Max Lane, *An Introduction to the Politics of the Indonesian Union Movement*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2019, ix + 152 pp. ISBN: 9789814833000, price: USD 11.90 (paperback).

Mapping the Indonesian social movement scene is no simple task. One could easily get lost in a sea of acronyms of the names of unions and movements, and the complex relationships between these competing organizations. Nevertheless, to have a more holistic picture of Indonesian politics, it is imperative to understand the dynamics of social movements in the country. The latest book by Max Lane, a long-time scholar of Indonesian politics and literature, provides a detailed introduction to the post-authoritarian politics of labor unions, arguably one of Indonesia's most vibrant social movements.

Focusing on union mobilization and political actions in the 2010–2014 period, Lane divides his discussion into six chapters. In the preface, he presents his main argument: that the new wave of labor activism in post-authoritarian Indonesia is still at its infancy. Armed with a wealth of data and extensive engagement with workers and labor activists, Lane then starts his discussion in a chronological manner.

In chapter 1, Lane gives a historical background of labor politics during the authoritarian New Order regime. Haunted by the specter of class-based leftist politics, the New Order purged leftist and progressive tendencies among the workers and instituted what Lane calls as 'authoritarian state unionism,' a form of 'totalitarian management of trade unions and industrial relations' by the state (p. 5). In this arrangement, there was only one legal union, the All-Indonesia Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, SPSI), that was more dependent on the state than its own mass base. However, dissident unions such as the reformist Indonesia Prosperity Trade Union (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, SBSI) and the militant leftist Indonesian Center for Labor Struggle (*Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*, PPBI) started to organize in the 1990s, challenging the regime's hegemony and broadening political space for independent working-class mobilization.

Lane then shifts his discussion to post-authoritarian labor politics in chapters 2–4. In chapter 2, he argues that the democratic transition period marked the end of authoritarian state unionism. This meant the mushrooming of new labor unions beyond SPSI. SPSI itself underwent various changes and debates, but it eventually split into two unions: The All-Indonesia Trade Union Confederation (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, KSPSI) and the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*, KSPI), which grew out of the splinter wing of the old SPSI (p. 34). Dissident unions influenced by leftist currents of the 1990s also emerged (p. 45). Here, Lane

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points out an important point of analysis: the economic upturn after the 1997 Asian financial crisis led to the entrance of a new generation of workers with little to no memories of the militant industrial action against the New Order regime in the 1990s (p. 47). This represents both challenges and opportunities for the labor movement in general.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the main empirical focus of the book, covering the 2010–2014 period. These chapters present latest updates on union mobilization in the struggle for wage, social security, and political representation. Lane highlights several case studies, such as the 2012 mass strike in Bekasi, the labor-led campaign for healthcare rights for all, and workers' participation in electoral politics. KSPI especially its metal workers' union, the Indonesian Metal Workers' Union Federation (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*, FSPMI), played an important role in these case studies.

In these chapters, Lane carefully shows the overlapping connections and tensions among different labor groupings and their activist supporters. He points out a critical juncture of this new wave of labor politics: how progressive and radical currents in the labor movement tried to reach out to FSPMI's mass base who are sympathetic to social democratic agenda. Despite the advances made by the progressive activists in radicalizing FSPMI members, their initiatives were cut short by the central leadership of KSPI, who is more than happy to cooperate with sectarian movements and elites such as the Islamist-populist 212 movement and its elite backers.

Lastly, in the concluding chapter and the appendices, Lane provides an update of the state of labor politics post-2014. The labor movement continues to be fragmented, but he reminds us that the progressive and leftist currents in the movement are alive and still maintain the aspiration to build a social movement-based political party backed by labor unions and other social movements.

Lane's analysis of contemporary Indonesian labor politics is a welcome contribution to studies on Indonesian social movements. However, several notes are worth mentioning. First, the readers will benefit from some kind of engagement with theoretical debates on Indonesian politics and labor politics, especially recent debates on oligarchy (Ford and Pepinsky 2014) as well as labor and democratization (Usmani 2018). Secondly, although Lane is pretty upfront about the unevenness of his data and personal bias toward several unions, such as his close connection with the Popular Democratic Workers' Union (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Demokratik Kerakyatan*, F-SEDAR), he could have actually enriched his analysis by integrating narratives from other left-leaning unions. Relatedly, I think a more critical analysis of the trajectory of leftist currents in the Indonesian labor movement is needed. It is understandable that Lane, as

an engaged scholar of Indonesian unions, might feel hesitant to elaborate on the failures of progressive unions, a sentiment that I, as an activist-researcher, also share. But I would argue that sympathetic scholars, labor activists, and the workers themselves would appreciate a more critical analysis of the achievements and weaknesses of post-authoritarian Indonesian progressive unions: more critical analyses, less apologetics.

All in all, *An Introduction to the Politics of the Indonesian Union Movement* is a helpful primer for those who are interested in labor politics in contemporary Indonesia. Max Lane's attempt to excavate narratives and insights from activist circles into a coherent story of the recent resurgence of labor unions should be appreciated. Both scholars and activists will find this book useful and insightful.

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