

= Union Films =

Union Films was a film production company located in Batavia , Dutch East Indies ( now Jakarta , Indonesia ) . Established by ethnic Chinese businessmen Ang Hock Liem and Tjoa Ma Tjoen in 1940 , it produced seven black @-@ and @-@ white films before it was dissolved in 1942 ; all are thought to be lost . The company 's films were directed by four men , mostly ethnic Chinese , and launched the careers of actors such as Rendra Karno and Djoewariah .

Established during the revival of the Indies film industry , Union released its first film , Kedok Ketawa , in July 1940 . This was followed by a series of films penned by Saeroen which were increasingly oriented towards the Indies ' growing intelligentsia and attempted to distance themselves from the theatrical conventions which were common in the contemporary film industry . This continued after Saeroen left for Star Film in 1941 , with Union 's final two productions emphasising realism . Following the Japanese occupation of the Indies in March 1942 , Union was dissolved , though its films continued to be screened into the mid 1940s .

= = History = =

Following the commercial successes of Terang Boelan ( Full Moon ; 1937 ) , Fatima ( 1938 ) , and Alang @-@ Alang ( Grass ; 1939 ) , the film industry of the Dutch East Indies ? which had been severely weakened by the Great Depression ? was revived . Film production increased and , in 1940 , four new production houses were opened , including Union Films . The company was funded by ethnic Chinese businessman Ang Hock Liem , who is credited as producer for the majority of the company 's releases ; daily operations , however , were handled by Tjoa Ma Tjoen . Union was headquartered in Prinsenlaan , Batavia ( now Mangga Besar , Jakarta ) , and , according to a press release , established to " improve the quality of Indonesian art " .

The fledgling Union 's first film , Kedok Ketawa , was released in July 1940 . Following a young couple who face off against criminals with the help of a masked bandit , this film was directed by Jo An Djan and starred Oedjang , Fatimah , and Basoeki Resobowo . It received positive reviews ; the journalist Saeroen wrote in Pemandangan that the film 's quality was comparable to imported Hollywood productions , and a review in Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad praised the cinematography . Following these positive reviews , Union hired Saeroen ? who had previously written Terang Boelan and several works for Tan 's Film ? as a screenwriter . He made his debut for the company with Harta Berdarah , directed by new hires R Hu and Rd Ariffien , following Jo An Djan 's departure for Populair 's Film . The film , in which a young man convinces a miserly hajji to be more charitable , was released in October 1940 and starred the singer Soelastri and martial artist Zonder .

Union released their third production , Bajar dengan Djiwa , by February 1941 . Directed by R Hu , this film ? a drama in which a young woman is sold to a loan shark in order to pay her father 's debt ? marked the film debut of Djoewariah ; she later became Union 's leading lady . Ariffien , meanwhile , was tasked with directing Asmara Moerni , based on a script by Saeroen . Attempting to reach the educated audiences by casting a young doctor , Adnan Kapau Gani , opposite Djoewariah , this romance told of a young man who is ultimately able to marry his former maid after she receives an education . Released in April , the film received mixed reviews : one , in the Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad , found the film " fascinating " , while another for the same paper considered the film dependent on the stage traditions which its advertisements had denounced .

In July 1941 Union released Wanita dan Satria , a Djoewariah vehicle which follows a well @-@ born womaniser who abuses his social status to gain women 's trust before ultimately getting his comeuppance . In advertising Wanita dan Satria , the company again emphasised the non @-@ theatrical background of the film 's cast , which also included Moesa , Djoewita and Hidajat . The film received positive reviews ; one , from the Soerabaijasch Handelsblad , wrote that Wanita dan Satria " gives a clear picture of the precarious position of Indonesian women and motivates the desire for a firmer outline of her rights in the Moslem society . " This was the company 's last film to be directed by Ariffien or written by Saeroen ; both men migrated to rival company Star Film soon afterwards .

Hu remained with Union and directed the company 's next production , Soeara Berbisa , with peranakan sound technician Boen Kin Nam serving as assistant director . Written by Djojopranoto , the work followed two young men who compete for the love of a woman before learning that they are long @-@ lost brothers . Djoewita had left the company at this point , and the studio hired Raden Soekarno for the leading role of this late 1941 release . The company 's final completed production , Mega Mendoeng , was directed by Boen and announced soon after shooting for Soeara Berbisa had begun . This film , a romance starring Soekarno and new find Sofiati , was released in early 1942 . In producing both films , Union emphasised realism and targeted educated audiences .

By the end of 1941 , the government of the Dutch East Indies were concerned that Empire of Japan could invade the colony . This fear reached the general populace , and the February 1942 edition of the film magazine *Pertjatoeran Doenia dan Film* reported that several studios would move away from the colonial capital of Batavia or go on a production hiatus . Union , though already beginning production of a film set in the Majapahit era titled *Damar Woelan* , was forced to stop filming . When the Japanese occupied the Indies in March 1942 , Union was closed , never to reopen .

Aside from Ariffien , who continued directing into the 1960s , none of Union 's directors or producers returned to the film industry after the conclusion of the Japanese occupation in 1945 . Several actors , however , continued their careers . Djoewariah , for instance , made her first film after leaving Union , *Sehidup Semati* ( One Life , One Death ) , in 1949 , and continued acting until the mid @-@ 1950s . The career of Soekarno , meanwhile , lasted through the 1970s ; he was mostly credited as Rendra Karno after changing his name in the 1950s . Others had careers behind the screen ; Kedok Ketawa star Basoeeki Resobowo , for instance , became art director on films such as *Darah dan Doa* ( The Long March ; 1950 ) .

= = Filmography = =

In a period of two years , Union released seven films ; all were feature length , made in black @-@ and @-@ white , and received wide releases in the Dutch East Indies . Several were screened in nearby Singapore , including *Bajar dengan Djiwa* and *Asmara Moerni* . Though its films were screened at least into the 1940s , the company 's output is likely lost .

*Kedok Ketawa* ( Laughing Mask ; 1940 )

*Harta Berdarah* ( Bloody Treasure ; 1940 )

*Bajar dengan Djiwa* ( Pay with [ One 's ] Soul ; 1941 )

*Asmara Moerni* ( True Love ; 1941 )

*Wanita dan Satria* ( The Woman and the Hero ; 1941 )

*Soeara Berbisa* ( Venomous Voice ; 1941 )

*Mega Mendoeng* ( 1942 )

= = Explanatory notes = =