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Life's Many Sides

Self Determination for Indonesia ?

By TON THAT THIEN

Dr Teugku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro, Chairman of the « Committee for Self Determination of Sumatra, the Celebes and the Moluccas », has, in an interesting pamphlet entitled « The Political Future of the Indonesian Archilelago » (Publisher : Sumatra Berdaulat, Medan, Sumatra) focused attention on Indonesia as « a geographic expression », and given us a clue to what may eventually emerge in Indonesia : a federation of the main island states which once formed the Netherlands East Indies and which had been made into a unitary state in 1950.

Indonesia as constituted today, argues Dr Hasan di Tiro, is « a political and economic misfit among nations » ; it is « Javanese Indonesia : a hoodlum empire misruled by psychopaths », « a cloak for Javanese colonialism in the archipelago ». He argues that a Javanese-dominated Indonesia is only a replacement of Dutch rule by Javanese colonialism. Above all, from the point of view of South East Asia, 'Javanese Indonesia has become a menace to neighbouring countries and a constant source of trouble in South East Asia'.

Dr. Hasan di Tiro therefore advocates self-determination for the component parts of the Indonesian Archipelago and asserts that «the establishment of the Confederation of South East Asia composed of the Republics of Sumatra, the Celebes, the Moluccas, Borneo, New Guinea, Bali, Sunda and Java will bring peace harmony and stability to this region ».

Dr. Hasan di Tiro makes clear that he does not advocate a call to arms for rebellion or secession' but only self-determination for the component parts of Indonesia. He advocates, he says' replacing the shortlived Javanese empire— now on the verge of moral, political and economic bankruptcy — with a new Confederation of the South East Asian States'.

Dr Hasan di Tiro's pamphlet contains twelve sections, the most interesting of which are section II (Colonialism perpetuated under a new name), III (Indonesia : not a nation but a geographic expression), IV (Dutch colonialism replaced by Javanese colonialism), VII (Javanese Indonesia : a menace to peace), IX (The solution : Self determination in the Indonesian archipelago), X (Establishment of the Republics of Sumatra, Celebes, Mocluccas. Borneo, Bali, Sunda. Java, New Guinea, and the Confederation of South East Asia), The titles of the sections are self-explanatory.

Dr. Hasan di Tiro's thesis can be appraised through reading sections III, VII, IX and X which will appear in the SDN beginning from to - morrow.

Letters to the Editor