces value beyond what is socially necessary and creates a *surplus-value*. It is in this surplus labour-time in which the nature of capital is found. That is, the necessary labour-time is “preserving former values” while the surplus

¹² Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976): 406.

¹³ David Harvey, “Chapter 1-2”, in *Reading Capital* (Graduate Center of the City of New York, New York, 2008).

¹⁴ Karl Marx, “Grundrisse”, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 2nd edition, David McLellan (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000): 403.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1932).

¹⁶ Karl Marx, “Commodities and Money”, in *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976).

labour-time is “adding new value” to the production process as a whole.¹⁷ Say, for instance, a worker sells his or her labour-power to the capitalist for a price valued according to the average necessary labour-time of the given society. Once the worker has produced enough for the reproduction of labour (i.e. value of means of subsistence), the worker continues to produce beyond the value of labour-power.

It is in this relation between the two constituents of labour-time in which the degree of exploitation is expressed. Marx defines it clearly by stating that the rate of surplus-value is the “exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital”.¹⁸ Thus, the rate of exploitation is equivalent to the proportion of the quantity of surplus-value to the amount of necessary labour-time. Accordingly, for exploitation to be non-existent, the worker is to receive the actual value of his or her labour-power, which, according to the theory of value, must be equivalent to the exchange-value of the product produced.

It appears then, an excess of value is necessary for the perpetual flow of new capital into the market from which endless more wealth can be appropriated.¹⁹ As more capital is set in motion, more capital is made available for the expansion of the capitalist market, subsequently demanding for a larger labour force in order to transform capital from commodity into surplus-value and, hence, new capital. Simultaneously, more capital can be appropriated for the alteration of the labour process needed to increase the productivity of labour and lower the means of subsistence. This will provide the means for the capitalist to extract more surplus-labour without extending the length of the working day.

Thus, as said by Marx himself, “the circulation of commodities is the starting-point of capital”.²⁰ This trend can be explained from the logic that being competitive in a capitalist market economy means keeping the variable costs of the commodities for the means of production – the cost of labour - to its absolute minimum and extract as much surplus-value as possible so to keep this process in motion.²¹ This is why prices are kept to their absolute minimum, since low prices mean low costs of the means of subsistence, which in effect means the commodity of labour can likewise be kept at its lowest possible level.

4.3. *Class consciousness*

As seen, it is the economic base that ultimately determines its superstructure, that is; realities of social, political, legal, ideological, cultural and religious in its entirety.²² From within a Marxist tradition, our perception of the world and our position in it is purely a reflection of the economic foundation of a given time and space.²³ It is to say, then, that any type of ideas system, whether it to be political, religious or philosophical, is conditioned to the economic base from which it arose. As pointed out by Georg Lukács, the laws of economics possess the ability to function as “laws of nature”.²⁴ The purpose of the superstructure is

¹⁷ Karl Marx, “The General Formula for Capital”, in *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976), 248.

¹⁸ Karl Marx, “The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value”, in *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976), 326.

¹⁹ Karl Marx, “The General Formula for Capital”, in *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976), 254.

²⁰ Karl Marx, “The General Formula for Capital”, in *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976), 247.

²¹ David Harvey, *Reading Capital* (Graduate Center of the City of New York, New York, 2008)

²² Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968).

²³ Wright C. Mills, *The Marxists* (Penguin Books, New York, 1962).

²⁴ Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1971): 229.

to facilitate the progress of productive development, meaning it must be arranged according to the needs of the economic base. When changes occur on the level of production, the superstructure must correspondingly change. It is thus the material forces that determines the whole of society, and not vice versa as idealists would have believe. By taking objective, material forces as the starting point it appears it is not “the consciousness of men [sic] that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness”.²⁵

Seeing that one’s material condition is determined by the productive relations, any social order (under capitalism) can be categorized according to the *shared* economic circumstances of individuals. People belong to what Benedict Anderson frames ‘imagined communities’, a group in abstraction defined by common interests.²⁶ Under these conditions, there exists class interests, but unless the class perceives itself according to its shared interests opposed to another class, there can be no class. A class is formed on the basis of its own class interests and by realization of the necessity of a common struggle *against* an opposing class, *in favour of* its own class. Thus, for a class to constitute a class, it must organize in the domain of politics.²⁷

So while particular social ideas, theories, conceptions are necessary to maintain the relations of production, it is precisely these subjective forces that engender radical change. In this sense, the objective forces thus shape the subjective forces and vice versa. Social change is not render possible if practice did not construct the subjective forces for its own existence, nor if theory stands in isolation as an arbitrary force. Besides facilitating the *process* of change, the interaction between objective and subjective forces determine the *meaning* of change.

4.4. Alienation

Both the ‘evolutionary’ process and meaning of change is systematically counteracted by the reality of alienation. Alienation as a state of human existence is the direct result of the capitalist mode of production, which reduces workers to become, and understand themselves, as mere means necessary for abstract, ulterior ends.²⁸ What underlies Marx’s conception of alienation is a philosophical and normative viewpoint on the ideal and real human relation to the physical activity of labour.²⁹ Notwithstanding such subjectivity, the reliance of capitalism on private property creates productive relations in which the labour, the product and the entire labour force is purely external to the worker. Although alienation is not unique to capitalist societies, it is intensified under the conditions of wage-labour.³⁰

Alienation as the estrangement of labour ultimately suggests a preceding state of ‘non-alienation’, a more ideal state in which people are not dehumanized by merely being reduced to a commodity and product of capital. Rather than applying alienation morally and subjectively, the concept appears more useful by means of structural analysis of the relation between labour and human existence. Even though it is inevitable

²⁵ Karl Marx, “Preface”, in *A Contribution the Critique of Political Economy* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977): 4.

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, New York, 1983).

²⁷ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1959).

²⁸ Wright C. Mills, *The Marxists* (Penguin Books, New York, 1962).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bertell Ollman, “Comment on Kelly’s Alienation”, *Political Theory* 1, no 1 (1973).

to talk about alienation without reference to a past or ‘truly human’ form of existence, the structural changes it refers to is, according to Marx, in actuality a crucial component to the laws of human development. That is to say, alienation exists even without those alienated experiencing their alienation consciously.

So, alienation in a Marxist sense is a word *and* a concept (subjective *and* objective) and must therefore be analysed in relation to other related concepts.³¹ The analysis of alienation comprises the productive relations, the relation between the worker and the means of production, the actual product, and nature.³² Thus, rather than being a subjective notion felt by the worker (or analysed from outside), alienation is a reflection on the basic relationship between people and their labour, and consequently, the relation between people. It is thus at first the means of production that causes the activity as well as the product of labour to no longer belong to the worker, with the worker becoming a mere objectification.³³ Labour has become an object, something that is no longer part of the worker, but to the product in which it is embodied. The product is something alien and hostile to the worker, since it is the product that begets the realization of his [sic] own objectification. Rather than it being an intrinsic part of the worker, the object of labour, and the means of subsistence as a reward, is what the worker receives externally. It is *only* through the object of labour that the worker can “maintain himself [sic] as a *physical subject*”.³⁴ It comes to show, then, alienation is produced by exploitation, while exploitation rests on alienation.

4.5. Mobilisation

Lukacs writes, “It is true that while dialectical materialism is itself the product of this process, it does not deny that men perform their historical deeds themselves and that they do so consciously”.³⁵ According to Marx this consciousness is, however, a ‘false’ consciousness, a collective knowledge and epistemology formed by the motions of economic development, or in the words of Marx and Engels, “a social product” from the very beginning.³⁶ Yet although consciousness arises from the very moment people enter into relations with one another, or in other words, from the beginning of human existence, the development of productive forces has seen consciousness to become no more than a distorted reflection of the world and our existence in it. That is, there is an already existing force that, from the moment we enter into human relations, determines how we perceive the world, ourselves and those around us. This force is not just a product of past generations, it is the product of the ruling ideas of past generations. As Marx and Engels famously write in *The German Ideology*, “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”.³⁷ It follows that the entire existence of the subordinate class has become understood as “something accidental”, as a reality over which is no control.³⁸

³¹ Bertell Ollman, “Comment on Kelly’s Alienation”, *Political Theory* 1, no 1 (1973).

³² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1968).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959), 29.

³⁵ Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1971), 50.

³⁶ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1968), 9.

³⁷ Ibid, 16.

³⁸ Ibid, 19.

Through ‘genuine’ class consciousness, or to put differently; the realization one belongs to an ‘imagined community’, such false convictions can be overcome. Although the conceptions of ‘genuine’ and ‘false’ consciousness have received much criticism over time, it can hardly be denied the capitalist system has thrown a veil over the eyes and minds of people, whatever class one belongs to. In the case of the exploited class, this veil causes a lack, or total absence, of action towards their emancipation. Or, with reference to Eduard Bernstein, there can be no emancipation of the working class if those outside lift the veil on their behalf, and their mental capacity is governed by the intellectuals who aim for their emancipation.³⁹ For Bernstein, “a high degree of mental independence”⁴⁰ is a precondition for working-class emancipation. Conversely, Lenin argues such mental independence leaves the working-class with nothing at all, since it is not capable on its own to attain the self-consciousness necessary for the evolution towards mass mobilisation.⁴¹ Whereas Bernstein argues class consciousness can originate from *within*, Lenin rejects this possibility and insists it needs to be introduced from *without*.⁴² The debate between Bernstein and Lenin represents the historical divide within the Marxist tradition on the question whether social change is to come about revolutionary or evolutionary.⁴³

³⁹ Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* (Independent Labour Party, London 1907).

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 216-19.

⁴¹ Vladimir Lenin, “What is to be Done?”, *Iskra*, no. 4 (1902).

⁴² Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, (Independent Labour Party, London 1907); ⁴² Vladimir Lenin, “What is to be Done?”, *Iskra*, no. 4 (1902).

⁴³ Tatang Sastrawiria and Haksan Wirasutisna, *Ensiklopedi Politik* (Perpustakaan Perguruan Kem. P.P. dan K., Jakarta, 1955).

5. THEORY IN PRACTICE

5.1. Exploitation

A general calculation on the ratio of wages and the value of means of subsistence is problematic seeing the large differentiation between wages. Not only does the legal minimum sector wage varies between different districts of North Sumatra, even workers with identical employment contracts within the plantation receive different amounts.⁴⁴ Additionally, due to constant changes in the amount and value of targets, sanctions, premiums, rations and other variable costs and incomes such as ‘invisible costs’, the wage amount differs on a monthly basis, per person. Though, based on a number of calculations of the income and costs of contracted workers, the wage received is close to equivalent to the value of means of subsistence. On average (in its most loose term), contracted workers receive a constant variable between approximately Rp. 1.800.000 and Rp. 2.300.000 a month (180 - 230 Australian dollars), based on a 40 hour work week. Even though a general value of subsistence can only be arbitrary and normative, from observation and documentation the means of subsistence is comprised of basic needs merely, with cigarets as the only exception. One worker whose salary is an approximate Rp. 2.300.000 needs to cover Rp. 2.150.000 for basic costs *only*. On most account, with extra monthly costs inevitable, the wages are just enough for basic foods, education and transportation costs.

With the ratio of wages and the value of means of subsistence for contracted workers being close to 1 to 1, this does not apply to casual workers. Casual wages ranges can reach as low as Rp. 400.000 (40 Australian dollars) per month despite similar working hours. Informal workers (‘kernets’) employed by contracted workers for additional tasks such as the collection of loose fruits receive as little as Rp. 35.000 (3,5 Australian dollars) a day for an adult, and Rp. 10.000 (1 Australian dollar) for a child. Even for the same labour-time a casual worker receives significantly less. Besides lower income, the casual worker does not receive any benefits, meaning total costs are notably higher. As seen, the use of casual workers contributes to the increase of the production rate.

As explained earlier, with an increase in the productivity of labour, the value of labour-power is able to decline. The premise of this logic is in the fact that productivity can increase without adding to the value of labour-power, by extending the working-day, the labour-time or the intensity of labour. With an increase in productivity, and a simultaneous decrease in labour-power, more surplus-value is produced. It follows that an increase in the productivity of labour means an increase in the supply of products, and a fall in the value of each single product. This causes the price of the greater mass of products to drop. Rather than the increase in labour intensity and productivity generating a rise in the value of labour-power, it remains stagnant, or it may even drop. As Marx’s writes in the *1844 Economic Manuscript*, “the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates”,⁴⁵ or to put more precise, the more the intensity and the productive of labour increases.

The use of targets is one strategy to increase the productivity and intensity of labour, and hence, add to the degree of exploitation. Firstly, targets cause an increase in the intensity of labour *during* the length of

⁴⁴ Republic of Indonesia, *Undang-undang Ketenagakerjaan Indonesia* (Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration Republic of Indonesia, Natal, 2016).

⁴⁵ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959).

the working day. With the use of targets a given working day no longer produces a constant value, but a variable value. Under these conditions, labour is embodied in more products (a higher quantity of palm oil kernels) than if targets were kept at a lower level. Secondly, targets cause an increase in the productivity of labour *beyond* the length of the working day. The target amounts are often too high to reach during the length of the working day, meaning workers are forced to either continue their labour beyond the working day without remuneration, reduce their own hourly wage by hiring 'kernels', or include unpaid labour. The latter in most cases involves immediate family members (wife and children) being 'forced' to work. Here, the worker himself [sic] is forced to exploit the labour of fellow workers (or own family), and it is exactly this structural pressure what Marx refers to as a hierarchically organised system of exploitation and oppression.⁴⁶ Even though in general the purpose of targets is to raise productivity without having to increase labour costs, the use of unreasonable targets as seen in the plantations, adds to exploitation in two-fold. First, more surplus-value is produced by the full exhaustion of labour efforts, and secondly, in cases targets are not met (in most cases) an arbitrary amount is deducted from the monthly salary.

Another strategy for the further exploitation of labour-power is the piece-wage system. Here, payment is a direct reflection of the effort of labour. In order for the worker to receive an adequate payment, it is in the interest of the worker to fully exhaust one's own labour efforts. In PT. Rimba Mujur Mahkota, female workers are 'forced' to run through the plantations in order to compete with other workers, and fertilize as many palm trees as physically possible. As seen, a piece-wage system creates competitive relations between workers.

On the surface it appears these are strategies consciously employed by the corporation. Contrarily however, these strategies are mere reflections of intrinsic mechanisms of the capitalist system. Marx predicted such strategies when he wrote his works almost two centuries ago, and as seen, remain applicable to explain certain divisions of the global economy. In order to elaborate further, I will first move to the notion of alienation and its relevance to the plantation system.

5.2. Alienation

What distinguishes the plantation from other industries is that it fully absorbs the entire being of the worker into its system. Although there are other sectors that share in common similar aspects of exclusion, there may only be a few, if any, that resembles the plantation system in its entirety. For example, in fishery workers may be excluded from the political, social and economic, they are ultimately connected to the natural. For plantation workers, the natural is an environmentally hostile habitat, with all of the land transformed into a monoculture of palm trees. To illustrate further, the resource sector, such as mining, may similarly exclude workers from the natural, economic, social and political, yet what remains is the technological. Whereas plantations also rely on a transport system, the division of labour sees the majority of workers like harvesters, identify only with their own primitive tools and instruments used for production. Hence, there is no direct relation to modern technological advancements. In short, plantation workers are alienated from the real and historical processes occurring in society as a whole, with all that can be reflected upon to gain an understanding of reality, is a fabrication in its entirety.

⁴⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (Penguin Books, London, 1976), 695.

By the nature of exclusion and primitiveness, plantation workers are isolated from the social whole. The existence of workers is confined to the physical boundaries of the plantation, with an entire infrastructure of basic facilities meeting the subsistence needs of the workers. Since each section is isolated from another, it can be said the plantation as a whole comprises of various comparable, yet distinct communities. Workers identify themselves to the community their labour contract has assigned them to. In these communities of workers there exists a strong sense of shared living and communal care, and more often than not, workers remain within their divisions for their social activities. The existence of these communities creates an illusion of village life, of 'realness'. When asked for her address, a worker confidently replied by stating the number of her 'afdeling' (division). When she was asked for more details, she said the name of the corporation. On further questioning it became clear she had no real perception of time and space, neither aware of her age or duration of employment, nor of her geographical location within the space of the district, island, country or world as a whole.

With the sense of belonging being limited to the closed entity the plantation domain, workers instinctively become passive participants of civil society. This is not to say workers do not participate in the community existing *within* the plantation, but this is yet to be framed a civil society. The community within the plantation is indeed linked by common interests, that is, the benefit of receiving plantation employment under adequate conditions. However, in most cases, especially without intervention of the independent trade union, these interests are not translated into common activity. It can therefore be said, there exists no civil society *within* the plantation.

Besides minimal union activity, workers are not politically active in civil society. Again, this can be attributed to the prolonged confinement to the plantation, with social and political life outside the plantation becoming a mere abstraction. It can then be argued plantation workers have themselves become an abstraction. As an abstraction, workers have lost sight behind the superficial similarities between themselves and the people who surround them. Following a Marxist perspective, it is on the basis of these similarities that workers set out to understand their world.⁴⁷ Their existence can become an illusion, not because of a subjective feeling, but rather because all aspects of what is perceived reality, is evidently based on the interests of the corporation and its stakeholders only.

5.3. *Class consciousness*

Even though able to be applied to the generic modern capitalist system, the state of illusion is more relevant to those within the plantation system than to those workers who are capable to surround themselves with more points of reflection. The only means that connects plantation workers to the outer social world, is the presence of television. Yet, rather than bringing reality closer to the worker, what is displayed on television is nothing more than an abstract world, the worker does not, and believes can not, belong to.

Their class situation is thus not perceived as a result of systematic oppression, but a reflection of a reality of 'have's' and 'have not's'. The normalization of such a reality overlooks the systematic nature of oppression and exploitation, and hence only contributes to the class situation. Social and political inequality is understood as a given, and not a construction.

⁴⁷ Bertell Ollman, "Comment on Kelly's Alienation", *Political Theory* 1, no 1 (1973).

For workers to move beyond the embryonic stages of consciousness, there must be an understanding on the need for organized and structured forms of resistance. Without such comprehension, action will only translate into outbursts of anger and desperation.⁴⁸ The former indicates the recognition of systematic exploitation, whereas the latter is only an expression of first-hand experience and awareness of direct relations of power and economic unfairness. Being such a closed entity, plantation workers are more often than not subjected to the former. As emphasized by numerous ‘labour intellectuals’, the anger and desperation of workers is often expressed in the eagerness for direct action and impatience for the absence of it.

Michele Ford quotes a former SPSI member, who says “the hardest thing... is making the workers conscious. You can’t just do it once. You have to do it twice, three times, even four times”.⁴⁹ On observation, workers are recurrently confused about their role in the trade union, about the need for solidarity, collective action, union membership, and so on, in order to improve their material situation. As a result, unionized workers take on a passive role, withdraw or take joined action without full awareness on its purpose. Whether it is done once, twice or three times, education may only sow the seeds for consciousness.

When Lenin wrote that “it is not enough *to explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed”, he argued for the need to *expose* to the worker the reality of oppression *in all aspects* that can immediately be related to.⁵⁰ Trade unionists often bring instances of injustice to the foreground in order to uncover realities of oppression. SERBUNDO’s recent focus is on the establishment of a pro-bono legal department in order for cases of injustice to maintain exposure and draw in attention from the workers. Consciousness is not arrived at by the realization of labour exploitation alone, it too requires a full comprehension on the structures, mechanisms and relations that underlies exploitation.

Following Lenin’s theory, unless the working class is exposed to all the manifestations of systematic control and authority in every aspects of society can there exist *genuine* [emphasis added] class consciousness.⁵¹ For as long as the working class can apply cases of authority, oppression, violence and the like, to its own class *only*, the struggle will never move beyond being economic in form only. Because workers are not able to recognize *all* groups of society are affected by the mechanisms in place, the target of the struggle will remain its immediate opposition. That is, without full knowledge on the system of oppression in its entirety, the struggle will not evolve into a revolutionary activity.

5.4. Mobilisation

In his reflection on the writings of famous Indonesian poet Rendra, Max Lane writes “workers, peasants, fishermen return to the political stage as the subjects of oppression, but not yet as the agents of change”.⁵² Since Redra’s poem of the 1970s, labour, in its most general sense, started to regain its political agency. Though, the level of agency is dispersed among sections of society, with the plantation sector lacking behind

⁴⁸ Vladimir Lenin, “What is to be Done?”, Iskra, no. 4 (1902).

⁴⁹ Michele Ford, *Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement*, (NUS Press, Singapore, 2009), 114.

⁵⁰ Vladimir Lenin, “What is to be Done?”, Iskra, no. 4 (1902): 34.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Max Lane, *Catastrophe in Indonesia*, (Seagull Books, Calcutta, 2010), 69.

considerably. This can be attributed to the space in which plantation workers are to organize, which is one that remains structured along authoritarian corporatist lines. As stated by Michele Ford,⁵³ the decline of the trade union movement in the late 1950s occurred simultaneously with the arrival of *Guided Democracy*, during which the military took on an active authoritative role in the economic sector.⁵⁴ The legacy of the reform prompted by *Guided Democracy* enables corporations, with considerable support of oligarchs, to control and suppress the agency of trade unionists.

Despite processes of modernization and economic, social, cultural and intellectual transformations in society as a whole, existence in the plantation is a not much different than it was a century ago. In *the German Ideology* Marx and Engels wrote:

History is nothing but the succession of separate generations, each of which continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and ... modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity.⁵⁵

Although the most of the rest of Indonesia has been touched by forces of modernization and a developing maturity of capitalism, the mode of production, the instruments of production, the productive relations and the conditions of labour in the plantation system have not changed accordingly. Following Marx, the lack of changes in the economic base of the plantation system can explain the total absence of mass mobilisation. With no changes in the base, there is no change in the superstructure, and with no change in the superstructure, there will be no demand for change.

While there is no 'evolutionary' mobilisation of workers, trade unions, such as the Plantation Labour Union Indonesia (Serikat Buruh Perkebunan Indonesia, SERBUNDO) begin to make headway again in re-organizing workers and bring about a trade union consciousness. The sentiment of SERBUNDO's leadership reflects the words of early 20th century Dutch Socialist Pieter Troelstra, who wrote that trade unions know that their work is actually done within the limits of capitalism; their duty is not to destroy employers, but to get as much as possible from them.⁵⁶ That is not to say, however, their called-for duty is in line with personal convictions. On observation, expressions of SERBUNDO's leadership on the various levels reveal progressive sentiment. However, considering the present circumstances, there is general acceptance the working class is mentally and practically ill-equipped for any mass mobilisation to occur any time in the near future.

⁵³ Michele Ford, *Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement*, (NUS Press, Singapore, 2009), 114.

⁵⁴ Max Lane, *Catastrophe in Indonesia* (Seagull Books, Calcutta, 2010).

⁵⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1968), 38.

⁵⁶ International Institute of Social History, *Archief en Collecties P.J. Troelstra* (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam).

6. THE PLANTATION LABOUR MOVEMENT

6.1. A brief history

Although the emergence of trade unions dates back to the early 20th century, it was not until the common struggle against the Dutch regime a mass labour movement developed.⁵⁷ At the time of independence between 1945 and 1949, foreign owners were dispossessed of lands and properties, with a change of ownership directly in the hands of the new ruling elite. The transfer of ownership from one ruling elite to another, together with a turbulent political environment on the national front, the trade unionists found themselves in direct conflict with the new property owners. Although the role of mass mobilisation in the post-independence period lost political traction, President Sukarno persistently argued for the need of mass action as a political strategy. During the early stages of the Sukarno's administration the Left experienced a rapid growth, with trade unions taking on an important role in the nationalist movement advanced by Sukarno. In 1962, the most dominant union, the Central Organisation of Indonesian Trade Unions (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, SOBSI), counted 3.2 million members, with the greatest number of members being in the plantation sector.⁵⁸ Membership of the Communist-affiliated union was particularly strong in Java and North Sumatra,⁵⁹ with plantation workers in North Sumatra in particular being "among the most organised and militant".⁶⁰ In the plantation sector, around 553 strikes targeting foreign-owned corporations were recorded in the period from 1951 to 1955.⁶¹ It was the introduction of the military-designed Central Organisation of Indonesian Socialist Workers (Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia, SOKSI) that further strengthened the Army's domination in the plantations. What followed was the beginning of the end of independent trade unions for decades to come.

The late 1960s saw the entire future of Indonesian trade unions change. Under the leadership of General Suharto, hundreds of thousands of communists, trade unionists, Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) and Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) members, leftist civil society groups, scholars and professionals were murdered, with an indefinite number more detained and tortured.⁶² With a strong trade union, plantation workers in Sumatra were one of the prime targets. With the fall of Sukarno, a 'New Order' was established under Suharto. In the attempt to further his anti-communist agenda, leftist political parties and organisations were banned, and left-oriented trade unions disappeared altogether up until the early 1990s.⁶³ By the 1970s, the few conservative trade unions remaining were formed under one single trade union federation, the All-Indonesia Labour Federation in 1973 (Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, FBSI), later to be restructured as

⁵⁷ Michele Ford, *Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement*, (NUS Press, Singapore, 2009).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (National Archive, Den Haag).

⁶⁰ Laura Ann Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt. 1870-1979*, (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985), 122.

⁶¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (National Archive, Den Haag).

⁶² Max Lane, *Catastrophe in Indonesia*, (Seagull Books, Calcutta, 2010).

⁶³ Ibid.

the All-Indonesia Workers' Union (Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, SPSI).⁶⁴ Although a union in form, the structure and form of FBSI served primarily to accommodate corporate and state interests, with officials from Suharto's political party Golkar taking on central leadership.

With a new form of resistance emerging in the 1990s, the Left was refound.⁶⁵ The new Left evolved from popular resistance, especially among students, that, even though sporadically, had been built up throughout the New Order decades.⁶⁶ Considering the presence of a common objective, the movement allowed for a heterogeneity of actors who, in spite of ideological standings, joined forces in order to overthrow the Suharto regime. With the common objective lost during the *Reformasi* era of reform and democratisation, fragmentation of the movement was almost inevitable.⁶⁷ It is this fragmentation together with the legacy of the historical event of 1965 and 1967 that is often argued the most common factor ascribed to the weakness of the labour movement post-1998, and up until today.⁶⁸

6.2. The union

Under the wing of an existing Sumatra-based NGO, SERBUNDO established in 2014 by a hand full of former independent trade unionists, social activists and lawyers. With the initiation of SERBUNDO, the NGO shifted the totality of its work to focus on plantation palm oil labour in Indonesia. SERBUNDO is the only active independent trade union with a membership of palm oil plantation workers exclusively. At present SERBUNDO is active in eighteen plantations across North Sumatra, includes an approximate membership of 3.000 unionists, with workers in at least five more plantations currently being organized. Not only does the trade union aims to expand across Sumatra, it is also in the process of discussion with partner organisations and contacts in the field about the options to establish SERBUNDO in Kalimantan. Since the initiation of an active union division only requires a total of ten members, SERBUNDO is able to expand its scope rapidly. Though most plantations include an oil processing mill, SERBUNDO is not yet active in engaging mill workers. Although membership is non-discriminatory, and includes both casual and permanent workers, the primary focus is on the harvesting division. From a trade union perspective, harvesters are in a powerful position for two reasons; for one, if their work is interrupted the total production process ceases, and secondly, since all formally employed harvesters are contracted workers, corporate-induced violations are less likely. As of now, the NGO and SERBUNDO count a total of eight salaried workers.

As a residue of the New Order, all plantations workers are by contract enforced to join the corporate associated SPSI. In the words of one workers, the SPSI is only a trade union by name and “does nothing besides collecting out monthly deducted membership fee for their nasi bungkus”.⁶⁹ Besides the income of membership fees, SPSI leadership are paid directly and indirectly by corporations and, allegedly, government

⁶⁴ Michele Ford, *Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement*, (NUS Press, Singapore, 2009).

⁶⁵ Max Lane, *Catastrophe in Indonesia*, (Calcutta, Seagull Books, 2010).

⁶⁶ Edward Aspinall, Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transitional and Consolidation, *Indonesia* 96 (2013).

⁶⁷ Vedi R. Hadiz, *Power and Politics in North Sumatra: the Uncompleted Reformasi*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies): 2003.

⁶⁸ Edward Aspinall, Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transitional and Consolidation, *Indonesia* 96 (2013).

⁶⁹ Interview with worker PT. Milano by author, March 22, 2016.

bodies. When referring to unionized workers, I therefore do not refer to SPSI members but to independent trade unionists only. Considering its position, SPSI is one of SERBUNDO's key targets, with the withdrawal from SPSI being a first condition of SERBUNDO membership. Focus on SPSI in the process of organizing workers is also a tactic to change worker's perception on trade unionism, something that may be deemed fundamental considering Indonesia's historical context. Although SPSI is SERBUNDO's primary opponent, the leadership does recognize the importance of collaborative action in cases interests are aligned, during May Day demonstrations for instance.

The NGO - trade union organisation operates on the basis of two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to improve immediate labour conditions through both a bottom-up and top-down approach, especially focusing on wages, housing and social security. The second objective is politically oriented, and especially related to the trade union's efforts to construct a self-reliant labour force capable to fight the plantation corporations as well as the government bodies. According to SERBUNDO's central director, the "right process" must ensure workers are capable to organize, manage, set goals, design programs and solve problems themselves, while being in line with the values, beliefs and principles of the trade union.⁷⁰ In order to avoid the violation of basic principles and values, this process is accompanied by sanctions.

This explains SERBUNDO's primary focus to be on education. Organisation of training sessions, discussions, inter-stakeholder meetings and seminars are common, targeting union members of all levels. Education programs are specifically designed according to the stage of comprehension of workers, stage of development of regional and local leadership, and particular issues distinct to a given plantation. In every organized meeting or discussion with union members, SERBUNDO's central leadership brings across the point for union members to be brave and stand against their intimidators. It is a part strategy to break down the system of intimidation, workers are demanded to act in direct confrontation with immediate intimidators. Though hesitant, workers are asked to individually confront 'mandor', and then 'mandor satu' and 'assistant', before progressing collectively to 'head of assistant', 'estate manager', 'general manager' and the corporation as a whole. Workers must thus be active and not passive members in order to comply with SERBUNDO ideals, while their actions, at the same time, must not translate into spontaneous collective action in the Leninist sense. This can be seen as a contradiction, and may explain the confusion and frustration regarding the reluctance of SERBUNDO's central leadership to allow demonstrations. The general conviction exists among unionized workers that this is the most effective strategy for immediate improvement of labour conditions and the strengthening of the trade union. However, due to violations resulting from previous demonstrations, SERBUNDO's current focus is on increasing union membership across North Sumatra, educating workers on rights and violations, and strengthening local and regional leadership instead.

Lenin claims the only strategy for all classes to attain a *genuine* class consciousness, trade unionists must not only go amongst workers, but spread political knowledge to all classes, or in Lenin's words: "they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions*".⁷¹ Being divided into a NGO and a trade union, the leadership operates within various social and political domains, including the national and international NGO sector, local, regional and central governments, civil society groups, international institutions, individual

⁷¹ Vladimir Lenin, "What is to be Done?", *Iskra*, no. 4 (1902), 48.

scholars, and professionals, and the working class. At the present moment, there is no direct focus on remobilising students. The incorporation of an NGO approach alongside ‘traditional’ trade unionism shows that SERBUNDO moves *within* and not *against* the system. It should be noted this is, in the words of SERBUNDO’s central leader, *one* of the strategies. This, in turn, is in line with Marxist thought. Historically often disregarded or mistaken is the readiness of the working class. As claimed by various trade unionists in SERBUNDO’s regional and central leadership, workers in North Sumatra are not ready to understand the movement of the Left from a wider perspective. With that being so, SERBUNDO must first and foremost focus on material conditions and the instillment of trade union consciousness.

7. A SYSTEM OF VIOLENCE

7.1. Violence

What reveals by applying Marx's theory to the existence of plantation workers is the appearance of a built-in structure of violence. It is not only direct violence (and threats of violence) that reinforces labour exploitation and oppression, it is those explicit forms of violence built into the system that by its very nature minimizes the need for the use of direct violence. The social differentiation as a result of unequal distribution and ownership is at the basis of the institutionalization and normalization of structures that causes the deprivation of basic needs, or what Johan Galtung coined 'structural violence' in 1969.⁷² Structural violence refers to the suffering imposed on people by particular (historical) arrangements that determine relations, processes and practices of a given social system. Seeing labour exploitation is the main feature for social differentiations that enables the expression of power, it must be a precondition for structural violence. That is, structural violence is a process driven by the systematic deprivation of needs of one group to the benefit of another, facilitated by exploitation, domination, and suppression. Exploitation produces the inequality necessary for domination, while domination in essence possesses the power to transform into oppression.

Galtung introduces four terms to explain the structural repression of consciousness and mobilisation, which are, according to the theory, the two preconditions for the struggle against exploitation.⁷³ According to Galtung, exploitation is reinforced by means of penetration, segmentation, marginalization and fragmentation. Segmentation, or the separation of a false and genuine consciousness, enables penetration, that is, the instillment of a form of consent necessary for the legitimation of class divisions. Marginalization ensures consciousness of collective class power is disguised by keeping workers on the margins, while fragmentation disables class power to be put in practice by keeping workers in isolation from each other.⁷⁴

Although structural violence is more disguised and less tangible and observable than direct (behavioural) violence, its impact is not in any way of lesser significance. Seeing that, as Galtung suggests, the causal chain of structural violence is longer, it becomes more difficult to attribute violence to anyone or anything in particular. This causes for the systematic suffering of people to not often be understood as a direct result of violence, as something that is unintentional and avoidable. Yet, by stripping away the layers it does become possible to place responsibility with particular past and present actors and arrangements. As Galtung argues, these layers function mechanically to disguise the reality of violence. In the plantation system, however, structural violence is more easily perceivable since oppression has reached a stage it no longer needs to be disguised.

⁷² Johan Galtung, Violence, Peace and Peace Research, *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969).

⁷³ Johan Galtung, Cultural Violence, *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

7.2. *The system*

The plantation is a closed entity. On plain sight this is clearly visible in the guards protecting the boundaries of the estate, yet it is primarily evident in the way it is structured, organized and controlled internally. In fact, the plantation can be seen as an interconnected network of mechanisms that are structured in order to enable domination, oppression, exploitation and ultimately; violence. Not all parts of these structures are easily perceivable, and in general workers themselves are not aware of the complex network of arrangements that shape their social conditions in its entirety. Seeing there exists an organized structure of processes, rules and relations of which its main purpose is to control labour (for reasons previously explained), the plantation entity can be framed as a *system of violence*.

From her extensive study on plantations in Kalimantan, anthropologist Tania Li frames plantations as monopolistic systems of infrastructural violence.⁷⁵ In their reflection on infrastructural violence, Rodgers and O'Neil define infrastructure as observable, with its direct stakeholders being identifiable.⁷⁶ Thus, infrastructural violence can expose relations of power, and reveal the structures that enable that power. Consequently, the blame of violence is assigned to tangible actors (existing here and now), rather than a historical abstraction.⁷⁷ It neglects the view of Marx, Lenin, Foucault and others, that everyone who belongs to a certain social order plays an active part in the "social machinery of oppression".⁷⁸ With no one to blame but past generations and nothing to point to but historical motions, infrastructural violence becomes a term useful to locate responsibility.⁷⁹ However, locating blame to actors of the here and now does not expose the laws of motions of systematic violence. So, even though the notion of infrastructural violence is relevant to describe the plantation system, for the sake of the effects of its limitations, I would like to refer to violence as structural violence.

At the core of this system of violence lies the reality of exploitation, alienation and false consciousness. Without these realities, structural violence can not operate. For exploitation to exist without the need for disguise, as it does in the plantation system, the outer conditions must be opportunistic. That is, the socio-economic conditions must be so that people are desperate enough to comply to the standards of the plantation system. The alienation and false consciousness that is both at the beginning and end of exploitation, facilitates not only further exploitation (in quantitative terms), but structural domination and oppression.

To call it a system of violence is yet another step further. Violence is most commonly associated with direct acts of physical harm, which is not per se the violence related to here. Rather, it is the absence of violence in its most commonly understood form that can explain the system of violence in the plantations. As Tania Li puts it, in the plantation system there is no need for a gun to cause physical harm.⁸⁰ Physical harm,

⁷⁵ Tania Murray Li, *After the Land Grab: Infrastructural Violence and Indonesia's Oil Palm Zone* (Chiang Mai University, 2015).

⁷⁶ Dennis Rodgers and Bruce O'Neil, "Infrastructural Violence: Introduction to the Special Issue", *Ethnography* 13, no. 4 (2012).

⁷⁷ Michael Mann, "Infrastructural Power Revisited", *St Comp Int Dev* 43, (2008).

⁷⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, New York, 1961).

⁸⁰ Conversation Tania Murray Li, March, 3, 2016.

or the effect of violence, refers to the suffering, desperation and hardship of plantation workers. As will be further illustrated, the entire existence of plantation workers is one shaped by means of violence. It is, following Marx's laws of capitalism, this violence that is the necessary component for the plantation system to sustain itself as it has been more than a century.

7.3. The plantation

The corporation supplies basic social facilities to contracted workers, which on most occasions includes housing, limited water and electricity, primary school education, a medical clinic, access to places of worship and a monthly meagre ration of rice. Workers are classified into barrack-style divisions of accommodation, with each division being characterized by different quality standards. Mostly, the divisions near the main entrance, the estate office building, social facilities, are in much better conditions than those tucked away in the plantation. For obvious reasons these are the divisions observed by accreditation auditors of (inter)national institutions such as the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). On observation, housing in the more remote parts of the plantation have shown inadequate, with leaking roofs, and cramped and unhygienic conditions a cause for disease and collapse. In the state-owned PT. Gruti Lestara Pratama plantation, the clinic usually occupies one staff, which is a midwife only. At present, however, the clinic is unattended, which caused the death of at least one worker recently, when the community was incapable to save a woman forced to give birth in her home. The availability of water is not always sufficient, with workers forced to find alternative options. In the PT. Rimba Mujur Mahkota plantation run by Indonesia's most notorious gangster ('preman'), several deaths occurred in the past two years while workers attempted to extract water from the nearby river and were attacked by crocodiles.

Most workers purchase their basic needs at 'home shops' located inside the outer boundary of the plantation. A credit system is usual, and most workers complete payments of purchased goods on a monthly basis (after, or on the day, wages are received). As informed by the SERBUNDO leadership, some corporation also apply a credit system, enabling workers to purchase goods without the available capital. This system enables - and arguably encourages - workers to indulge in luxury goods such as costly motorcycles, adding to the need for wage-labour.

The movements of workers, and others who enter the guarded entrances, are highly monitored through a system of surveillance and security. Besides visible surveillance, an informal monitoring mechanism is part of the plantation structure. In addition to formal security staff, 'ordinary' workers and supervisors receive additional payment to monitor the movements of fellow workers within the particular departments. A plantation counts at least five levels of authority, infiltrated into every department within the plantation by means of granting 'ordinary' workers authorization and control. It is therefore, for instance, impossible for unionized workers to arrange a meeting or discussion without authorities being aware of it.

Before becoming a contract worker and receiving permanent work status, workers are generally employed as casual workers for the duration of one to two years. Most workers aim to receive permanent work status and use the preceding years to demonstrate their strong work ethic and dedication to reach targets. For a casual worker there exists no job security, as the corporation can dismiss the worker at any given time. Furthermore, a casual worker has no access to the social facilities provided by the plantation such as housing, medical assistance and education. Compared to a low five percent of casual workers employed in

Sumatra in 1902, corporations now have at their disposal a pool of cheap, easily disposed, casual workers.⁸¹ Although the Dutch recognized the value of casual labour, the real shift to casual employment emerged under the New Order when state plantations, as part of the reorganization of the labour force, dismissed most permanent workers.⁸² As a general rule, the use and exploitation of casual workers is only possible if the wider socio-economic circumstances allow for it. To put differently, in areas of high unemployment and low opportunities, workers are more likely to submit to temporary, irregular and uncertain employment. Simply following capitalist rules, the corporation takes full advantage of the desperate socio-economic situation of non-workers by offering below standard wages and labour conditions.

A large number of the labour force is comprised of Nias people, a remote island that is one of Sumatra's most impoverished regions. The employment of desperate or eager 'outsiders' provides the corporation with a labour force vulnerable to forces of submission and exploitation. The Dutch employed a similar tactic by stimulating transmigration from Java, with the willing, non-local and landless Javanese taking on the majority of the labour force.⁸³ Furthermore, seeing that local land conflicts are not in the interests of migrant workers, a labour force comprised of migrants enables the corporation to further its land grabbing agenda. Land conflicts are thus often fought from *outside* the plantation and not from *within*.

7.4. Structural intimidation

Intimidation is received on a daily basis with SERBUNDO members being prime targets. Intimidation is carried out by different levels of authority, seeing the lowest level supervisor, or *mandor*, conduct most of its action. Intimidation carried out by the *mandor* particularly relates to the level of production and the ability to reach targets. The *mandor* is responsible to enforce compliance to corporate standards, and functions as an actor of authority. Not only do workers receive wage deductions if targets are not met (which is often due to the high degree of targets), their employment conditions can also change at any given time as a result of false complaints (i.e. housing relocation, deduction in ration quantity, fines).

During the establishment of SERBUNDO in the PT. Langkat Nusantara Kepong, all of the twenty initial members withdraw within one week after receiving persistent intimidation from 'mandor satu' regarding union involvement. In PT. Rimba Mujur Mahkota, a SERBUNDO board member from the basis level received immediate dismissal after a union gathering. The member was banned to enter his house and possessions were confiscated by the corporation. Forced relocation, either to another division within the plantation, or mostly to a plantation in another district, is a common measure. Forced relocation is often targeted towards local union board members, with a current case in PT. Milano seeing the dismissal of the basis level SERBUNDO chairman and vice-chairman.

Violations of freedom of association are concealed and hidden from outside the plantation, while at the same time being strategically displayed within the system. Due to the informal monitoring system, union members are often demanded to cease meetings and discussions held in the plantation. Despite legal entitlements associated with the right of association, participants generally receive intimidation or

⁸¹ Tania Murray Li, Li, *Social Impacts of Palm Oil in Indonesia: a Gendered Perspective from West Kalimantan* (Centre for International Forestry Research, 2015).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Laura Ann Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt. 1870-1979* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1985).

punishment following a meeting or discussion. Although direct demands less occur when meetings are organized by regional or central trade unionists, there still is a presence of security forces to add to the sense of anxiety and uncertainty. For SERBUNDO this is not only detrimental to the sentiment of unionized workers, it also adds to the reluctance of non-unionized workers to join the trade union.

Every month workers, especially harvesters, receive monetary sanctions for unidentified faults and complaints. These sanctions are often ascribed to what can be perceived inevitable errors associated with the labour task, such as the dropping of palm oil kernels or the picking of unripe fruits. On a monthly basis, workers are deducted an arbitrary amount of their wage due to received sanctions (with documentation indicating amounts as high as Rp. 707.000). In many cases, the workers have no recollection of errors, implying sanctions to be false complaints. Thus, sanctions can be perceived a tool to demonstrate on the one hand the corporation's power to dominate, and the powerlessness of the worker on the other.

Since the employment of women is on casual basis and therefore more easily subdued, the suppression of male workers is often by means of intimidating their wives. Recently in PT. Rimba Mujur Mahkota, a total female workforce of a particular division was reduced working days from twenty to twelve as means of punishment for their participation in a legal demonstration. Besides the increased financial and, hence, emotional stress as a result, it particularly causes further demoralization among the work force. Besides shortening the total of working days, punishment also involves lengthening of the working-day. The working day is often extended by a raise in the target amount, or by adding tasks to the worker's job description for no, or hardly any, remuneration.

Ultimately, a deep-rooted historical submissiveness together with a fear for unemployment enables and maintains systematic intimidation and oppression.⁸⁴ As put forward by Fanon, this fear is found on a consciousness on the possibility of more serious deprivation as a direct result from unemployment.⁸⁵ Among plantation workers this is found in a common sentiment of defeatism and despair, relating to a recognized inability to have control over one's own life. Phrases, such as 'What can I do?' are often expressed in despair, with a common understanding that in order to avoid a worsening of conditions there is no other option than full compliance to terms of employment as it is.

7.5. *Oligarchical structures*

Historically, oligarchs in Indonesia have acted as a direct force of violence.⁸⁶ Although almost twenty years has passed since the end of a regime of military rule and violence, oligarchs that operated side-by-side of those in power have far from drowned in the flood. As argued by Vedi Hadiz, the democratic processes of the Reformasi period have not proven to be a direct threat to local oligarchs such as Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila, PP).⁸⁷ As Vedi Hadiz writes, despite almost two decades of 'reform' and democratic processes, oligarchs continue to form the basis of social and political reality in former stronghold areas, with North

⁸⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, New York, 1961).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Edward Aspinall, "Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transitional and Consolidation", *Indonesia* 96 (2013).

⁸⁷ Vedi R. Hadiz, *Power and Politics in North Sumatra: the Uncompleted Reformasi* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), 2003.

Sumatra being its primary.⁸⁸ Partly as a result of the political transitional phase, and partly because of the absence of a strong labour movement, oligarchs were provided with a free roaming space after the downfall of Suharto. It can be argued that there is more space for oligarchs in democratic Indonesia than there was under the New Order. In democratic Indonesia, oligarchs have proven to be an useful instrument to maintain the interests of the elites, especially of those whose interests were previously protected under the Suharto regime.⁸⁹ While more study is required on the complexity of processes, the transitional period and its changing political environment did to a certain extent enable the widening and deepening of oligarchical structures, as is especially evident in North Sumatra.

Being established as a paramilitary force during the New Order, Pemuda Pancasila is the most influential oligarch, with the highest number of members being in North Sumatra. As of today, Pemuda Pancasila's influence continues to increase in North Sumatra, despite rival organisations such as Ikatan Pemuda Karya (IPK) as well. Despite having established a political wing (Partai Patriot in 2001, Pemuda Pancasila is not particularly politically motivated, with no representation of Partai Patriot in the current parliament.⁹⁰ Instead, Pemuda Pancasila's primary aim is power and capital, observable by their systematic efforts to extort capital from local communities, government officials, corporations, individual business owners, and so on. For its membership, Pemuda Pancasila particularly attracts unemployed, low educated young males. The higher level positions are generally occupied by well-educated senior men, more often than not holding close connections to Suharto's New Order political party *GOLKAR* and its leading members. As a result of its power and capability to pressure civil society, Pemuda Pancasila members are often elected in government positions on the district and local level.

Although the association between oligarchs and plantation corporations is not official for obvious reasons, it is neither fully disguised. Especially in the Pemuda Pancasila stronghold district of Langkat, territories are marked by the organisation's distinct sign posts placed along the boundaries of the plantations. PP receives capital from plantation corporation in order to secure its territory and intimidate its workers. PP is particularly active within the plantation when there is movement among workers, for instance to mobilise or demonstrate. On various other occasions, alleged Pemuda Pancasila members conducted violence against workers during peaceful demonstrations, often without prosecution. Pemuda Pancasila enables the corporation to conduct violence and intimidation against its workers without being directly affiliated to the act. Thus, Pemuda Pancasila is used as an instrument to suppress workers and it is therefore in the corporation's interest to have existing power structures remain in place. Recently, in the Langkat district, Pemuda Pancasila allegedly received invisible money to ensure a corporate-supported member was elected 'kepala desa', or head of village, in an attempt to suppress the emerging trade union movement from developing.

7.6. Past and current governments

As seen, corporate violence is two-fold. On the one side there is the 'disguised' alliance with oligarchs and state security, while on the other side there is the system itself that firstly, enables violence, and secondly, is a

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Edward Aspinall, "Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transitional and Consolidation", *Indonesia* 96 (2013).

⁹⁰ Republic of Indonesia, *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republic Indonesia*, 2014.

source of violence. Yet, violence can not only be attributed to the plantation corporation or oligarchs, but must include the government. On first sight it may appear the construction of the plantation system ensures the control of a commodity for the sake of the interest of the corporation only. Indeed, the system of violence increases labour productivity, surplus-value, the accumulation of capital, and finally, the profit rate. It can not be denied this is in the interest of the corporation. However, it is the profit rate that only acts as an incentive for corporations to keep the cost of labour to the utmost minimum in order for Indonesia to remain competitive in the global palm oil market. Thus, the low costs of labour is in the interest of both the corporation as it is in the interest of the Indonesian state. Just as the corporation utilizes oligarchs such as Pemuda Pancasila to secure its interests, so does the Indonesian state imposes on the corporation to further its national economic interests. It can therefore be argued that actors of the ruling class not only take the form of capitalists, but of the institution of the state also.

Further, current-day systematic violations are partly the result of past regimes, from as far back to Dutch colonialism. Besides actual historical practices, this is mostly relevant in the deliberate *erasing* of history under the New Order, creating whole generations misinformed and manipulated by an illusionary past. Taking a Foucaultian perspective, Farmer claims, “erasing history is the most common explanatory method relied upon by the architects of structural violence”.⁹¹ It enables a process of normalization, or what Farmer refers to as desocialisation, that ensures established power structures are legitimized, commonly recognized and uncritically assessed.⁹² As a result of the manipulation of the historical memory of the collective, structural violence comes to be the direct result of current-day realities rather than a product of past events and actors. During observation, not a single reference has been made to historical events, such as those of 1965 and 1967, or to past structures, practices or regimes, to explain the present-day violence. It can therefore be presumed that for workers their violence is not a legacy of past brutalities against trade unionists, communists, intellectuals and others associated to the Left.

7.7. Trade union

Decades of systematic dissemination of anti-communist rhetoric has intellectually paralysed the working class. In general, plantation workers have received little to no education, and in most observable cases have obtained a distorted knowledge of the history of the labour movement. Among workers, trade unionism has associations linked to communism, an common conviction allegedly maintained within the plantation by religious and community leaders. During a mass gathering in Medan in 2015, Pemuda Pancasila leader Yapto S. Soerjosemarno warned members against the peril of communism and its association with the labour movement.

In the present circumstances, the restriction of union activity in the plantation system is a mere resemblance of the mechanism of control employed by the Army during the time of *Guided Democracy*.⁹³ Even compared to the Dutch administration, union activity in the plantation sector was less restricted than it is in modern democratic Indonesia. Despite legal right of association, suppression of union activity is still

⁹¹ Paul Farmer, An Anthropology of Structural Violence, *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (2004).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Daniel S. Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics 1957 - 1959*, Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series (Ithaca, New York, 1966a).

built-in to the plantation system. Trade unions are still required to seek permission for any movement, even for member meetings and discussions, either directly from the corporation or from the legislative body. Demonstrations need to be approved by legislative forces, and as the latest regulations on the May Day action in Medan illustrates - where the number of demonstrators was restricted to a minimal amount - structural repression remains in place.

The structures underpinning the authoritarian corporatist rule of the New Order continues to impede the movement of plantation labour. Yet, compared to earlier stages of the last century or so, suppression is more structural and systematic in form. During the 1930s under colonialism or in the time of *Guided Democracy* for instance, it was *organised* labour that had to be suppressed. In the present circumstances, structural oppression is so deeply rooted in the plantation system that there is little to no organised labour to be suppressed. Instead, structural oppression and a legacy of fear enables the immobilisation of the principle constituent of organised labour, that is, the subjects of labour.

8. CONCLUSION

In his reflection on the oppressive rule of the Tsar and the resistance movement of 1901 Russia, Lenin wrote, “even those able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience.” Although the tribune in Indonesia is built on legally binding pillars, these are proven too weak and corrupt in order for trade unionists to organize and emancipate plantation workers. This is partly a residue of a history of suppression and violence, and partly due to the demands of modern capitalism and global production chains needing a “cheap, socially malleable and politically inarticulate” labour force.⁹⁴ All the elements of the plantation system allow for the “squeeze” of labour and capital to resemble no more than a system of slavery that dissolved long ago. Realities of exploitation, domination and oppression have created a system of violence, and with their entire existence dependent on the corporation, it leaves workers no other choice than to comply to detrimental conditions. This system of violence not only facilitates the “slavish submission” of plantation workers, it also works in manipulative ways to tear down the pillars of the tribune from which trade unionists attempt to speak.⁹⁵ Even though workers are slowly becoming conscious of their collective power, they remain too afraid to use it.

⁹⁴ Laura Ann Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt. 1870-1979* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1985).

⁹⁵ Vladimir Lenin, “What is to be Done?”, *Iskra*, no. 4 (1902).

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Bernstein, Eduard. *Evolutionary Socialism*. London: Independent Labour Party, 1907).
- Cliff, Tony and Gluckstein, Donny. *Marxism and the Trade Union Struggle: Trade Unions in Russia and Britain*. London and Chicago: Bookmarks, 1986.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf. *Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1959.
- Engels, Frederick. "Anti- Dühring." *Vorwärts*, January 3rd, 1877.
- Engels, Frederick. *Wage Labour and Capital*. Cologne: Neue Rheinische Zeitung, 1891.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1961.
- Ford, Michele. *Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2009.
- Hook, Sidney. *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, 3rd ed. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1968.
- Jessop, Bob. *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods*. Oxford: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd, 1982.
- Lenin, Vladimir. "What Is To Be Done?" *Iskra*, no. 4 (1902).
- Lenin, Vladimir. *Materialism and Empirio-criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972.
- Lane, Max. *Catastrophe in Indonesia*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2010.
- Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971.
- Mandel, Ernest. "Introduction." In *Capital: Volume I*. 11 – 86. London: Penguin Books, 1976.
- Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1857.
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. *The German Ideology*. Progress Publishers: Moscow. 1968.
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume I*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin Books, 1976.
- Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Translation by S.W. Ryazanskaya. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979.
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. "The Holy Family", in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Mills, Wrigt, C. *The Marxists*. New York: Penguin Books, 1962.

Scott, James, S. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Existence*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987.

Singer, Peter. *Marx*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Stalin, Joseph. "Historical and Dialectical Materialism," in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. New York: International Publishers, 1939.

Stoler, Laure Ann. *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt. 1870-1979*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.

Journals

Aspinall, Edward. "Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transitional and Consolidation." *Indonesia* 96 (2013), 101 - 102.

Azad, Bahman. "Marxism, Science, and Class Struggle: The Scientific Basis of the Concept of the Vanguard Party of the Proletariat." *Nature, Society, and Thought* 18, no. 4 (2005): 503 - 533.

Budidarsono, Suseno, Susanti, Ari, and Zoomers, Annelies. "Oil Palm Plantations in Indonesia: The Implications for Migration Settlement/ Resettlement and Local Economic Development." *Biofuels - Economy, Environment and Sustainability*, chapter 6 (2013): 173 - 193.

Caraway, Teri, L. "Protective Repression, International Pressure, and Institutional Design: Explaining Labor Reform in Indonesia." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 39, no. 3 (2004): 28 - 49.

Cohen, Gerald Allan. "The Labor Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 8, no 2, (1979): 338 - 360.

Farmer, Paul. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* 45, no 3 (2004): 305 - 325.

Ford, Michele. "Research Note: Indonesian Trade Union Developments Since the Fall of Suharto." *Labour and Management in Development* 1, no 3 (2000): 1 - 10.

Ford, Michele. "Substitute Trade Union or Novel Form of Labour Movement Organisation? Understanding Indonesia's Labour NGOs." *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 14, no. 1 (2003): 90 - 103.

Galtung, Johan. "Violence, Peace and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191.

Hadiz, Vedi, R., and Robison, Richard. "The Political Economy of Oligarchy and the Reorganization of Power in Indonesia." *Indonesia* 96 (2013): 35 - 57.

Hadiz, Vedi, R. "Power and Politics in North Sumatra: the Uncompleted *Reformasi*." Reproduced from *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation & Democratisation*, edited by Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003.

Heath, Joseph. "Habermas and Analytical Marxism." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 35, no. 8 (2009): 891 - 919.

Lev, Daniel S. *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics 1957 - 1959*, Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series (Ithaca, New York, 1966a).

Mann, Michael. "Infrastructural Power Revisited." *St Comp Int Dev* 43, (2008): 355 - 365.

Ollman, Bertell. "Comment on Kelly's 'Alienation'." *Political Theory* 1, no 1 (1973): 51 - 53.

Ollman, Bertell and Bendix, John. "Going Beyond the State?" *The American Political Science Review* 86, no 4 (1992): 1007 - 1021.

Rodgers, Dennis and O'Neil, Bruce. "Infrastructural Violence: Introduction to the Special Issue", *Ethnography* 13, no 4 (2012): 401 - 412.

Sastrawiria, Tatang and Wirasutisna, Haksan. *Ensiklopedi Politik*. Jakarta: Perpustakaan Perguruan Kem. P.P. dan K., 1955.

Reports

Forest Peoples Programme. *Assault on the Commons: Deforestation and the Denial of Forest People's Rights in Indonesia*, 2014.

International Institute for Labour Studies. *The Future of the Labour Movement: Some Observations on Developing Countries Report*, 2014. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.

International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development. *Inequality, the Dark Side of Development in Indonesia*, INFID Report 2013.

Li, Tania Murray. *Social Impacts of Palm Oil in Indonesia: a Gendered Perspective from West Kalimantan*, 2015. Centre for International Forestry Research.

Roundtable of Sustainable Development. *Principles and Criteria for the Production of Sustainable Palm Oil*, 2013. Kuala Lumpur: RSPO.

Verburg, Johan. Discussion Papers. *Fair Company - Community Partnerships in Palm Oil Development*, 2014. Amsterdam: Oxfam Novib.

Archive

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. National Archive. Den Haag, the Netherlands.

International Institute for Social History. Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Films, Podcasts and Lectures

Harvey, David. *Reading Capital*. Podcast. New York: Graduate Center of the City of New York, 2008.

Li, Tania Murray. *After the Land Grab: Infrastructural Violence and Indonesia's Oil Palm Zone*. (Lecture notes, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, June 5-6, 2015).

The Act of Killing. Written and directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Drafthouse Films, 2012.

The Look of Silence. Written and directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Drafthouse Films, 2014.

Other

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*. <http://www.qualres.org/>.

Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism. *Outline of Palm Oil Production*. <http://www.schusterinstituteinvestigations.org/>.

Republic of Indonesia. *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republic Indonesia*. 2014.

Republic of Indonesia, *Undang-undang Ketenagakerjaan Indonesia*. Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration Republic of Indonesia, Natal, 2016.

Scheduled Meetings

February, 5. Technical Director and Project Coordinator RSPO. Jakarta: RSPO.

February, 25. Social Activist. Bandung: unknown.

March, 4 - 6. SERBUNDO, Oppuk, Oxfam, RSPO, FNV Mondiaal. Medan: Saka Hotel.

March, 5. PT. PP Lonsum, SERBUNDO, Oppuk, Oxfam, RSPO. Medan: PT.PP Lonsum.

March, 6. Chairman SERBUNDO and Director Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

March, 7. SERBUNDO, Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk.

March, 12. Dr. Tania Murray Li. Telephone meeting. Bahorok.

March, 13. SERBUNDO Deli Serdang. Deli Serdang: PT. PP Lonsum.

March 21 - 27. SERBUNDO PT. Milano, PT. Abdi Budi Mulia, PT Nurika Jaya, PT. PLP. Kotapinang: various locations.

April, 4. Chairman SERBUNDO and Director Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

April, 6. SERBUNDO, SBMI, SPSI, F.SPMI, SBSI, SBSU, Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

April, 8. TEMBUS, Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

April, 13. Oxfam, Oppuk. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

April, 13. Oppuk, SERBUNDO, APBD-SU. Medan: Oppuk, 2016.

April, 17 - 24. SERBUNDO PT. RMM, PT. DIS, PT. PSU, PT. GRUTI. Natal: various locations.