Jan M. Pluvier

A study in Indonesian politics

CONFRONTATIONS

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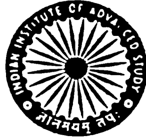

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CONFRONTATIONS

a study in Indonesian politics

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OVERZICHT VAN DE ONTWIKKELING DER NATIONALISTISCHE BEWEGING IN INDONESIE IN DE JAREN 1930 TOT 1942

(*'s Gravenhage, W. van Hoeve,* 1953)

CONFRONTATIONS

a study in Indonesian politics

JAN M. PLUVIER

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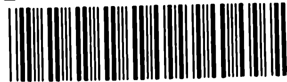
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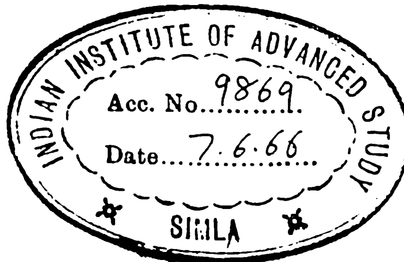

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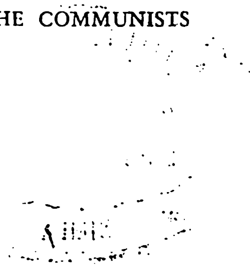


PREFACE

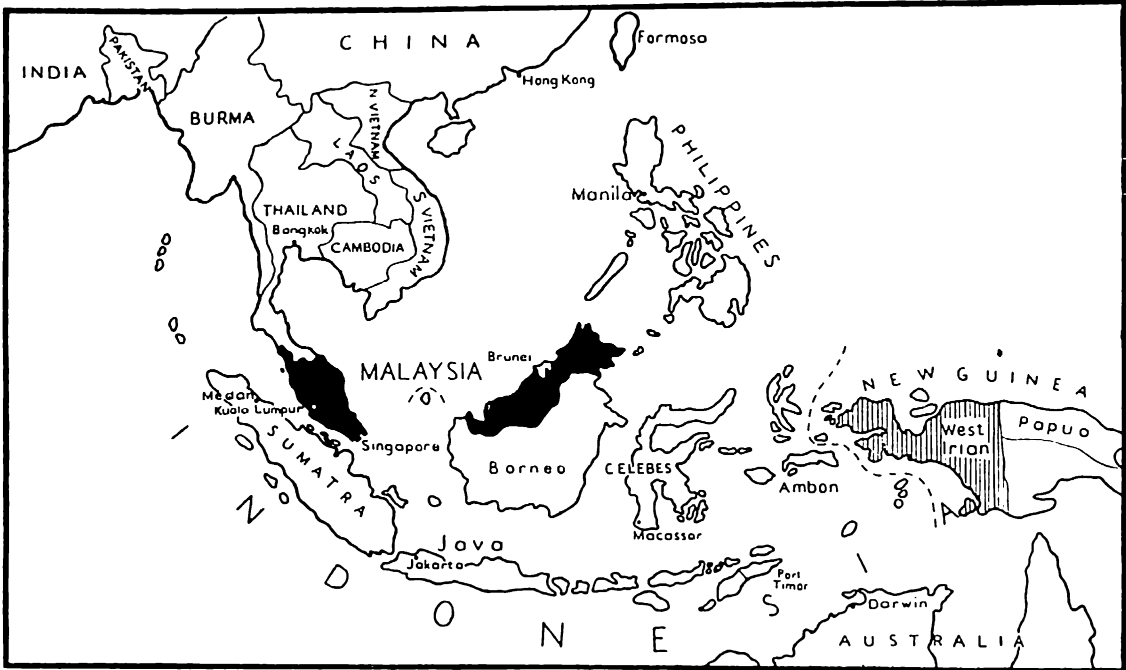
This essay does not claim to bring to light any new facts and indeed the data referred to in the text may be found in any of the books listed in the select bibliography.

The interpretation of events is, however, different from the one usually given. As a historian, I am well aware that this interpretation is not necessarily the correct one but I hope what I say will at least clarify some important points and provide the answers to a number of questions which for some time must have been exercising the minds of many people, more particularly the Malaysians who at the time of writing are bearing the brunt of Indonesia's new Confrontation.

My thanks are due to Dr. J.A.M. Caldwell and my publishers who were kind enough to assist in removing the 'Dutchness' from my English.

JAN M. PLUVIER

Petaling Jaya
Malaysia
April 1965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INTRODUCTION

Having brought about the downfall of King Louis Philippe early in 1848 the French set up a republican government. It was dominated by bourgeois politicians, but in order to ensure, for the time being at least, the support of the working class, two socialists were included. One of the two was Louis Blanc, the well-known theorist and the founder of the *ateliers sociaux* which were formed to counteract the evil social consequences of the growing system of industrial capitalism. The 'social workshops' were to be co-operative productive associations, established and guaranteed by the state and managed by the workers.

Shortly after it assumed power the republican régime itself set up apparently similar institutions, which it called *ateliers nationaux*, or 'national workshops'. The name was cleverly chosen because it suggested a link with the socialist workshops. There was, however, a world of difference between the national workshops and those planned by Blanc. The former were merely places providing unproductive relief work for the unemployed on government subsidy. In fact they had been set up by the middle-class leaders mainly to discredit the socialists and they were run in such a way as to ensure failure and so prove the ineffectiveness of socialist doctrines. No pains were spared to make the venture as costly as possible in order to frighten off the taxpayers who had been made to bear the burden of the scheme, which many people considered to be a waste of national funds on the Parisian 'ne'er-do-wells'. This clever policy demonstrated that the republican leaders of 1848 were not quite the naïve, unpolitical and simple-minded folk they have been so often considered because they were no match for the imperial adventurer by whom they were supplanted, but a group of people who clearly knew what they wanted—or rather, what they did not want, namely,

a popular republic. The policy paid off well: the socialists were defeated at the polls, the threat of a 'red republic' was averted and when, in June 1848, the Parisian proletariat rose in revolt, it was mercilessly crushed.

These comments may seem a scarcely relevant introduction to an essay on the subject of Indonesia. There is, however, a connexion. Under cover of the national workshops and of Louis Blanc's prestige among the workmen, the French middle-class politicians of 1848 were busily engaged in working secretly against the social aspirations of the lower classes and in ensuring that the republic should be of the bourgeois type, 'conservative' and respecful of private property. In a similar way, the government of Sukarno, while carefully creating a leftist image by its anti-imperialist pretensions and its outward co-operation with the communists is primarily occupied with defending the political and economic power of the Indonesian ruling *élite* against any attempt at social change.

There are differences, of course, since historical parallels are never exact. The position of the Indonesian ruling class *vis-à-vis* the mass of the population is far weaker than that of its French nineteenth century counterpart—and even the latter had to rely on a dictatorship, that of Napoleon III, to secure its predominance. Thus, while similarly sacrificing the democratic parliamentary system in favour of a strongman régime, the Indonesian ruling *élite* has to proceed with more caution. They are in no position to provoke a showdown: they have to conceal their intentions more carefully. Thus they have been building up an ingeniously devised façade—the leftist image—which has been accepted both at home and also abroad, where many observers have attached tremendous importance to it.

One of the elements of this leftist image is an attack on foreigners. The Dutch were the first to bear the brunt; Malaysia became the second target.

1 NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION 1919-1941

The 1918 programme of the Sarekat Islam, then the largest political organization in the Netherlands Indies, declared that the aim of the party was to fight both the Dutch government and also 'sinful capitalism'. Since the Sarekat Islam leadership consisted mainly of people representing the interests of the middle-classes, the phrase 'sinful capitalism' was clearly meant as a compromise. The struggle against capitalism was included in the programme in an attempt to strengthen the party by making an appeal to social revolutionary leaders who were at that moment increasing their influence at grass-roots level. At the same time, in order not to be too radical and thus frighten off the propertied classes, the party confined its attack to 'sinful', that is, foreign, capitalism. For some years the compromise worked and in 1919, according to its leader, Tjokroaminoto, the Sarekat Islam had two million members.[1] Although we would do well to accept this figure with reserve, the party was undoubtedly the first organization in Indonesian history with mass support.

But compromise was no solution and the social revolutionary leaders vehemently attacked the clause on 'sinful capitalism' as opportunist. Tensions formed between the radical leaders with their following among the lower classes, and the moderate politicians who considered the social aspirations of these lower classes a threat to their own position, and the downfall of the Sarekat Islam resulted. This was not, however, an isolated case of disharmony between certain Indonesian leaders but it was a clear symptom of—to use a somewhat tarnished phrase—the 'class struggle' element of the liberation movement.

[1] J. Th. Petrus Blumberger *De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indië*, p. 69

As foreign political and economic domination were the most prominent features of colonialism, it was inevitable that the Indonesian revolution would be nationalist to a high degree. Indeed, putting an end to the political hegemony of the Dutch in 1949 and crippling their economic domination in 1957 were certainly quite sensational achievements, but the desire for national independence and for terminating the economically subordinate position of the country was only one aspect of the Indonesian revolution. In essence this revolution was a comprehensive movement for renovation and modernization and, as such, it included the ideal of achieving some kind of social justice. The objectives in this respect ranged from the introduction of a few social improvements to a complete overhaul of the structure of society.

These recommendations could not fail to bring an element of discord into the revolutionary movement. Though it may offend the ardent nationalist who cherishes the conviction that the Indonesian people rose as one man against their Dutch masters, the point must be stressed that the fight for freedom was not unanimously supported. The Indonesian revolution was not unique in this. In every revolutionary situation there will be found those who are opposed to change. In this case there were some people who preferred the settled conditions and certainties of the old order to the uncertainties and obscurity of a new régime. Not committed to either side, they simply wished to be left in peace, but did not form any great obstacle to the revolutionary struggle, for in general they lacked the spirit to resist the new trend just as they lacked the imagination to accept it.

There were others, however, who did resist, namely those whose positions were endangered because they were based on the old order—the Amboinese soldiers of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, for example, or the civil servants

who feared what would happen to them if the government which they had served so loyally should disappear, or the aristocracy from which the Netherlands Indies government had recruited its administrative helpers.

This opposition was not, however, so dangerous to the nationalist movement as to jeopardize its chances of ultimate success. In fact the native aristocracy had clearly been on the way out for some decades owing to the economic changes of the colonial period. These changes had caused the emergence of a new *élite* and, even without a revolution, the aristocratic class would have had to give way. But the very existence of the aristocracy and the fact that to a large extent it sided with the old order—that is with the colonial rulers—gave the revolution a social revolutionary character. In the nationalist struggle the nationalists not only fought foreign domination but also their own countrymen who supported it.

In the Netherlands Indies a distinction existed between indirect and direct rule, but under the extremely centralized and meddlesome system of administration which the Dutch had built up this distinction had faded into mere theory. For all practical purposes the native states of Java and the petty principalities in the Outer Islands (282 in all) were completely subjected to the Dutch. So were the Javanese Regents belonging to the *priayi*[1] class who were the remnants of the traditional administration at the lower levels and who were maintained by the colonial government and operated in territories under direct rule. Although the traditional rulers' prestige among the population, based upon the *adat*,[2] had been carefully boosted and great efforts had been made to create the impression that they were really in charge, their authority was indissolubly linked with and subordinate to the paramount power. Judging from one of

[1] *priayi*, official belonging to the Javanese aristocracy.
[2] *adat*, custom, especially as source of customary law.

his titles, a potentate like the *Susuhunan* of Surakarta might still regard himself as the 'axis of the Universe', but any photograph showing him in the presence of the Dutch Resident would reveal where the real authority lay.

In spite of their traditional prestige and sometimes magic influence it became increasingly evident that the native rulers, the Javanese Regents and whatever other types of *adat* chiefs might exist were no more than official agents, enabling the Dutch to maintain an effective and inexpensive local administrative system. They were personifications of the government in Batavia through whom the mysterious and unpopular policies of the central administration could be imposed on the population.

The native chiefs gradually lost prestige, first with the urban intellectuals and middle-class groups, the main reservoir of nationalist leadership, who had never been greatly impressed by them, and later with the rural population who were, perhaps, influenced by the Muslim *kiais* and *ulamas*.[1] They thus began to rely more heavily on the colonial government to which they owed their position, while the government in its turn sought their support when it came under nationalist attacks. Under cover of promoting local patriotism, the so-called Malino-scheme of Dutch sponsored 'federal' states (1946-50) was to a large extent based on the co-operation of the traditional chiefs.

Because of this attitude the traditional groups have been denounced by the nationalists as collaborators with the colonial régime. This they certainly were, but they should not be termed anti-national. In fact, several among them supported the nationalist struggle, from Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX of Jogjakarta down to many members of the *priayi* aristocracy, like Sutardjo (the proposer of the famous pre-war Volksraad petition). Others who committed themselves to their colonial masters did so neither from

[1] *kiai* and *ulama*, Muslim religious leader and teacher.

love for the Europeans nor because they were afraid of freedom, but because they feared the nationalists. They clearly realized that the victory of nationalism might result in the abolition of their social and political privileges. Their position was that of any aristocratic class facing an essentially middle-class revolution and the only power which was able and, for reasons of its own, willing to help them avert this threat happened to be the foreign ruler. They were, as a class, the principal native victims of the nationalist revolution, which in this respect at least accomplished one of its social revolutionary ambitions: the elimination of the aristocracy's position of leadership. This end was achieved because, in fighting the feudal classes at the same time as the Europeans, the secular nationalists and the Islamic religious leaders of the revolutionary period were in complete harmony.

In other respects, however, the Indonesian nationalist movement was outwardly characterized by a bewildering variety of political organizations with a nightmare of party initials, a situation which, on the analogy of the famous Malay-Indonesian snack of pieces of broiled meat on skewers, or *saté*, was occasionally referred to as *persatéan* and compared sadly with the *persatuan*, or unity that the Indian nationalist movement was displaying. This lack of structural unity was due to personal rivalries, to differing opinions on immediate tactical problems and to the oppressive policy of the Netherlands Indies government which made reorganization or reorientation necessary from time to time. But it was also the result of different concepts regarding the more remote problems which would arise in the post-independence period, particularly the structure of state and society and the character of the government.

Until independence was achieved, the Indonesian leaders did not in general allow the final success of the purely nationalist struggle to be endangered by considerations

about the future. It was the nationalist ideal of *Indonesia Merdeka* which provided the bond for holding together the different sections of the nationalist movement and all nationalist-inclined parties stood on this common platform, irrespective of whether they were social revolutionary or bourgeois moderate, adherents of a secular republic or of an Islamic state, or in favour of a unitarian or a federal type of constitution. The Dutch tried to play upon these contrasts but they came to realize that the underlying sense of unity, like the skewer in *saté*, rather than its outward diversity, was the essential element of the movement for national liberation. It was only after the colonial régime had been overthrown that the nationalist movement split up into the various factions of which it was composed.

However, the Indonesian leaders did not neglect their ideals with regard to the post-independence period. Among the nationalists there were the social radicals who wished to go further than merely expelling the foreigners, putting an end to the ruling class's privileges and taking over the positions of those who had been evicted. They envisaged a change in the whole structure of society which would be a better remedy for the country's social and economic ills than simply imposing reforms while leaving the traditional set-up of society essentially untouched. Thus the achievement of independence was a condition *sine qua non* rather than an end in itself.

Because the nationalist issue was subordinated to their more remote aims, the social revolutionary groups and in particular the communists among them have often been regarded as anti-national. The communists were particularly feared because they were the most consistent advocates of social change and because of their allegiance to a world-wide organization with its centre in Moscow but this accusation was based on an incorrect assumption, namely that nationalism meant advocating independence and a parlia-

mentary government of the bourgeois type. Advocating a social revolution was in fact not contrary to the aim of nationalism as such, which, strictly speaking, gave no pointer whatsoever to the form of government or the structure of society that was to be introduced. The struggle for Indonesian independence was, moreover, not opposed by any of the social radical groups, who had nothing to fear and much to win from the disappearance of a strongly anti-communist and anti-socialist colonial régime. Even the communist Madiun insurrection of 1948 did not in any way endanger the final outcome of the nationalist struggle.

It is true nonetheless that the social revolutionary groups considered the struggle for independence—and independence itself—as a means to further their own particular ends and that, while engaged in the fight against the Dutch, they were strengthening their own positions against those whom they expected to be their opponents after independence. But the nationalists of the bourgeois type, for their part, also considered independence to be a step on the road to power and to the realization of their ideals. These were the abolition of 'sinful' capitalism and of the leading position of the feudal classes and the introduction of a democratic government, at least so long as this would guarantee their position as the ruling *élite*. They, like the radicals, were aware that they had to strengthen their organizations if they wished their vision of the future to be ultimately successful.

Because of these considerations, as well as the necessity of fighting the Dutch, both factions, the social radicals and the bourgeois nationalists—and also the religious leaders—attempted to obtain as large a following among the population as possible. It was at this juncture that *kromo*—the common man—entered the Indonesian political stage.

During the pre-war decades *kromo* was the most flattered personality in Indonesian nationalism. Nearly all political

parties had a paragraph in their programme dealing with his plight and outlining the methods of improving it, and as far back as the late 'twenties Sukarno had invented a new term, *marhaen*, to define him. That the nationalist movement should go to great lengths to consider the problems of the poor and to devise schemes for their solution, is quite understandable if one looks at the living standards of the lower classes. But though the political leaders subscribed to various programmes for the betterment of the living conditions of the great mass of the rural and urban proletariat, they did so for political considerations too.

As *kromo* formed the overwhelming majority of the population it was clearly worth while paying attention to him. The self-conscious nationalist leaders, mainly descended from the *bourgeoisie* and Western educated intellectuals, did not make a big impression numerically. Their eventual success was due to the fact that they carried the mass of the population along with them, at least to the extent of passive acquiescence. This success was not achieved only by making great play with terms like 'freedom' and 'independence', for these are meaningless words to people whose first and foremost concern in life was a struggle to make both ends meet. The nationalist leaders realized that they had to capitalize on the resentments and needs of the mass of the population. Consequently they advocated an improvement in the standard of living and by this means were able to obtain support among the mass of the population for their own nationalist demands.

It would be going too far to conclude from the above that the nationalist leaders' appeal to the lower classes was merely a cynical manoeuvre to attract as many adherents as possible in the political struggle against the Dutch and to strengthen their own position after independence; and in fact a number of organizations did a great deal of welfare work among the poor for humanitarian reasons. But in all

essentially bourgeois revolutions the lower classes have been used by the leaders as an indispensable ally in the struggle against 'the common enemy' and as an equally indispensable stepping-stone for their own march to political power. The leaders of the Indonesian revolution were no exception.

What considerations were actually behind the propaganda on behalf of *kromo* and the initiation of welfare work schemes? Was the intention to obtain the support of the masses in order to strengthen the leaders' own position or rather that of the social group to which they belonged? Or was it meant to forestall other more radical leaders from extending their hold over *kromo*. Or, finally, was this policy actually aimed at improving the living standards of the lower classes and, if so, was a revolutionary overthrow of society to be the end product or were there merely to be improvements made to the existing social and economic structure which as a whole was not to be fundamentally transformed?

The development of Sarekat Islam between 1918 and 1920 showed that any policy directed at turning the passive, silent masses into an active force was not without danger to the position of the leaders. The Sarekat Islam leadership, themselves, found they were not prepared to run the risk when they realized that they would be unable to contain the power that might be unleashed. They dropped the socialists and their large following and instead took up a less controversial issue, Pan-islamism, to attract adherents. There were, of course, other reasons why the Sarekat Islam right wing changed its course: socialism was considered incompatible with Islam, and if the Dutch community drifted into one of its periodical panics it would not be difficult for them to persuade the government to strike against the party as a whole. But events proved, nonetheless, that the questions posed above are not merely hypothetical ones.

However, to answer them and, by doing so, to classify

nationalist parties as either social revolutionary or essentially bourgeois, is not easy. For obvious reasons the leaders themselves did not venture their opinions on this point and it is always difficult to gather the real intentions behind their public statements. Secondly, the social status of neither the leaders nor their following gives any pointer as to these intentions. As we have seen, in general the nationalist leadership, including that of the communists, came from the Western-educated middle-class, while the followers of a party like the nobility-sponsored Perkumpulan Kawulo Ngajogjakarta belonged to the lower sections of the population. Factors which come into the picture are a genuine compassion for men's needs, and a Marxist doctrinaire approach in the first case and traditional respect for the aristocracy in the second.

Social-revolutionary ideas found expression for the first time in the Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging (I.S.D.V.), founded in 1914 by some Dutch Marxists. From there they filtered into the Sarekat Islam, which originally accepted them, although not whole-heartedly. After the left-wing leaders had been thrown out in 1921 they and their followers, known as the Sarekat Rakjat, collaborated closely with the Partai Kommunis Indonesia, the successor of the I.S.D.V. Both parties attempted to win over the mass of the population and in this they were quite successful. 'The communist movement makes in general a bigger impression than the Sarekat Islam in the previous decade, because it roundly gives expression, in peppery language, to the general bitterness and distrust *vis-à-vis* the government, the administration, the entrepreneurs, the Europeans, all of them...[and] because the leaders are able to create the feeling that they will act more strongly on behalf of those who feel distressed'.[1] The Government publication from

[1] *Mededeelingen der Regeering over enkele onderwerpen van algemeen belang*, 1924, p. 12-13

which this is quoted admitted that this factor accounted for their success more than the tenets derived from Russia. The economic depression of the early 'twenties favoured revolutionary activity in Java as much as the virtual breakdown of traditional norms and concepts was responsible for social tensions in West Sumatra. The development culminated in the revolts of 1926 and 1927.

The government's repression was severe: the leaders of the two revolutionary parties either had to escape or were sent to the Boven Digoel bagnio[1], and in the ensuing hunt for communists there was no opportunity left for setting up communist or social radical organizations. But the lower classes stayed behind together with their problems and resentments and from this moment onwards non-Marxist politicians vied for their attention.

After 1926 the nationalist parties were usually classified according to their tactical attitudes: either non-cooperative or co-operative. To the outsider this might seem a minor distinction, but it was not. For some Indonesian leaders to embrace either 'non' or 'co' amounted to little short of a confession of faith, and the Netherlands Indies government, too, attached so great an importance to this distinction that it almost completely based its policy on it. It persecuted the non-cooperators, regarding them as extremists, and tolerated the co-operators, who were considered moderates, although it carefully scrutinized them. It failed to take into account the fact that both groups were in complete agreement that Dutch rule should be eliminated.

Referring to these parties as Left and Right respectively has not helped to keep the distinction true. Class-consciousness might in some cases have played a role in determining the tactical stand of a party, yet it cannot be taken for granted that co-operators were *ipso facto* right-wingers (although most of them were), or that non-cooperators

[1] Internment camp, set up in 1927, in New Guinea.

invariably belonged to the Left. In fact only a few did.

While accepting, for the time being, the existing political and economic foundations of society, the co-operators set out to improve the economic situation of the country. This they regarded as a necessary condition for achieving political independence. They did not advocate the overthrow of the social and economic system because they realized that this would be impossible so long as the colonial régime was firmly established. It was not even their intention to do so after the downfall of the colonial régime for in general the co-operators belonged to the group of bourgeois leaders who, in spite of all their activities on behalf of *kromo*, were ultimately aiming at replacing the European top layer in the political and economic spheres with people from their own ranks.

This view may be encountered, too, in non-cooperative circles, particularly in the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, as the old Sarekat Islam had been renamed. As the official party organ, *Loednjah Tanfidzyah P.S.I.I.*, put it in December 1930: 'The activities to promote the economy of the people, irrespective of the colonial circumstances brought about by the Dutch administration and capitalist enterprise, are based on economic principles and not related to any political action....These economic activities constitute, however, one of the conditions for the success of the political action which will lead to political freedom: no nation will enjoy independence as long as it is not economically free. On the other hand, the political movement which is advocating political independence should follow the same policy as the one trying to achieve economic freedom; it should devote itself to self-activity, heedless of the actions and regulations of the foreigners, at least as far as this is possible without violating the laws.'[1] The last sentence points to a difference of opinion with the co-operators, but

[1] *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisch-Chineesche Pers*, 1931, p. 105

this was the only difference. If other calls were to be heard occasionally in P.S.I.I. circles—like agricultural collectivization(!)—they were meant solely to rally the mass of the population to its banners.

The views of the other non-cooperators were different from, and in fact contrary to, those held by the co-operators and the P.S.I.I. In their opinion, political independence should precede any drive towards economic and social improvements. This point of view, outwardly more radical, does not automatically imply that the non-cooperators stood more to the Left than the co-operators; after all, the radicalism to which they gave expression was political rather than social. In non-cooperative circles, anti-capitalist and Marxist-sounding slogans might be heard quite often, together with attacks on the bourgeois nationalists of the other side, but these did not detract from the fact that the leadership consisted of middle-class intellectuals for whom Sukarno's appeal to the masses and activity in the trade union sphere constituted important factors in winning over the masses to their camp. They were not primarily interested in a fundamental change in the structure of society and, preoccupied as they were with the fight for freedom, they hardly committed themselves on what should happen after independence.

The Partai Nasional Indonesia, founded in 1927 by Sukarno, recruited its adherents both from among the middle-classes and from the mass of the population. After the dissolution of the organization in 1931 its following was dispersed among the ranks of two successor parties, Partai Indonesia (Partindo) and Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (P.N.I.-baru). The difference between the two was unconnected with any social issue. They were in agreement with each other that political independence should be the primary objective, to be achieved by non-cooperative tactics. But while the P.N.I.-baru, led by Hatta and Sjahrir, emphasized

political and social education, the Partindo, Sukarno's choice, was convinced that a mass organization was the appropriate instrument. It may be assumed that the more radical utterances of the P.N.I.-baru served to turn many bourgeois leaders to the Partindo, but this gives as little evidence that the former was more to the Left than the latter as the mass following of the Partindo indicated the contrary. Both parties were engaged in trade union work; both had a strong middle-class wing.

During the mid-thirties the uncompromising attitude of the disastrous Governor-General Bonifacius C. de Jonge forced the non-cooperative parties into virtual inactivity. The co-operators came to the fore, mainly in the Partai Indonesia Raja (Parindra), a right-wing organization formed by the merger, in 1935, of two co-operative parties, and in the Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia (Gerindo) which considered itself a 'leftist correction' to the former. The Gerindo consisted of many of the previous non-cooperators who preferred to change tactics rather than to be politically silenced in the wilds of New Guinea.

In its professed aims and utterances the Gerindo was more to the left than the Parindra, but again this does not automatically prove its real nature in this respect. The Gerindo performed little welfare work on behalf of the lower classes and there is no indication whatsoever that the party concerned itself with trade union activities, which made it unique among Indonesian political organizations. On the other hand, the Parindra was extremely active in attempting to bring about improvements in economic conditions. The fact that this right-wing party actually performed much welfare work (while there is hardly trace of any such activity on the part of the left-orientated Gerindo) was, however, in practice as well as in theory, not such a paradox as it seemed.

In practice, the activities of the Parindra and the Parindra-

controlled trade unions and peasants' associations, while covering the lower classes, were primarily meant to be for the benefit of the middle-classes. An imminent railway strike in 1933 failed to come off because the Parindra trade union kept aloof from what it considered 'political action'— as if there could be any non-political strike under colonial conditions. The peasants' association (Rukun Tani) did much good work in the rural areas, but it may well be questioned whether the then Governor of East Java, Charles O. van der Plas, a progressive *poseur*, would have been as sympathetic to it if this activity had actually included the poorest sections of the peasantry in its scope. Indeed the Dutch had discouraged any close contacts between the leaders and the masses ever since the Sarekat Islam had given them a fright during the period just before 1920, and the Parindra leaders were not the sort of men to press the issue.

In theory, the discrepancy in the amount of welfare work performed by the Parindra and the Gerindo was not so paradoxical as it seemed, because of the different views held by the two parties in this respect. The Parindra was convinced that the results of its activity, namely the education of an economic and intellectual *élite* and the formation of a stronger middle-class, were the necessary pre-requisites for obtaining independence, while the improvements brought about on behalf of the masses at the same time would not fail to give the party mass support. The Gerindo on the other hand still held the view of the former non-cooperators that all this work was a waste of energy under colonial conditions and that, in consequence, its policy should be directed primarily at achieving independence.

There are however, some indications which may point to the Gerindo as a more leftist party than the Parindra. In 1937 Sutomo, the Parindra chairman, advised that the organization should follow the example of Kemal Ataturk. This advice casts an interesting light on the professed popu-

lar character of the Parindra. Again, the fact that Parindra refused to accept Eurasians in its ranks was based on suspicions as to the role of this community in the national struggle—in no South-East Asian country were the Eurasians (legally Dutchmen) more pro-European than in the Netherlands Indies. But the refusal was also dictated by the consideration that the Eurasians might constitute an economic danger to the emerging Indonesian middle-class. The Gerindo leaders on the other hand were not influenced by any such consideration of economic competition and they admitted, in principle, Eurasian members. If anything finally proved the leftist character of Gerindo it was its fervently anti-fascist and anti-Japanese stand, in contrast with the attitude displayed by the Parindra leaders and by Thamrin in particular.

In case the last remark should give rise to some misunderstanding, a few points must be made clear. Those who admired Japan did so primarily because of its dazzling rise as a great power, a great *Asian* power, since it won the war against Russia in 1905. They did not agree with Japanese policies and methods in every respect, but they sought to avail themselves of the opportunities which Japan, as the shining example to all Asians, presented. During the Second World War Japan was the occupying authority. For those who collaborated with the Japanese, *Indonesia Merdeka* remained the ultimate end, and they made use of the Japanese towards this end.

But whoever did go over to the Japanese side, genuine leftists were not among them. They were no less eager to win independence, but they could not bring themselves to accept Japanese help or to embark upon any other opportunist course to achieve their ends. The political and socio-economic structure which was at the root of Japan's successes was, after all, too much opposed to their own visions of the future Indonesian society. Out of fear for Japanese

fascism, which might do them more harm than the colonial régime, they showed on the whole more readiness to co-operate with the Netherlands Indies administration in the years immediately preceding the Second World War than the bourgeois nationalists. They were rebuffed, of course, and during the Japanese occupation they went underground, though they did not sever their links with the collaborator group.

It should not be understood from these remarks that the entire right wing was on the side of Japan or that the resistance movement was exclusively made up of left-wingers. The situation was far more complex: there were many conservatives who did not want to have any dealings with the new masters and there were quite a few double-dealing politicians and mid-war turn-coats as well. The general impression nevertheless remains that those who collaborated were to be found predominantly among the conservative sections, while those who belonged to the Left either went underground or simply kept silent.

2 NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION 1942-1949

During the Japanese occupation the nationalist movement gained considerable strength. First, there was the psychological effect of the sudden disappearance of the Netherlands Indies administration. This was an event which the Dutch in Indonesia may have seen as the twilight of the gods, but what struck the Indonesians most was the swiftness with which it had taken place. Age-old respect for the European suddenly dwindled as did also the conviction among large sections of the population that Dutch rule, like the succession of the monsoons, was an unalterable state of affairs. This factor gave fresh impetus to Indonesian self-confidence.

Secondly, there was the practical effect of many Indonesians taking the administrative and technical positions formerly reserved for Europeans and now left vacant. They realized not only that they were fully capable of performing their new tasks—a discovery of great psychological value—but also that if they were to keep these posts, they must prevent any restoration of Dutch rule. Because of this they sided first with the Japanese and later with the Republic. The third factor was the changing attitude of the younger generation, which, under the influence of Japanese propaganda, took part in military and semi-military activities and eventually supplied motive power behind the older nationalists, the strength of which was proved by the events of 17 August 1945.

The fourth factor which contributed to strengthening the Indonesian movement was political. From its early beginnings the policy of the Japanese—at least in Java—was directed to winning over the population with the help of those leaders who, because of their links with the masses, might be useful to this end. The main purpose of the

Japanese was, of course, to control the population more easily and to mobilize its support for their own schemes. But the Indonesian leaders had other ends in view, particularly after it became clear that Japan was going to lose the war. Because of this the more or less monolithic popular organizations which had emerged under Japanese auspices and with Japanese backing tended to become more independent, outwardly co-operating with the Japanese, complying with their requests, and making use of their protection, but at the same time wresting concessions from them and preparing themselves for post-war contingencies. The result was that the nationalist movement which arose after the war was a real mass movement.

But this last factor also greatly contributed to changing the character of the nationalist movement by relatively strengthening the influence of the religious-orientated wing. While pursuing their policy of lining up the masses for their own purposes, the Japanese, who in fact were afraid of any fully-fledged popular movement, seem to have been well aware that the development might eventually get out of hand. For this reason they did not put all their eggs in one basket. Outwardly they created some more or less monolithic organizations, in which all sections of the *élite* were involved, but at the same time they alternately sponsored one group of leaders and held down the other.

For the first few years of the Japanese occupation, the pre-war political leaders were virtually up against a blank wall of Japanese indifference. The political nationalists were cherishing nationalist and, to a certain extent, democratic ideals which were not Japan's and, in spite of all their activities and propaganda on behalf of the lower classes, their influence outside the urban centres was still limited. The Japanese did not, therefore, find them very useful partners. Some of the nationalist leaders were given official advisory posts in the Japanese-sponsored mass movements, but it

was not until late 1944 that the Japanese committed themselves—in generalized terms only—to Indonesian independence, and allowed the nationalist politicians to obtain a more substantial share in political life. By this time, however, the nationalist *élite* no longer commanded an unassailable monopoly position because, while they had been kept at bay during the previous years, the rise of another group of leaders had been encouraged.

The Japanese accorded their favours alternately to two *élite* groups, both commanding a certain popular following. On the one hand, they preserved, and in some cases even enlarged, the authority of the aristocracy (the mainstay of Dutch colonial rule) in the local sphere with the intention of checking the influence of the political nationalists. On the other hand, they initiated a mass movement under their own auspices by utilizing Muslim religious leaders. This meant a revolutionary departure from the practice of the Dutch who, preoccupied as they were with seeking support from among the traditional aristocratic class and emphasizing *adat*, had remained neutral towards Islam, though they closely supervised Muslim organizations and curbed the activities of 'fanatics', whom they greatly feared since the Tjilegon rising of the late nineteenth century. The Japanese attempts to bolster up Islam and sponsor a Muslim mass movement were, of course, dictated not by any genuine interest in Islam for its own sake but rather by the consideration that the religious leaders commanded a large following among the rural population which a shrewd policy might win over.

This emphasis on the role of the *kiais* and *ulamas* turned Indonesian Islam into a powerful political force with its roots at village level. The Islamic urban *élite* having been more or less ignored by the Japanese, had to adapt itself in order not to be left behind. It was the aristocracy which suffered for the democratization of the Indonesian *élite*

structure. The *priayis* and *penghulus*[1] were not altogether left out of account by the emergence of the new Islamic leadership, but both their actual authority and their influence in the local sphere met with far stronger opposition. The nationalist *élite* came to notice the change too.

This digression on the changes in the Indonesian *élite* structure serves to show that since the Japanese occupation the leaders of the Indonesian movement cannot be exclusively classified according to their views on socio-economic problems. A new type of leader, cherishing new ideals as to the future structure of Indonesia, had arisen alongside the old secular type of bourgeois nationalist or social radical. This type of leader and these ideas had existed long before the Japanese occupation. Muhammadyah, a modernist, purely socio-religious organization was founded as far back as 1912, while the orthodox Nahdatul Ulama had been launched in the mid-twenties. Both used to have a large following, or, rather, great influence among the population; leaving aside the Sarekat Islam's peak of 1918-1920, Muhammadyah was in terms of members, the largest Indonesian organization. It was, however, only during the war years and because of Japanese backing that their contacts with the masses paid political dividends. Only then did the Islamic movement become a force to be reckoned with. By the end of the Japanese occupation the Islamic federation Masjumi (Madjelis Sjuro Muslimin Indonesia, i.e. Advisory Council of Indonesian Muslims), which was founded in 1943, constituted a serious challenge to the political nationalists.

After the war the Dutch used to complain that the Japanese had left behind a time bomb in the form of the nationalist movement. The nationalist leaders in their turn might well have complained of another time bomb—the religious movement—which held fundamentally different

[1] *penghulu*, traditional chief; title of spiritual head of Muslim communities.

views on the structure of the new state. It was Sukarno who commented on these views when he outlined the philosophical basis of a free Indonesia. In his famous *pantja sila*[1] speech on 1 June 1945, he stressed that nationalism ought to be the first underlying principle of the new state, and only mentioned Islam (in the same breath with Christianity) under the heading of 'representative government'—the third principle—as being important, though not sufficiently important to justify the setting up of an Islamic state. The Islamic leaders' ideals could not be dismissed so easily, however. Although the secular nationalists managed to win control over the quasi-political organs as soon as the Japanese had given the green light, so that they were able to take over the administrative machinery the moment Japan surrendered, Masjumi continued to hold considerable influence over the population at grass-roots level.

While the political nationalists committed themselves to a secular state they were less eager to have themselves pinned down to a precise definition of their views on socio-economic issues. The fourth principle of *pantja sila* referred only to social prosperity and social justice—aims to which no one could possibly object—but it failed to give any clue to the means and methods of achieving this purpose. Thus, here again, there was a political controversy which, like that over the religious-secular issue, was far more intense than it had been in pre-war years. In 1945 the Indonesian revolution had entered its decisive phase. Now that independence was no longer so remote it was more worth while to put up a fight for the realization of the various plans for the future.

One may well question whether the leaders were in general motivated by genuine concern for the type of state and society which was to emerge out of the revolutionary struggle against the Dutch, or whether many of them were

[1] *pantja sila*, the five basic principles of the Indonesian Republic.

merely contending for personal power and for control over the masses. The high-sounding political and economic programmes were not necessarily meant to be a presentation of the fundamental principles upon which the leaders were prepared to base free Indonesia, nor can they be relied upon as an indication of the real character ('right' or 'left') of the several parties. In some cases these programmes were mere baits to attract the masses and to lure them away from other parties.

Whatever the real motives of the leaders, it is clear that fundamental principles did play a role in the years between 1945 and 1949. Confining ourselves to those relevant to the social and economic structure of independent Indonesia it may be stated, first of all, that the religious movement did not in general, hold views which differed greatly from those of the middle-class-orientated secular nationalists. It is true that the *kiais* and *ulamas* were more familiar with the living conditions of the rural population and with their demands and resentments than any of the political nationalists, but in this connexion this carried no weight: after all they were not politicians but religious teachers who are not usually noted for the progressive nature of their socio-economic ideas. On the other hand, the political leaders of the Islamic organizations were urban middle-class intellectuals and far less in touch with the rural masses. There was a group of prominent men in the Masjumi who combined their modernist Islamic ideals with a more or less progressive approach to social and economic problems, but they were never fully in control of the party machinery.

The most influential secular nationalist party was the Partai Nasional Indonesia. It was a party of the Western-educated middle-class nationalists, and it had also strong ties with the older civil servants and the local traditional aristocracy who, now that there was no longer any Dutch régime to defend them against the local religious leaders,

sought refuge with, and accommodated themselves to, their erstwhile enemies, the nationalist *élite* groups. The P.N.I., was certainly not characterized by a dynamic ideology on social and economic issues. The official party line was *Marhaenism*, Proletarianism, but there was neither consistency nor comprehensiveness in this concept. It could hardly have been expected otherwise in an organization which drew most of its support from the upper and middle sections of the bureaucracy. Social and economic reforms should be introduced, but there could be no venturing into anything of a more sweeping nature. The existing framework of society, minus the Dutch and possibly the Chinese, had to be preserved so as not to repel either the propertied classes or the bureaucratic *élite*.

More progressive social and economic views were expounded in the Partai Sosialis. This party played an important role during the revolutionary years, but the eminence of its leaders, two of whom were heads of government from late 1945 to early 1948, was responsible for this rather than its ideology. Over the latter there was a difference of opinion which caused a split when Sjarifuddin took the party over to the communist side and Sjahrir, fully committed to ideas which may be termed 'social democrat', founded the Partai Sosialis Indonesia in 1948.

The strongest advocates of a comprehensive social revolution were of course the communists, both the official Soviet type, represented by the re-emerged P.K.I., and the nationalist type, of which Tan Malaka was the main representative. Both groups were strongly engaged in attempting to win over the masses to their side and in vehemently attacking each other. The P.K.I. seemed on the whole to be more successful in both respects until they overshot the mark when they revolted against the government at an inopportune moment, late in 1948 when the Dutch were preparing to strike a decisive blow at the Republic and

were only waiting for a pretext. The rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed: it led to the disappearance of the old guard and the crippling of the communist organization. As a result the Partai Murba, Proletarian Party, fathered by Tan Malaka, who himself seems to have been killed shortly afterwards, was free to assume command over the social revolutionary sector of the Indonesian movement.

The fact that there were so many different opinions could not fail to give rise to much political bickering in the nationalist camp and it occasionally led even to open conflicts, like the attempted Tan Malaka coup of 1946, the resorting to open warfare by the Muslim fanatics of Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam in 1948, and the communist Madiun rising. But none of this detracted anything from the resoluteness of the nationalist struggle. Facing the danger of a restoration of the Dutch colonial régime, all branches of the Indonesian movement, whether religious or secular, middle-class nationalist or social radical, combined into one powerful force combating, both the Dutch and those who were, or were considered, their supporters—the 'federalists' of Van Mook's Malino scheme.

The Indonesian nationalist revolution had been considerably strengthened by the feelings of self-confidence which had increasingly permeated the Indonesian population, especially among the younger generation and by the activities and propaganda to this end during the Japanese occupation. Equally, it had been favoured by the initial military weakness of the Dutch, the non-committal attitude of the British occupying forces — mainly composed of Indian troops—and the anti-colonial though opportunist stand of the United States. It could not be curbed successfully, either by stubborn legalistic hairsplitting and the long-drawn out dishonest negotiations over the federalist scheme, or by the politically inane second military action of 1948. The Dutch colonial régime was, in the words of the socialist

author Marcel Koch, 'a régime which had learned nothing and which was finished off in the way it deserved'.[1] The end came on 27 December 1949 with the Transfer of Sovereignty and before the following June the federal structure which had been imposed upon the Indonesians had been demolished.

[1] D.M.G. Koch, *Batig Slot, Figuren uit het Oude Indië*, p. 153

3 INDEPENDENCE: FULFILMENT AND DISILLUSION

When Indonesia crossed the threshold to freedom her prospects for the future seemed brighter than those of any other Asian country which had gained independence so far, with the exception of Ceylon. There were neither the communal massacres and the abysmal poverty of India, nor the widespread social unrest and deep-rooted corruption of the Philippines. There was no civil war as in Burma, nor was it, like Pakistan, an artificially created state which had to start from scratch in almost every respect. Indonesia had suffered greatly both from the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary struggle but the physical destruction and dislocation were not beyond repair. She inherited an extensive modern economic apparatus and one of the potentially richest territories of the world.

During her struggle for independence she had won worldwide respect, which was based not only on a romantic admiration for a people showing so much tenacity and resourcefulness in fighting for its freedom and in committing itself to the Western principles of parliamentary democracy, but also on more realistic considerations. The Indonesian revolutionary government, unlike the Vietnamese, had succeeded in keeping the communists at bay and had crushed a P.K.I. revolt. This accounted largely for the friendly if not ambiguous policy of the United States and, consequently, in those days, of the United Nations. In 1950 Indonesia commanded a considerable amount of international goodwill. The only country evincing open hostility was the Soviet Union—this was the result of Madiun—while the Dutch, their wounded pride still sensitive, showed great annoyance at the removal of their federalist friends from the political scene.

Disappointment set in rather quickly, in Indonesia itself as well as abroad. In some respects this was but the disenchantment likely to arise among those who, setting their expectations too high, had looked forward to independence as a remedy for all complaints and expected it to follow the exact course which, each individually, expected of it. The younger generation, which had enthusiastically played a leading part in conducting the revolutionary campaign from the more dangerous outposts, discovered to its dismay that the country's leadership was sliding back into the hands of the old-guard nationalists who were claiming superiority because of their age and their better education. Indonesians now had better access to official posts, but the economic rewards were disappointing.

The feelings of disillusionment were, however, more profound than this. Instead of independence marking the beginning of a general improvement all round it seemed to be a mere milestone on a downhill path. This might have been a pessimistic view, but the general picture nonetheless was one of economic deterioration and increasing political instability.

Whatever these developments might prove, it definitely was not the old colonial adage that the 'natives' were not yet ripe for self-rule. They only indicated that independent Indonesia was in a sense facing more problems and more difficulties in solving them than the colonial régime had experienced. All these problems were emerging in a society which was politically far more articulate than in pre-war years. The Dutch had occasionally been able to waive or neglect issues which did not quite fit into their scheme of things, because there had been no effective political opposition. But the Indonesian government could not afford to disregard public opinion and incur public discontentment out of which the opposition might make political capital.

It should be noted that any governmental system based

on principles which for the most part are derived from abroad needs some time to mature. This is valid in almost any country; it is the more so in an Asian nation which obtains its freedom after eight years of war and revolutionary turbulence. The coming of independence was accompanied by an upsurge of enthusiasm and the desire to build up a new state and society. At the same time, however, various dissonant forces were released once the only factor that had cemented them together had been eliminated. There was no longer any national consensus of opinion.

A situation like this created problems which required a strong governmental structure and a sound party system. Constitutionally speaking Indonesia was going through a phase of transition. Its constitution (formulated late in 1949, amended in 1950) was a provisional one and, since the unitary state had come into being, its parliament was a patchwork made up of the left-overs from the representative bodies of the revolutionary Jogja Republic and the deceased United States of Indonesia. Owing to lack of experts and competent civil servants after the dismissal of many Dutch and Eurasian officials, the administration functioned inefficiently and clumsily in the executive sphere as well as in the legislature.

This last factor also accounted for the defects in the party system. The capable and authoritative leaders were usually drawn into the higher ranks of the government and the civil service, leaving the parties behind under the command of second-rate people who attempted to make up for their lack of experience and political weight by trying to score off their rivals. Dutch neglect in not providing sufficient facilities for political training was partly responsible for this: there was hardly any experience of the institutions of self-government—the only impressive thing about the pre-war Volksraad had been the stately building in which it used to be housed. Another factor was that most parties had come

into being or their leaders had begun their political careers during the colonial period. Their activities had been directed against the government, but after independence had been achieved and a national government had supplanted the foreign rulers, many parties still persisted in displaying an element of opposition and enmity towards all authority.

Personal rivalries also played their role. Many political gestures were primarily dictated not by considerations of what would serve the well-being of the nation but by narrow party interests and by the attraction of power and the prospect of being fed at the public expense—or of losing this privilege. The impending elections, moreover, cast a shadow over the political arena and greatly affected the parties' behaviour towards each other, both inside and outside the government.

Finally, there were the ideological differences. In general, ideology was not the most outstanding characteristic of any of the Indonesian parties—with the possible exception of the P.K.I.—but there was, at least, a great variety of ideals and programmes and, based upon these, a large assortment of political parties.

In the Indonesian parliament, which from 1950 to 1955 functioned with no electoral mandate, 206 seats were divided among seventeen parties and factions and in addition there were twenty-six other members belonging to no faction. As a result, all governments during these years, as well as the only preceding government of the United States of Indonesia—and the only succeeding one to be based on election results were coalitions. Delicate negotiations, to say the least, usually accompanied the formation of these governments—a feature also of the Dutch parliamentary system and taken over with it. There were six cabinets, none of them stable, between the proclamation of the unitary state in 1950 and the formation of the Djuanda government in early 1957.

Despite its defects the political system in operation between these two dates was essentially based on the principles of constitutional democracy. The constitution emphasized the party system and the sovereignty of parliament. In his preface to *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* Herbert Feith enumerates six distinct features which represented 'at the very least, an attempt to maintain and develop constitutional democracy', namely 'Civilians played a dominant role. Parties were of very great importance. The contenders for power showed respect for "rules of the game" which were closely related to the existing constitution. Most members of the political *élite* had some sort of commitment to symbols connected with constitutional democracy. Civil liberties were rarely infringed. Finally, governments used coercion sparingly.' With regard to the last-mentioned feature it may be added that the governments had little authority to use coercion.

In 1957, however, this attempt at constitutional democracy was abandoned. Although from that moment the Indonesian parliament gradually lost many of its prerogatives to the executive, three years elapsed before it was finally dismissed and the concept of parliamentary government definitely buried. In its place came 'guided democracy', a euphemism for a somewhat authoritarian régime.

Considering the circumstances under which Indonesian democracy had had to operate between 1950–57, it is a wonder that the pretence was not abandoned earlier. Each of the problems the ruling *élite* had to face, controversial as they were, posed, either separately or in combination, a serious challenge to anyone in power. The governments were not only obliged to find solutions, but they also had to make allowance for the different opinions, whether fundamental or opportunist, of both the coalition partners and of the opposition parties, while the towering figure of the President had to be taken into account as well. As a result,

with one exception, neither a common platform nor a solution was arrived at for any of the more pressing problems. The exception was illiteracy; in tackling this problem, where the Dutch colonial régime had failed so dismally, independent Indonesia achieved its greatest and most admirable success.

But in all other fundamental issues the governments were unable to sustain any firm policy. Firstly, there was the challenge which regionalism posed to Indonesian unity and which seemed to have been overcome when, in 1950, the United States of Indonesia was supplanted by a unitary state. The federalist scheme had been under a cloud partly because it was Dutch-sponsored and partly because some sections of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army had been involved in the post-independence troubles at Macassar and Ambon. The schemes of the soldier-adventurer Raymond Westerling in West Java compromised it even further.

But regional particularism did not die with the break-up of the federal structure. The mood of dissatisfaction which after 1950 began to creep into the regions outside Java was based not only on actual ethnological and cultural differences, but also, and primarily, on economic consideration: for instance, income earned for Indonesia in Sumatra flowed into the Javanese coffers, and although the Outer Islands accounted for 85 per cent. of Indonesia's export income, these foreign earnings were used to pay for Java's imports of food and consumer goods. In this respect the governments in Djakarta faced an ugly dilemma. They made occasional promises—which they were hardly in a position to keep—of decentralization and of granting some sort of autonomy to non-Javanese regions. No government could afford to pay less attention to the economic interests of over-populated Java, which was the political centre of the Republic and the stronghold of the P.N.I. and P.K.I., in order to benefit the relatively more prosperous Outer

Islands. But this policy, termed a 'Javanocentric' attitude, led to discontent in the non-Javanese territories.

A second fundamental problem, which could not be solved by compromise, was posed by the religious issue: whether or not Indonesia should be an Islamic state. Fanatical supporters of a Republik Islam Indonesia had been organized by Kartosuwirjo into the Darul Islam movement, which was displaying murderous activity in West Java. In 1952 Darul Islam came to an agreement with Kahar Muzakkar's rebels in the Southern Celebes and in 1953 a similar and more substantial rebellion swept over Achin. The Masjumi party has often been charged by its political opponents with being conciliatory towards the Darul Islam, but it cannot be said that the Islamic federation was directly connected with these violent expressions of the demand for an Islamic state. It may be true that there was a marked increase in guerilla activity when, in 1953 the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet in which Masjumi was not represented, assumed office and that there was an equally marked decrease in these activities at the moment the Burhanuddin Harahap government took over in 1955. But these seem to have been coincidences which were due to opportunist moves on the part of Darul Islam rather than to any complicity from Masjumi. In fact, Darul Islam indiscriminately attacked every government, whether or not Masjumi was a partner, and the Islamic fanatics despised the modernist Masjumi leaders as thoroughly as they did the secular politicians of the P.N.I. But, although Masjumi as an organization remained aloof from Darul Islam, it was still reluctant to condemn the rebels unequivocally. Fundamentally it cherished the same ideals, although as far as the leaders were concerned, it was based on a different concept of Islam (modernist instead of orthodox) and a more tolerant outlook, aiming at a constitutional state guided by the tenets of Islam rather than a theocracy. There was always the suspicion, however, that the more

doctrinaire Islamic leaders would be able to carry the day.

The third problem concerned the integration of the army into the state, or rather its position *vis-à-vis* the government. From 1950 the army officers played an ever increasing role of their own on the political stage and there were several clashes with the civilians in power. On three occasions the downfall of a cabinet was, directly or indirectly, caused by army interference and in many more cases the authority of the government and its appointees in the armed forces was openly defied by insubordinate action. The army was a factor which greatly contributed to political instability and the weakening of the government's coercive powers. It was only because the army—consisting of old K.N.I.L. men and of revolutionaries, either Japanese-trained or just guerilla fighters—was itself divided, and because Sukarno with his immense influence among the common people was able to play the several pressure groups off against each other, that a full military dictatorship was averted.

The most important pressure group which could be lined up as a counterweight against the increasing power and pretensions of the army was the Communist Party. This brings us to the last problem the Indonesian ruling *élite* had to face—the economic situation and the living standards of the masses. In every respect this was a problem of the first magnitude, because it affected the overwhelming majority of the population and was also extremely complicated. Any government embarking upon a policy of improving socio-economic conditions had to take into account a great many factors. But these factors were so closely connected with one another that any policy for tackling them separately was unlikely to solve the problem as a whole. A sweeping programme of reforms was required, covering all aspects of economic and social life.

It cannot be said that the Indonesian governments did not realize the necessity of carrying out reforms. They

attempted, in fact, to bring about several improvements in economic and social conditions, but they had to work against tremendous odds and their efforts were frequently thwarted by various factors. There was political instability at the centre and in several regions a break-down of internal security. There was little managerial and technical competence and rapidly increasing corruption. There was hostility towards foreign enterprises, mainly Dutch. (This was not only the result of the tendency to subordinate economic problems to nationalist political issues, but was also based on the desire to encourage rival Indonesian firms in trade and industry.) There was the growing disappointment of the Outer Provinces which began trading directly with Malaya and Singapore. Finally, there was the problem of a rapidly increasing population. Any programme of reforms required great efforts, large financial outlay, experts, and a fair amount of time to enable it to be put into effect. Money and experts could be provided by the outside world, but time was less easily obtained, for every year the population pressure on Java increased. As a result of all these factors the production of currency-earning exports dropped, increasingly serious monetary inflation, continuous budget deficits and balance of payment crises set in, and a steady deterioration of general social and economic conditions resulted.

The main factor, however, which accounted for the failure to bring about any general improvement in this situation, despite the lip-service paid to the need for it and the partially successful reforms which were actually carried out, was the failure to put into practice any comprehensive and sweeping programme of economic reforms. There were, of course, the social revolutionaries—and among them the communists—who had their particular ideas on this subject, but the P.K.I. never occupied a single seat in any of the seven cabinets of this period. The other social radical leftists who were occasionally given ministerial posts were

never in a sufficiently strong position to influence general policy. In all governments between 1949 and 1957 the parties who predominated represented what might be called the middle-classes—the economic *bourgeoisie*, the Western-educated intellectuals, the civil servants. It is true that only a very small minority belonging to these groups can be classified as bourgeois-capitalist and, as a result, the majority were able to adhere to some socialist ideas without embarrassing consequences for themselves. But their socialism was directed more negatively against foreign (Dutch and Chinese) capitalism than positively towards any real programme of socialization. Moreover, whatever disharmony might exist among these parties and on whatever issues they were fighting each other openly or intriguing against each other in secrecy, they were in complete agreement that the proletariat, whether rural or urban, should be kept in its place.

This was not easy, however. First, economic conditions were not conducive to preventing social unrest from spreading. Secondly, the masses had been greatly affected by the revolutionary troubles of the previous decade. To a large extent the propaganda of the nationalist parties themselves was responsible for this, for in order to enlist the support of the lower classes, they had promised a better life in the future. Indonesia, they had said, would cease to be a nation of coolies, but this is what it continued to be. After independence, the nationalist *élite* had taken over political control and the direction of economic affairs and the proletariat had been left behind with its expectations unfulfilled. The disappointment of the lower classes was successfully exploited by the P.K.I. and other social revolutionary politicians who were in a stronger position to do so than the middle-class nationalists who were in power, since they were glad to point out the failures of the government. Under Dutch rule the nationalists had done the same, but they could not possibly afford to follow this line once they had become

the government themselves. Even if they happened to be in the opposition they had to restrain themselves because they might well be found in the next cabinet and be reminded of their words. The only thing the nationalists could do in this respect—and they did it unsparingly—was to support the claims of the labour forces on foreign estates against the colonial exploiters and foreign capitalists.

After it had recovered from the carnage of 1948 the P.K.I., being better organized than any other party and in control of some vital trade unions like S.O.B.S.I. or Barisan Tani Indonesia, gradually managed, under the able leadership of the astute Aidit, to gain wide, popular support and to eclipse the other social revolutionary groups. The middle-class orientated parties were unable to check this development, either by putting forward their own variants of socialism or by naked force. The P.K.I. had learned the lesson of Madiun and carefully refrained from anything that might give the government, or the army a pretext to close in on it.

There were two ways left for the ruling *élite* to curb the danger it faced from Communism. The first was to divert popular attention from the social and economic conditions towards issues for which the support of the P.K.I. might be enlisted; and the second was to abandon the parliamentary democratic system and resort to a strong-man régime instead. A policy like this might at the same time enable the secular politicians of the P.N.I., who were most consistently pressing this line, to settle accounts with their political opponents within the ruling *élite*. Both means were to be applied concurrently after March 1957.

4 NEW GUINEA AND THE REBELS

Since the emergence of public opinion as a significant factor in politics, it has become common practice, when other means of persuading or convincing people fail, to divert popular attention from difficult fundamental problems to other less controversial issues. In the Indonesian setting of the 1950's there was no need for the ruling *élite* to invent any such safety valve, for the issues were already there, conveniently created for them by the Dutch. West New Guinea under Dutch rule was considered an obstacle to the consummation of the national revolution as were the enormous Dutch business interests which still dominated a substantial part of Indonesia's economy and the heavy indebtedness to the Netherlands which Indonesia had been compelled to accept at the Round Table Conference of 1949.

Future historians will have to explain the internal political background and the attitude of emotional rancour which led the Dutch, after they had given up their claims over the rest of the archipelago, to hold so tenaciously to the poor and worthless territory of West New Guinea. The arguments of the Indonesians were as senseless as those of the Dutch, but their leaders were at least able to make use of the conflict to further their own and their parties' struggle for political preponderance. New Guinea, and Dutch colonialism in South-East Asia in general, became *the* issue in internal politics, overshadowing all other problems. This was the bond which held together the foundations of Indonesian national solidarity.

The main forces behind this policy of emphasizing the nationalist issue were Sukarno and the Partai Nasional Indonesia, the views of which were closely associated with those of the President. One might suspect that this desire to continue the nationalist revolution in an independent Indonesia

was the expression of entirely negative political attitudes. There was, however, a positive factor: the ambition to build up the Indonesian state and society on the foundations of national traditions and norms, as defined in the five principles of *pantja sila*. In advocating this, the Indonesian nationalist ideology was opposing not only foreign economic and political influences but also the more or less internationally-orientated doctrines which were at the roots of the Islamic parties and Marxist organizations. Out of these different opinions some of the fundamental problems emerged which dominated Indonesian politics after 1949. Any genuine solution could be ruled out and a compromise was not likely. It was not even possible for any one of the contending parties and ideologies to have its way by means of force, under the prevailing system of parliamentary democracy.

The President and the P.N.I. found the way out of this political deadlock by pushing the nationalist issue, the negative one, against Dutch or, in a wider sense, Western, imperialism. Since the Netherlands and Indonesia had not parted as friends in 1949 and New Guinea was an obstacle to entering into good relations, it was not difficult to whip up nationalist feeling and bedevil Indonesian politics with anti-Dutch propaganda. But the gradual liquidation of the Dutch position in Indonesia which ensued was not an end in itself; it was a means by which the P.N.I. ruling *élite* diverted popular attention from the main internal issues and strengthened its own position at the cost of other contenders for power.

Contrary to what was to happen at a later stage of this development, the anti-Dutch campaign in its initial phase was not a manoeuvre primarily directed against the P.K.I. As an essentially bourgeois party, recruiting its active members from among the commercial and professional classes and from both the traditional and modern civil servants,

the P.N.I. was not of course well disposed towards Communism. But it considered the P.K.I., at least for the time being, a less dangerous rival than Masjumi, its coalition partner in several cabinets. Sukarno agreed with this partly because of the Masjumi concept of an Islamic state, but primarily because of the increased strength of the Islamic element in politics and the vague association of it with the non-Javanese distrust for Djakarta's 'Javanocentrism'. Lining up the P.K.I. against Masjumi and, to a lesser extent, against Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia, was not difficult. Around 1952 the P.K.I. took the hint, stopped attacking the *pantja sila* ideology, and backed the first Ali Sastroamidjojo government (1953-55), although it did not actually join it.

The anti-Dutch policy was not without success in that it led to a weakening of the influence of Masjumi and the P.S.I. Because of the nationalist excitement which this policy produced, both parties soon found themselves in the humiliating position of being virtually compelled to abandon those political and economic views which were less anti-foreign than those of the President and the P.N.I. Thus the Wilopo government, a coalition of Masjumi, P.S.I. and moderate P.N.I. members, was charged with favouring the 'colonial exploiters' when it supported foreign estates and oil companies as the only feasible means of increasing the production of currency-earning exports and of improving the balance of payment. It is true that there was also a socio-economic motive behind this charge, because supporting foreign enterprise as Masjumi and the P.S.I. did in order to drag Indonesia out of its economic quicksands, automatically meant discouraging Indonesian rival firms whose interests the P.N.I., as the representative of the 'non-sinful' capitalists, had taken to heart. This accusation forced the two parties, under penalty of being ostracized as anti-national, to adapt themselves to the anti-Dutch course which they considered detrimental to Indonesia's economic in-

terests, though they were as outspoken in their claim that New Guinea be handed over. It was the basically conciliatory Burhanuddin Harahap government which unilaterally abrogated the Netherlands-Indonesian Union in early 1956.

The P.N.I. reaped the harvest of its policy in the parliamentary elections of September 1955, when it polled nearly 8.5 million votes (22.3 per cent. of the total cast). Masjumi was the second strongest party with close to 8 million votes, but it did far less well than had been expected by Indonesian and foreign observers. Nahdatul Ulama emerged with nearly 7 million votes. It had broken away from the modernist Masjumi in 1952 and because of its orthodox Islamic views it was basically anti-Western. During previous years it had shown a willingness to collaborate with the P.N.I. The communists obtained slightly over 6 million votes (16.4 per cent.). Sjahrir's P.S.I. was pulverized: this party which, whatever its political reasonableness, was essentially too high-brow for the electorate, polled only 750,000 votes. The elections for the Constituent Assembly in December 1955 confirmed the trend: the P.N.I., P.K.I. and N.U. won even more votes, while Masjumi and the P.S.I., and the remaining minor parties polled fewer.

The election results clearly showed several things. First the policy of the P.N.I. as it had been carried out by the first Ali Sastroamidjojo government with the backing of the President, the P.K.I. and N.U., had obviously won the approval of the majority of the Indonesians, despite the criticism levelled at its corruption and maladministration. Secondly, although Masjumi did not do so well, it was definitely not finished. In the Outer Islands Masjumi overshadowed the other major parties which were essentially Javanese, and this factor gave extra weight to the regional problem.

The greatest surprise of the elections was the unexpectedly good performance of the communists. P.K.I. success in the

urban areas had been anticipated, because of its influence on the proletariat through S.O.B.S.I. It had also been expected that the party would benefit from the support it had given the Ali Sastroamidjojo government. The elections confirmed these expectations but they also showed that the P.K.I. had a large following in the densely populated rural districts of Central and East Java, where it had had to compete for popular attention with the P.N.I. and N.U. who, in the village chiefs and the *kiais* respectively, had far more effective instruments at their disposal to intimidate the villagers.

The P.K.I. success was mainly due to two factors: the rapid disintegration of the traditional village communities and the deterioration in economic conditions. As neither the process of social disintegration nor that of economic deterioration was likely to be checked in the foreseeable future it was expected that the P.K.I. would increase its strength even more in the years to come. This prospect greatly alarmed the non-communists of the Masjumi, the P.N.I. and N.U. and they consequently reconsidered their attitude towards each other and made an attempt to bury the hatchet. It was a weak attempt, for the second Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet (1956-57), a coalition of these three major parties and several representatives of the smaller ones, was ineffective both in bridging the differences between the partners and in tackling the country's fundamental problems.

Sukarno did not approve of this government which should, in his opinion, have been made up of all major currents of Indonesian political thought, including the communists. This was seemingly an attempt to continue the pre-election collaboration between the P.K.I. and the P.N.I. against the Masjumi, which was obviously still regarded by the President as a greater threat than the P.K.I. The communists apparently took this to be the reason for his

disapproval of the second Ali government and, though in opposition, they never attacked the cabinet as a whole but only the Masjumi element in it. Sukarno did indeed favour a revival of the co-operation between the communist and nationalist forces, but those who feared that he was going to throw in his lot with the P.K.I. and the communists themselves (who were pleased with the prospect) appeared to be wrong. It was, at that time, not Sukarno's intention to include the P.K.I. in the government itself, and the communists were in fact kept out until March 1962, five years after Sukarno had obtained a predominant voice in the composition of the cabinet.

Closer co-operation with the communists was not designed to benefit the P.K.I. and Sukarno's strategy was in part directed against that party. The President had been as alarmed as the other non-communist politicians by the unexpected show of communist strength at the polls but his disapproval of the second Ali government, however, sprang from a difference of opinion as to the tactics to be followed in attempting to diminish the communist threat to the position of the ruling *élite* and to himself and at the same time to keep the other opposition groups at bay. He doubted whether a coalition, lined up against the communists and composed of the three major and two minor parties, all of whom were at variance with each other over almost every issue, would have much success.

A policy of isolating the communists—or just pretending that they were not there, which was the parliamentary custom in many Western countries—was plainly impracticable in Indonesian circumstances. Sukarno's alternative was to collaborate with the P.K.I. This was one component in a wider policy which was essentially aimed at creating a balance of power, namely, lining up the communists, in co-operation with the P.N.I., against the Masjumi, the regional centrifugal forces and the army. It was not his

intention actually to eliminate any of these contenders for power, and the fact that Masjumi and the P.S.I. came to naught in the subsequent development was the result of a tactical error on their part rather than of preconceived presidential policy. Sukarno wanted to utilize all the non-communists in checking the P.K.I.

But a policy like this could be successful only if the existing political framework was changed, and in the course of 1956 Sukarno seriously started a campaign with this in view. In October, after his visit to the U.S.S.R. and China, which is usually considered significant in this connexion, he suggested that Indonesia should 'bury the political parties' in order to 'advance national unity'. A few months later, in February 1957, he elaborated his point when he recommended a drastic change in the political system. Parliamentary democracy, he considered, was unsuitable for Indonesia; it should be replaced by *demokrasi terpimpin*, or 'guided democracy'. At the same time Sukarno called for a *gotong rojong* (mutual help) cabinet, consisting of all parties, and for a National Council representing the functional groups in Indonesian society—the armed forces, the police, the peasants, the workmen, and so on.

Events in late 1956 favoured his plans. The second Ali cabinet disappointed many for there had been the expectation of an improvement of the political situation after the elections, and the existing parliamentary system was widely held responsible for the failure. This feeling, strengthened by increasing disgust at the continuing corruption, fitted in well with the traditional belief that every government should be of an authoritarian nature. About the same time regional restiveness began to assume graver proportions and this was combined with mounting dissensions in the army. In December 1956 military *coups* took place in Sumatra, where army-led councils were established which severed relations with the government and in early March 1957 the

same happened in Macassar, reducing the central government's authority over East Indonesia to nothing.

To face these difficulties Indonesia clearly required a stronger type of government than the politicians had been able to provide during the previous years, and the first step in this direction was taken in April 1957. The Djuanda cabinet (1957-59), with the P.N.I. and N.U. as the major partners was supposedly responsible to parliament, but in fact was dependent on the president. It marked the beginning of the introduction of 'guided democracy', designed to increase the authority of the executive at the expense of the representative body. This government sought the support of the communists which the P.K.I. was willing to give but one wonders whether the Party was content with the change. Although they were not particularly pleased with the existing parliamentary system it offered them the best opportunities for spreading their influence among the peasantry and for penetrating the bureaucracy. But this was exactly what the ruling *élite* did not want to perpetuate and indeed the downfall of the parliamentary system proved most unfavourable to the P.K.I. Despite all previous references to a *gotong rojong* cabinet they were left outside the Djuanda government. The speed with which Sukarno acted in March 1957 had taken them by surprise. Apparently they did not realize the consequences of the change in full and believed that Sukarno and the P.N.I. might still be made use of as their political path-finders.

For Sukarno's purposes, however, mere support for the new system and the government was not sufficient, since the communists would be committed to assenting to the government's actions in a parliament which Sukarno intended first to isolate and then to shelve altogether. It would by no means diminish communist activities among the masses which might ultimately be directed against the position of the ruling group. This prospect was clearly realized

by those in power when the elections for the provincial councils of Central and East Java were held in mid-1957: the results confirmed the most pessimistic expectations. In the two provinces together the P.N.I. lost over 20 per cent. of the votes it received in the parliamentary elections of 1955, namely 1.1 million out of 5.2 million. Masjumi and N.U. also lost votes, although proportionally far fewer. On the other hand the P.K.I. polled 5.4 million votes against 4.6 million in 1955, an increase of 18 per cent..

To defend its position Indonesia's ruling *élite* had to find other ways to curb the increasing influence of the P.K.I. The most obvious way was to press on with the anti-Dutch policy. The second Ali Sastroamidjojo government had already taken the step of repudiating Indonesia's financial obligations to the Netherlands (August 1956). At the end of 1957, however, the struggle for New Guinea was given a new direction when the anti-Dutch policy was stepped up to an unprecedentedly high pitch. After yet another failure to obtain a two-thirds majority in the United Nations for a pro-Indonesian resolution on the New Guinea issue, the authorities embarked upon a campaign of crippling the huge economic interests of the Netherlands all over the country. In this campaign of taking over Dutch companies the P.K.I. and the S.O.B.S.I. played a prominent role.

Whatever genuine national indignation over New Guinea there might have been behind it, this frontal attack on Dutch business was essentially a manoeuvre in the internal struggle for power. It would serve to create an atmosphere of nationalist frenzy in which it would become increasingly difficult for any opposition to make its voice heard let alone take open action without running the risk of being charged with stabbing the government in the back. It would make the communist organization and influence among the masses subservient to the nationalist ends of Sukarno and the P.N.I.

leaders who, if the campaign were successful, would gain the political credit of having been the master minds behind this new approach to the New Guinea problem. Finally, it would divert the attention of the masses from the unsolved socio-economic problems and prevent the P.K.I. from pursuing its own plans by keeping it engaged in activities directed against Dutch enterprise.

Carrying out this more drastic programme was not without risks. The authorities might stir up the mob with calculated deliberation and exploit it on a large scale, but some day a point might be reached at which it would no longer be possible to exert control over it. It was true that Sukarno had demonstrated a mysteriously restraining mastery over the mob on the only occasion in post-independence Indonesia when it had not been deliberately roused by the authorities themselves. (This was during the demonstration of some army sections against the President and the parliament on 17 October 1952.) Nonetheless there was still the possibility of events getting out of control. Because of this the army closely supervised the proceedings and among the official and unofficial public statements made in this critical month of December 1957 there were many which were notable for their disapproval of unauthorized action and their insistence on keeping a hand on the brakes.

The second risk was related to the attitude of those elements opposed to 'guided democracy'. Parliamentary democracy is a system of government which is allowed to function only in so far as it guarantees the preservation of the economic and social structure upon which the ruling *élite*'s authority is based. The establishment of an authoritarian form of government in Indonesia was, in effect, not such a deviation from previous practice in both Asia and the West as it might seem. Sukarno's 'guided democracy', however, differed from the authoritarian governments of the traditional type in that it did not adopt an anti-com-

munist policy but rather courted the favour of the communists. This gave rise to the misconception that the experiment was pro-communist and it accounted for the dislike of Indonesian 'guided democracy' in Western circles, although at much the same time they had little difficulty in accepting General De Gaulle's guided democracy in France.

This dislike was widely shared in Indonesia itself, but the critics overlooked several factors. First, it was hardly possible to suppress Communism by force; and secondly, the general anti-Western feelings of the Indonesian population compelled Sukarno and his government to cloak the real nature of their experiment in violent anti-Western propaganda. Any strong anti-communist line would have destroyed the image of the progressive young emerging nation which Sukarno was building up and have placed the Indonesian régime on the same level as the régimes of Thailand, South Vietnam and the Philippines which were not highly esteemed in Asian public opinion. Finally, an anti-communist course would be politically inopportune because it would remove the only counterpoise to the power of the army, the hostility of the adherents of an Islamic state and the centrifugal tendencies in the regions outside Java. By overlooking these factors the critics failed to realize that Sukarno's policy was designed to play them and the communists off against each other, a policy in which the 'guided democracy' concept and the anti-Western drive were complementary elements.

This policy was seen by its opponents as a move primarily meant to destroy them and they exaggerated the pro-communist tendencies. This error of judgement regarding the proper nature of Sukarno's experiment was one of the principal factors behind their revolt of 1958. They were taken aback by the anti-Dutch campaign, not because they were pro-Dutch but because they feared the economic consequences of so sudden a breakdown of the Dutch-manned

economic apparatus and the departure of Dutch experts. They expressed concern at the image of Indonesia's economic stability abroad, at the way the Western world might retaliate, and at the prospect of being drawn into the Soviet orbit as the only alternative for economic aid. Finally, they feared the international repercussions at a time when the world was dominated by John Foster Dulles's notions of political right and wrong, and they saw Indonesia already ruled by the P.K.I. and the S.O.B.S.I.

Early in 1958 these opposition elements combined with other groups which had complaints against Sukarno and his government. This time it was not a case of mere insubordination behind the government's back, like the actions of the territorial army commanders and the continuing barter trade with Malaya and Singapore in previous years. It was a genuine revolt, with its main centres in Minangkabau and Minahassa.

In one respect the leaders of the rebel movement were in agreement, namely in their dislike of the government in Djakarta and of Communism—for reasons of propaganda conveniently linked with each other—but for the rest they represented many different interests and were motivated by a wide variety of considerations. The 'Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic' (P.R.R.I.) and its following was made up of genuine democratic politicians of the opposition parties who were disgusted at the prevalent trend of political developments, and of territorial army chiefs who could by no means be regarded as primarily concerned with the fate of democracy. The rebel movement also included advocates of a unitary state and of regional autonomy, secular nationalists and adherents of the Islamic state, socialists and reactionaries.

But if the heterogeneous composition of the rebel movement alone were not enough to account for its failure, then its tactical errors certainly were. The rebellion was badly

prepared and poorly organized, militarily as well as politically. The leaders were far too optimistic about the amount of support they would receive both in Indonesia itself and from the outside world. In setting up a competing government they made the worst possible blunder: they threatened to fracture Indonesian national unity. It was precisely because of this danger that most army officers, although in their hearts not unsympathetic to the rebels' cause, chose to remain loyal to the Djuanda government. The presence of eminent politicians like Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Natsir, Burhanuddin Harahap, was no compensation for the conspicuous absence from their ranks of former vice-president Hatta. Finally, the population of the territories where the dissidents had taken over power hardly lifted a finger to support their régime. At the end of June 1958 the principal strongholds of the rebellion were back in the government's hands, the rebel leaders were in hiding, and their forces scattered and resorting to guerilla warfare. As guerillas they were hardly more than a nuisance, although they carried on fighting for a considerable time. Neither the proclamation of the Republik Persatuan Indonesia in February 1960, nor the formal alliance with some sections of the Darul Islam could check the move towards defeat: the R.P.I. was a still-born child and the alliance with the cut-throats who represented orthodox Islam in its most repugnant form utterly ruined the rebels' pretensions to speak for the majority of the population. Gradually the leaders began to realize that there was no way out but surrender, a course on which most of them ultimately embarked in 1961. They were welcomed as returning prodigal sons rather than rebels, particularly the military men among them, and in several instances they were even permitted to retain their arms and their formations,[1] a leniency typical of the way an essentially rightist government treats its

[1] A. Brackman, *Indonesian Communism: A History*, p. 258

essentially right-wing adversaries,[1] and contrasting sharply with the savage butchery that had followed the suppression of the Madiun rising. For those in power the real enemy was on the left wing.

[1] cf. the attitude of the Weimar Republic *vis-à-vis* the insurgents of the Kapp Putsch (1920), or that of the Fifth Republic with regard to the generals' rebellion of April 1961.

5 GUIDED DEMOCRACY

The rebellion of 1958 solved none of the major outstanding problems, but its consequences considerably simplified the pattern of the struggle for power. It played havoc among those civilian politicians and military commanders who had challenged Sukarno's policies on the regional issue, and it weakened the position of those who opposed his *pantja sila* principle of the secular basis of the state or questioned the wisdom of the campaign against Dutch business. As a result Sukarno's influence and his claims for leadership were strengthened. So was the position of the army.

But these were the only results of the rebellion which the President and his government could enter on the credit side of their books. The other consequence of this elimination of one of the major contending groups from the political scene was far less to their advantage because it removed at least one counterpoise to the increasing influence of the Communist Party. With his mastery of balancing one power factor against the other Sukarno could hardly have intended this. His policy had not been directed at suppressing these opponents but simply at lowering their prestige. That they might be provoked into open rebellion, to which the government could only react as it did, had not been envisaged.

One of the pillars of his strategy having been shattered, Sukarno had to review the situation and reconsider his policy. This was the more urgent because the weakening of one section of Indonesian political life had relatively strengthened the position and prestige of the other major power factor. It goes without saying that the P.K.I. strongly supported the government in its struggle against the dissident politicians. The communists rightly regarded them as their greatest adversaries and, in accordance with government propaganda, but not altogether accurately, depicted

them as anti-nationalist, pro-Western and accomplices of colonialism and imperialism. The government was not in a position to reject their support and this situation accounted largely for the fact that outside Indonesia, the civil war was represented as a straight fight between Communism and anti-communism. This was a simplification, as we have seen; it was not even a struggle between Left and Right and, although the government enlisted the communists as its allies, the P.N.I., as the major party behind the government, expressed serious doubts of the P.K.I.'s intentions and occasionally charged it with beating the anti-imperialist drum too loudly, especially when it sounded anti-American.

The gravest danger for the government and the ruling *élite* was not so much the stepped-up communist activity, because this was directed against either the Dutch or the rebels, but the benefits Communism might reap from the worsening economic situation. The anti-Dutch campaign adversely influenced Indonesia's economy; it disrupted transport and decreased efficiency and thus, because of its social consequences, might spoil its effectiveness as a manoeuvre to divert popular attention from these very issues. Bad socio-economic conditions are a fertile soil for discontent, and might be taken advantage of by the opposition. Since the organized opposition of Masjumi, the P.S.I. and the regional groups had virtually ceased to exist, the only opposition was the P.K.I. which, by late 1958 was the only political party with substantial organized mass support at grass-roots level. In the end the government might well face a situation in which the communists posed a far more serious challenge to the ruling *élite* than ever before.

To avoid this two conditions had to be fulfilled. One was to reinforce the power of the executive and the other was to restore the triangular formula of power relationships to enable a new counterpoise to be lined up against the P.K.I. in lieu of the previous combination consisting of the army,

Masjumi, the P.S.I. and the regional leaders. For this the army now took full responsibility; its role in suppressing the rebellion had enlarged its influence, and the elimination of the dissident satraps had restored its unity, so that it was more powerful than before and could perfectly well act as the sole major counterbalance to Communism.

A more powerful army might, however, pose a challenge to the position of Sukarno and sometimes there was wrangling between the two. But this aspect of personal rivalry, which occasionally induced Sukarno to protect the P.K.I. against suppressive actions undertaken by army officers, was not typical of the role the military were to play in Indonesian politics after 1958. The army was given, or tacitly allowed to take, an unprecedentedly large share in civil administration as well as in economic management, complete with access to rich funds, lucrative jobs and high social status. This development lured the army leaders into the ruling *élite;* the army itself became the most privileged group of all and was staunchly anti-communist not only, as before, on the grounds of ideological considerations or because it was the army's task to defend the government against Communism, but also because the army officers were now bent upon preserving their recently acquired privileges and perquisites. What outwardly looked like a triangular struggle for power was in fact a straight contest between the P.K.I. on the one hand and the government and the army on the other, and any division of opinion among the two elements of the latter power factor was related only to tactical matters.

In 1959 and 1960 'guided democracy' was rapidly put into effect. It was proposed that the provisional constitution should be replaced by the revolutionary constitution of 1945 which provided for a strong presidency as the principal locus of governmental power. When the majority of the Constituent Assembly did not approve of this it was sum-

marily dismissed (July 1959) and the old constitution was introduced by decree. A few days later Sukarno appointed a new cabinet in which he took the post of prime minister himself. The parliamentary system, considerably undermined already by the power of the President, in cases of emergency, to enact government regulations in place of laws and by the setting up of advisory councils, received a final blow when parliament itself was dissolved by decree in March 1960. It was replaced by a new parliament entirely consisting of appointed members, about half of whom represented political parties and the other half the functional groups.

In the wake of the gradually increasing impotency of parliament, the political parties, too, had lost much of their vigour. Sukarno's exhortation to 'return to the spirit of the revolutionary period of 1945-49' and the proposal to reintroduce the revolutionary constitution of 1945 manoeuvred them into an awkward position in which they could not express any disapproval without running the risk of being accused of opposing the Revolution itself. Moreover the government took special measures designed to curtail their freedom and scope. Examples of these were the monetary purge of 1959, amounting to the ruin of those private firms which in the past had provided the political parties with funds, and the order to higher civil servants to sever their party ties or resign. Some discontent was shown, of course, but when it did actually crystallize into a protest movement (the Democratic League of 1960) it failed because it was supported neither by the P.N.I. and the N.U., nor by the army, and it was roundly opposed by the P.K.I. When in July 1960 regulations were issued as to the conditions to which all political parties should adhere in order to be granted legal recognition, most parties conformed, namely, P.N.I., N.U., P.K.I., the two Christian parties—Parkindo and Partai Katolik Indonesia—and five smaller parties

Two parties, Masjumi and the P.S.I., did not comply with the order to sign the declaration of full ideological support to the government and their defiance led to their liquidation in August 1960. Thus Sukarno removed from the scene his most consistent critics, whose political power, because of their implication one way or another in the 1958 rebellion, was on the wane and insufficient to make them any longer useful partners in the counterbalance to Communism. The attention of the Western world has been mainly focussed on the disappearance of these two parties because they represented what the West considered reasonable and constructive in Indonesia's political development. Their fate was consequently widely regarded as an indication, or a proof, of Sukarno's leftist, if not pro-communist, inclinations, an impression which was greatly strengthened by the generally anti-Western and anti-imperialist trend of Indonesia's official policy.

To draw such a conclusion from the fate of these two parties and of some of their leaders who, during the next years were rounded up and put in confinement, tends to overlook the fact that Sukarno's policy was showing a Janus-like capacity for looking in two directions at once. The end of Masjumi and the P.S.I., and of the trends they represented, was an accidental by-product of political development and not more characteristic of it than the occasional disharmony between the President and the army chiefs, referred to above, was of the factual role the army was playing.

Neither can the outward official tolerance towards the communists be taken as representative of the essential character of 'guided democracy'. Considerations of political expediency motivated Sukarno's attitude towards the P.K.I. His insistence on bringing the party into the ranks of the executive and advisory organs was based on his desire to have the communists identified with the government and

with responsibility, so that in the event of official shortcomings and inadequacies their prestige would also be weakened. His opposition to any outlawing or forcible elimination of the communists rested on his fear that, even if a civil war did not result from such repressive action, the party might retaliate by using its effective organization and mass support to sabotage the country's economy and cause irreparable harm. Finally Sukarno realized that an outwardly friendly attitude towards the P.K.I. would help Indonesia to obtain Soviet diplomatic and financial support, which might be useful in the event of Western nations becoming annoyed at her consistently anti-imperialist attitude.

But all this did not detract one whit from the real nature of 'guided democracy', whose primary objective was to weaken the position of the P.K.I. in a constitutional sense. In the many deliberative bodies, councils and agencies set up under the new system, communists were appointed, but their influence was clearly and decisively counterbalanced by the far heavier representation allotted to other parties and functional groups. After a reshuffle in March 1962, two communists were allowed to enter the cabinet, but at the same time the army was given far greater influence. Thus in the end the general orientation of the government turned out to be more anti-communist than before. Finally, the P.K.I. obtained 30 seats in the new parliament, against 44 and 36 given to the P.N.I. and N.U. respectively and 20 to all minor parties together. For a party which had polled 16.4 per cent. of the votes in 1955, 30 seats meant an under-representation in a parliament of over 260 members, although the P.K.I. was able to get the support of some representatives of the functional groups. Whatever influence it might have was, however, neutralized by the fact that the new parliament was hardly more than the President's plaything; it had no other function than that of an ornamental sounding-board.

The greatest set-back for the communists was that the number of their representatives in parliament was now fixed—unless some new appointments were made by the President. However politically meaningless in terms of parliamentary practice an increase in the number of seats might be, if the P.K.I. could have made a considerable gain in votes at a subsequent election its prestige would have greatly enhanced. But this was exactly what the government wished to avoid. As long ago as late 1958, Djuanda had announced that the elections, due for September 1959, were to be postponed until sometime in the following year. This deferment affected all political parties, but it was really prejudicial only to the communists, and this postponement was in fact a cover for calling off elections altogether. Mention of elections has occasionally been made since (but only hypothetically and no sensible person really expects them to take place).

To sum up, it may be said that the desire to contain the influence of Communism which, before 1955, was only a minor influence on the actions of politicians and governments, became, after the rebellion of 1958, a major characteristic of Indonesian politics. This desire was also the principal motive behind the passionate exhortations to keep alive the spirit of the revolution, the persistent pointing to the dangers of imperialism and colonialism, and the continuous indoctrination with nationalist symbols, all elements designed to create a sense of national crisis and an atmosphere of patriotic ardour, if not frenzy. In so far as this policy was directed against the Western powers and all the West stood for, it was in harmony with the general line of the P.K.I. and to this extent the communists strongly supported the government. The official policy of directing the nation's energies to these targets served primarily to divert popular attention from the socio-economic situation to more dramatic and appealing issues. It also made use of foreign scape-

goats to divert attention away from those who, rightly or wrongly, could be held responsible for the failure to solve the economic problems. It compelled the communists, who in the circumstances could do nothing but toe the line of nationalist agitation, to abandon or at least hold back their efforts to make capital from the widespread discontent.

In following this policy Sukarno was drawn into a vicious circle. He tolerated (with some reluctance, since it might jeopardize his own personal status) a tremendous increase in the power of the army. In addition to utilizing the army as the anti-communist watch-dog, he reinforced his own position in a constitutional sense by curbing the power of parliament and establishing a series of deliberative councils with vague and overlapping responsibilities and no real power. The P.K.I. and the trade unions were under close supervision, and in July 1960 strikes in vital industries and plantations were declared illegal. By cancelling elections, the government deprived the P.K.I. of the possibility of openly demonstrating its numerical strength at the polls. The army was overtly engaged in attempts to cut back communist following in the rural areas. Sukarno did the same in a more covert and discreet way as we have seen by his policy of anti-imperialism.

The disadvantage of this policy was that, however cleverly devised, it led to nothing. In spite of all precautions taken and manoeuvres devised, the P.K.I. might well continue to increase its strength, because the major factor contributing to its appeal was by no means eliminated. Popular discontent could be silenced by nationalist agitation, but it was not likely to disappear as long as there were no essential improvements in the economic situation and in living standards. The crisis over New Guinea and the stepped-up anti-imperialist campaign not only diverted popular attention from the immediate problems upon which logically it should have been focussed, but by absorbing administrative

and financial resources it also distracted the government's energies from any policy of socio-economic development. While Sukarno was calling upon his people to 'be obsessed with nationalism... to display zeal and resoluteness to complete the unfinished revolution... to revive the spirit of the tiger', Indonesia's economic situation continued to deteriorate. In addition to the feelings of popular discontent there was widespread resentment at the army's heavy-handed actions, its mismanagement and corruption, and its incursion into the economic and administrative spheres previously dominated by civilians. Only one organization could possibly benefit from this dissatisfaction: the P.K.I. It was careful not to antagonize Sukarno himself nor to attack the sacrosanct *pantja sila* ideology, and instead directed its main criticism against the army, which promptly retaliated by closing down the party's newspaper and arresting communist leaders. But indirectly the P.K.I. continued to be potentially the most serious threat to the entire governmental system and the social structure upon which this system was based. This being the case the authorities were not in a position to relax their efforts to divert popular attention to more sensational issues and away from those topics over which the P.K.I. had the greatest influence. This problem continued after the New Guinea problem had finally been solved; and another diversionary cause had to be found.

Since 1958 the Dutch government had been gradually losing support for what it considered to be its right to rule over New Guinea. By presenting the case as a classic example of colonialism Indonesia made sure of the sympathy of the Afro-Asian nations with their ever-increasing influence in world councils. The image which the Indonesian government had built up for itself—socialist and protecting the P.K.I. against the army officers—guaranteed the support of the Soviet bloc. The Western powers did not openly desert

the Netherlands but it was no secret that the issue annoyed them extremely. The United States in particular was fearful of being manoeuvred into the one position it attempted to avoid at all costs, namely being compelled to commit itself overtly to either of the two sides.

In the Netherlands itself doubts were raised about the wisdom of a policy which had resulted in the liquidation of all its business interests in Indonesia. Expelled from the Dutch government in late 1958, the Labour Party found the courage to criticize the sterile New Guinea policy to which it had contributed so much itself. In 1961 came the unexpected swing of the Calvinist Anti-revolutionary Party to a more realistic approach to the problem. Behind the government's back a pressure group of Unilever and other business circles made contact with Indonesian politicians.

But the Dutch Foreign Minister, Luns, was not to be convinced so easily. In late 1961 he presented a proposal to the United Nations to replace Dutch rule over the disputed territory with some kind of international trusteeship, an indication that the Dutch government although realizing that it was fighting a losing battle was not yet willing to let Sukarno have his way. In the interests of this proposal, which was rejected by Indonesia, the Netherlands, the only Western power to do so, even went so far as to support the controversial Liberian motion censuring a speech of the South African minister, Louw, in the General Assembly, but this move to influence the African votes was of no avail. In the New Guinea debate the Brazzaville nations put forward a compromise resolution which was not unsympathetic to the Dutch but which failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority.

But Indonesia's own resolution was not successful either. In a sense the entire New Guinea issue had got bogged down. The building-up of expectations for the liberation of West Irian, with official promises of a speedy success

('before the padi ripens') had despite all efforts not yet borne fruit, apart from creating psychological means to strengthen the government's control over the masses. After the seizure of Dutch enterprises, the removal of the Dutch element from the country, the severing of diplomatic and of indirect relations with Holland, and the forcing of Japan to cancel the visit of a Dutch warship to Tokyo, there was not much left to be done short of embarking upon military action.

Early in 1962 detachments of Indonesian troops landed in New Guinea. It is uncertain whether this resort to open armed hostility was meant to put pressure on the Dutch or on the United States which was uncomfortably caught between two fires. Realizing that Indonesia constituted a major factor in world politics while Holland was hardly worth considering in this respect, the United States started to mediate, at the same time pressing the Netherlands, who were still trying to play for time, into accepting the terms. In August 1962 the final agreement was signed and the Dutch were left with only an undertaking on paper that the interests of the Papuans would be properly taken care of. Whatever the errors of the Dutch—and they were many —they suffered this defeat partly because they had been let down by the United States which thirteen years earlier, on grounds of military strategy, had helped to shape the unfortunate Dutch decision not to include New Guinea in the Transfer of Sovereignty to Indonesia.

It was a clear victory for Indonesia, for Sukarno personally and for his régime which, like all dictatorial régimes, needed an occasional fanfare of success. But this very victory contained an element which could prove dangerous. The ending of the West Irian problem meant the removal from the political scene of an issue upon which popular attention could be focussed. But the immediate consequences were even more embarrassing. Now that Dutch influence had disappeared from the region there was no more need for

the emergency regulations or for such a large military force. What would happen to demobilized military personnel returning to civilian life? They would find conditions infinitely worse than they had become accustomed to in the army and they might well reinforce the ranks of the discontented. Finally, the opponents of the régime might breathe more freely now that their opposition would no longer necessarily be anti-patriotic or treacherous.

Now that the Dutch question was finished with, a new scapegoat was needed to divert popular attention from the economic situation. Mobs could be set on the Indian Embassy during the Fourth Asian Games in 1962 after an Olympic official, who happened to be an Indian, had levelled criticism at the barring of Israel and Formosa from the Games, but this was only a temporary distraction. In order to be effective the new bogy had to be more substantial than this. It had to be Western or pro-Western so that it could be presented as an instance of imperialism and colonialism bent upon destroying the Indonesian revolution. This would guarantee the support of the P.K.I., discourage the opposition and match Indonesia's progressive image abroad. Three bogies were available. First, there was Portugal, the only real colonial power left in South-East Asia after Britain had announced its intention of abandoning the Borneo territories and Singapore. Portugal was the most hated of Western nations in the Afro-Asian world, especially since the indiscriminate killing of Africans in Angola. Yet Portugal, despite its bad colonial record, was not adequate for the purpose, for the continuation of colonial rule over half of Timor, however medieval, could hardly serve as an excuse for rousing the Indonesian masses. Moreover, India had set the example of how to deal with Portuguese enclaves and any conflict over Timor could be solved within two days.

The second candidate for a scapegoat was the Philippines.

Independent, it was, certainly, but in Indonesian eyes definitely not one of the young, emerging forces. Economically, it was still strongly tied to the former colonial power, as it was militarily by the arrangements for military bases, as well as by its adherence to the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty; politically, it was ruled by essentially the same classes that had been the mainstay of the Spanish régime and whose power the American administration had in no way touched; finally, the Indonesian rebels of the Celebes had received help from the Philippines, a fact which the government in Djakarta did not forget. But in this case, too, the Indonesian rulers were not inclined to proceed: the Philippines would fit well into any policy aimed at eliminating Western influence and neo-colonialism in South-East Asia, but there was one objection to singling it out as a major target, namely that however vehemently Indonesia might attack Western imperialism it was careful not to antagonize the United States beyond a certain point.

Thus, neither Portugal nor the Philippines replaced the Dutch as safety-valves for Indonesia's brewing problems. But Malaysia did.

6 CONFRONTATION AND THE COMMUNISTS

The factual story of Indonesia's relations with Malaya since the Malaysia project took definite shape needs only to be briefly related. The first reference to a possible combination of Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories into a wider federation was made in May 1961 and by the end of the following year preparations for carrying the scheme into effect were already in an advanced stage. The plan was received with studied indifference on the part of Indonesia but as long as the latter was preoccupied with New Guinea she did not show any particular hostility. This attitude changed, however, after the final Dutch-Indonesian agreement had been signed in August 1962. In September the Foreign Minister, Subandrio, declared that he had to take stock of the situation and decide whether or not Malaysia would adversely affect Indonesia's interests.

This was the first indication that Indonesia was not as unconcerned as her initial attitude might imply. When the Brunei rebellion broke out, in December 1962, the Indonesian press was decidedly on the side of the rebels. So was Sukarno himself, and by January 1963 'confrontation' could be inserted into the world's lexicon of political jargon.

The quarrel seemed in sight of a settlement for a short while when Sukarno met Tunku Abdul Rahman in Tokyo in late May. There they decided to solve the problem in a spirit of good neighbourliness and parted as the best of friends, cracking what the Malayan press called 'outrageous jokes'. The next discussion, on a lower level, was held in Manila, in June, and on this occasion the Republic of the Philippines with its claim to British North Borneo was also represented. Apart from sketching out the Maphilindo plan, the conference resulted in an Indonesian and Filipino

promise not to oppose the formation of Malaysia, while on the other hand Malaya committed itself vaguely to allowing neutral observers to ascertain the opinion of the Bornean peoples.

In the meantime, however, Malaya and Britain carried on with their plans, and on 9 July 1963 the Malaysia agreement was signed in London. The next day Indonesia resumed confrontation. Under these circumstances the hammering out of a new accord was far less easy and Sukarno went to the second Manila conference intending 'to crush Malaysia'. A compromise was eventually arrived at, however, early in August 1963. A United Nations Commission was to inquire into the wishes of the peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo—Brunei having meanwhile chosen not to join the federation. Indonesian hostility continued and it was stepped up after Malaya fixed a specific date, 16 September, as Malaysia day. Two days before this deadline, the U.N. Secretary-General, U Thant, announced the results of the United Nations inquiry, which showed opinion was in favour of Malaysia. The whole business was stigmatized as a hoax by Indonesia.

On 16 September 1963 the Federation of Malaysia came officially into being. Indonesia (and the Philippines, for that matter) refused to recognize the new state and on the same day a crowd ransacked the British Embassy in Djakarta, in one of the worst mob demonstrations the authorities had ever let loose in Indonesia's recent history. Relations between Malaysia and Indonesia (and the Philippines) were broken off; those between Indonesia and Great Britain were not, but they reached the lowest possible level. The subsequent reaction of the Indonesian authorities was to take over Malaysian and British property and to embark upon a policy of economically boycotting Malaysia, especially Singapore. At the same time Indonesia intensified her military actions along the Borneo border. 'Crush Malaysia',

had by now become the main issue in Indonesian politics.

Indonesia put forward many arguments for opposing Malaysia so vehemently. Like Malaya, the new federation maintained strong economic ties with the former colonial power and, although not a member of SEATO herself, she allowed on her territory a substantial military force of troops belonging to powers who were members of SEATO or the ANZUS pact. This, plus the fact that the government in Kuala Lumpur followed a decidedly pro-Western line in the controversy between the Western powers and the Soviet *bloc*, made Malaysia, in the eyes of Indonesia, an accomplice of Western imperialism. It was not the sort of independent Asian policy Indonesia expected of independent Asian nations. Thus the whole Malaysia scheme was presented as a neo-colonialist plot designed by Britain to continue her influence in South-East Asia. The government in Kuala Lumpur was described as a collection of stooges serving British interests, and Indonesia itself could pose as being encircled and virtually threatened by Western imperialism.

In several respects Indonesia held quite a few political trump cards when she embarked upon her confrontation policy. By attacking a Western power as the master mind behind the Malaysia plan she was assured of support by the communist *bloc* and those non-aligned nations which were politically nearest to her. Her indictment seemed well founded in view of Malayan political history. Malaya had never experienced an outbreak of revolutionary nationalism to the same degree as other South-East Asian countries and in the only fighting that had taken place, during the Emergency, the one nationalist organization of any significance had been an ally of the colonial power against the common enemy. After independence had been achieved the so-called 'spirit of the tiger' was lacking altogether, a situation entirely contrary to what Indonesia considered the criterion of revolution. Hence Sukarno's contemptuous remark that

Malaya had been handed independence on a silver salver instead of having fought for it.

Thus in confronting Malaysia Indonesia was able to present herself as a really independent nation setting out to liberate Malaya from a government which was depicted as hostile to the aspirations of the Malay nation. The distinction between Malay and Malayan was perfectly clear to the politicians in Djakarta but they chose not to emphasize this point. The Malayan government had furthermore aroused Indonesian official suspicion in 1958 by showing sympathy with the Sumatran rebels. Finally Malaya's Prime Minister had attempted—in 1960—to mediate in the New Guinea conflict in which, according to Indonesia, there was nothing to mediate but only to surrender, and in 1963, while commenting on Indonesian insistence on a referendum in the Borneo territories, Tunku Abdul Rahman had made the terrible *faux pas* of drawing attention to the fact that Indonesia had denounced the clause in the New Guinea agreement which provided for a referendum among the Papuans.

The political gain of the campaign against Malaysia which emphasized the image of Indonesia as a leftist, genuine non-aligned, anti-imperialist nation, was not likely to be neutralized by any Western counter-attack for this would only make Indonesia a martyr for the sake of Asian freedom. The Western powers directly involved were Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The British reacted to the demolition of their Embassy, the digging up of their golf course, and the take-over of their property with remarkable restraint, the Suez disaster of 1956 having made them realize the dangers of retaliatory action. Australia was Indonesia's immediate neighbour since the Dutch had left New Guinea and although she did not like Indonesian ways she attempted to make the best of them. Both Britain and Australia—and New Zealand, for that matter—were committed to defending Malaysia if it were to be attacked and should ask for

assistance, but any stronger action, such as a strike against Indonesian guerilla bases in Kalimantan or the Riau Archipelago, was out of the question, at least unless it had the blessing of the United States. Indonesia knew this and she based her gamble on the correct assumption that the United States was unlikely to give this blessing.

Whatever impression the Indonesian objections against Malaysia might make among the Afro-Asian neutralists, the communist nations and progressive circles in Western countries, these objections were not the essential motive behind confrontation. The Indonesian government was not particularly anxious about the continuation of Western influence in South-East Asia, for, if that had been the case, it would have been more justified in attacking the Philippines. Neither was it essentially concerned with the fate of the Malaysian population: in that case it might have pointed to the considerable and quite shabbily-treated anti-Malaysia faction in Singapore rather than insisting on a referendum in Sarawak and Sabah. But Singapore was a predominantly Chinese state and the Chinese, who were inclined to the Left, were the last people with whom the Indonesian ruling group would declare its solidarity.

The primary motives behind the 'crush Malaysia' campaign were shrewdly concealed behind the smoke-screen of a neo-colonialist plot. If any aspect of Malaysia posed a threat to Indonesia, it was not the fact that it maintained political, economic and military ties with Britain so much as the economic prosperity of its major component parts, Malaya and Singapore. Judging by the intensity of the illegal barter trade across the Strait of Malacca, it was no secret to the Sumatrans that economic conditions in Malaya were far better than in their own country (and Sumatra itself was better off than Java). The Sumatrans might ask the awkward question why it was possible to achieve in Malaya what was apparently impossible in Indonesia.

It was not that dissatisfaction over the discrepancy in standard of living was likely to lead to a new separatist revolt—the first one had failed partly because genuine popular support had been lacking—but the dissatisfaction did lead to an intensive secret barter trade which deprived official Indonesia of a large part of its revenues. In confronting Malaysia, the Indonesian government was aiming at harming Malaya's economic position and, by doing so, eliminating not only the discrepancy in standard of living but also the illegal trade across the Straits.

But the Indonesian government could not possibly admit that Malaya's prosperity was one of the underlying causes of its opposition to Malaysia, for this would imply that it had apparently no positive means at its disposal to check its own worsening financial position and deteriorating economy. It was easier, and politically more opportune, to point to factors operating from outside rather than to its own failure to carry out successfully a long-term policy of economic development.

There was another motive behind confrontation which the Indonesian government had to camouflage carefully: its mistrust of the Chinese. Many factors contributed to this antipathy, the major one being the important position the Chinese minority held in Indonesia's economy. It would not be fair to depict all Chinese as money-lenders, usurers and retail traders, but the myth of Chinese wealth and rapaciousness had done its work well and had made them the scapegoats in the eyes of those who were less industrious or just less successful. As far back as 1912 the Sarekat Islam had been set up as an organization of Javanese merchants directed against Chinese competition, and during the revolution there had been ugly instances of racial rioting, especially in Tangerang in 1946 and Tjilatjap in 1947.

After independence the Chinese continued to be a dominant factor in the middle sectors of economic enterprise,

despite government policy which aimed at promoting Indonesian economic interests by granting special privileges to Indonesians. Although some slight increase in the economic importance of the Indonesian element may have resulted, in most cases this amounted to no more than financial co-operation between Indonesian 'dummy' entrepreneurs and their Chinese associates, and in fact the Indonesian share in the capitalist sector of the economy did not show any marked expansion. It was as a result of this frustration that under 'guided democracy' anti-Chinese measures were devised which were much more rigorous. Late in 1959 an order was issued prohibiting aliens from engaging in retail trade in rural areas, a discriminatory regulation which severely affected many thousands of Chinese, sparked off a quarrel between Indonesia and the Chinese People's Republic and attracted P.K.I. disapproval. Yet in the main the drive to Indonesianize economic life failed. 'The economic position of the Chinese is a thorn in Indonesia's flesh...', stated Subandrio in May 1963. 'The major cause of the discontent is the fact that one minority group has not yet shown any willingness to assist in carrying the burdens of the revolution...and is not aware of the spirit of co-operation in Indonesian society.' He made his statement shortly after a series of savage anti-Chinese riots, starting in Cheribon, had swept over West Java.

In neighbouring Malaya the government and administrative posts were held by Malays but here again, economic life was controlled by Chinese. In Singapore, moreover, the Chinese were predominant in all respects. Indonesian politicians were perfectly well aware that the major reason for including the Borneo territories in the Malaysia federation had been to counterbalance the Chinese numerical majority in Malaya plus Singapore, but with their traditional Javanese contempt for Malays they were not convinced that this simple device would tip the racial scale in

other fields as well. If it did not, Indonesia might find herself in the end bordered by a neighbour virtually dominated by Chinese, a prospect which her leaders did not relish. In this respect, Indonesian misgivings about Malaysia were shared by the Philippines and might well have been instrumental in President Macapagal's insistence on a wider federation of the three countries as proposed at the first Manila conference held in June 1963. If Maphilindo had been successfully implemented nearly 7 million Overseas Chinese living in these countries would have been safely drowned in a sea of over 125 million people of the Malay-Indonesian race, which seemed a more reassuring proportion than the ratio of 4.3 million Chinese to 5.7 million non-Chinese in the Malaysia federation.

Since in the post-war world whose eyes were focussed on Apartheid and the American South, it was hardly a recommendation for any political group, and still less for a young emerging nation openly to advertise racial discrimination, this anti-Chinese motive behind the opposition to Malaysia was carefully camouflaged. The same is true of the third fundamental motive which urged the Indonesian government into its confrontation policy: its anti-communism.

In contrast to racialism, anti-communism might, of course, be considered quite a respectable argument for any policy. But not for Indonesia who did her utmost to pose as a genuine non-aligned nation. But although out of expediency the policy was not stressed, anti-communism played a predominant role in Indonesia's confrontation and, as with the racial anti-Chinese motive with which it in a sense was linked, it brought Sukarno into the seemingly strange marriage of convenience with the Philippine leaders who were far less inhibited by considerations as to how the non-aligned world would judge them.

The anti-communist factor behind confrontation showed

two separate aspects. One was related to the doubt, expressed in the Philippines as well as in Indonesia, that Malaysia, although she had outlawed Communism, would be successful in serving as an anti-communist bastion to protect South-East Asia against the threat posed by China. It was feared that, if the Malaysian Chinese were ever to gain a predominant position in, or control over, the Federation, Communism might benefit. After all, the Overseas Chinese, whatever their loyalty to the countries in which they were living, were known to be greatly interested in and impressed by what was happening in China, and the fact that China's revival as a great power had been accomplished by a régime which was communist automatically coloured their opinions in this respect. Among the indigenous politicians of the South-East Asian countries there were many who were constantly haunted by the spectre of the Chinese minority acting as China's, that is Communism's, fifth column in their adopted homelands. In this event a Chinese-controlled Malaysia, because of the Federation's unique geographical position partly on the mainland and partly on South-East Asia's archipelago, would allow Communism to cross the South China Sea, to bypass the American Seventh Fleet and to march right up to the gates of the Philippines and the long jungle border of Indonesian Borneo.

Those pointing to this possibility neglected one important point, namely that the real danger from Communism was that it might find a fertile soil either in bad socio-economic conditions or in a feeling of discontent and frustration among the Chinese resulting from the discriminatory treatment they suffered at the hands of the local authorities. Viewed from this angle the Philippines, with its landlordism, tenancy and agrarian indebtedness and, even more, Indonesia, with the unchecked deterioration of its economic and social conditions and its heavy-handed actions against the Chinese minority—not to mention South Vietnam—

offered better opportunities for communist success than Malaysia.

Neither of the two governments, of course, would admit this. Thus the Philippines claimed Sabah so that it might act as a buffer between the Philippines proper and Malaysia in case of trouble. The Indonesian leaders, too, were troubled by the fear of Communism gaining strength in Malaysia. Since any such development was most likely to start with a take-over in Singapore, Indonesia wanted the city-state to be isolated and put in political quarantine rather than have it included in a larger unit. This assumption entirely underestimated both the shrewdness of Singapore's P.A.P. politicians in dealing with the communists and the determination of Kuala Lumpur to keep guard at the Causeway, but it did contribute to Indonesia's wish to prevent Malaysia from coming into being.

The anti-communist motive conditioned confrontation in yet another way. The Indonesian politicians realized better than their colleagues in the Philippines that the real danger of Communism came from within rather than from without. Confrontation was not meant to annex any Malaysian territory; it was intended only to prevent a social revolution in Indonesia by allowing the P.K.I. to let off steam in a direction where it could do no harm to the Indonesian ruling *élite*.

For the outsider this motive was not easily perceptible. According to the Malaysian authorities confrontation was a communist scheme. In a sense this might be a logical attitude: in their years of political apprenticeship, that is during the height of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1954), they had known only one foe, Communism, and they were consequently inclined to regard anything disreputable in politics as communist or at least linked with Communism. In holding this view on confrontation they were greatly helped by outward appearances; after all the P.K.I. was a

fervent partisan of Sukarno's anti-Malaysia drive. In fact, the party had been the first in Indonesia to voice its opposition to the Malaysia project for the P.K.I. had no particular reason to feel sympathy towards a scheme which was designed to break the back of the Singapore Left and to form an anti-communist barrier in South-East Asia.

This view is, however, a simplification. In Western circles and in Malaysia Indonesia's confrontation was occasionally commented upon as a manoeuvre to divert popular dissatisfaction from the internal difficulties the government was facing. This it certainly was, as we have seen, but this is only half the story. To complete it we must ask which group would have been most likely to benefit from this dissatisfaction if it had been allowed to have its natural way. The army? Hardly, because the army was one of the two nuclei of authority in the authoritarian set-up of 'guided democracy', hand in glove with the government and equally responsible for the tottering economic conditions and social misery. The once dissident army officers? These had by now been cajoled into returning to the fold. The Sumatran separatists? They had tried once to revolt and blundered into an ignominious defeat. The former adherents of Masjumi? Their organization had collapsed and their leaders were interned. Darul Islam? This commanded only a limited following and had lost its attraction since the execution, in 1962, of Kartosuwirjo, who had too black a criminal record to have his life spared. Only one organization was left which could seriously attempt to avail itself of the prevalent feelings of dissatisfaction: the P.K.I.

It may be true that the P.K.I. raised the anti-Malaysia banner in the first place, but it is also true that they were almost immediately followed by Sukarno and the army. From the very moment that the Indonesian government took over the campaign and made 'Crush Malaysia' a top item in its policy the communists were automatically drawn

into a strategy which was in fact aimed at preventing them working for the realization of their own purposes. This disadvantage was not outweighed by the occasional official declarations of amity. The appointment of the party's third important man, Njoto, in the cabinet's presidium in August 1964 was such a gesture and just as meaningless as that of the other two communists who had been in the government since 1962 and it in no way strengthened the P.K.I.'s influence in the decision-making sphere.

Not only in Indonesia itself but also in Malaysia confrontation had an adverse affect on the Left, or, as far as Malaysia is concerned, on whatever social radicalism had survived the Malayan Emergency. Faced with Indonesia's threats the government in Kuala Lumpur quite understandably undertook to consolidate Malaysia's position and to ensure its security. In carrying out this policy the ruling Alliance party laid down the principles of a Malaysian national consensus and helped to create an atmosphere in which any opposition might be accused of anti-national behaviour. Confrontation, linked with Communism and, more correctly, with communalism, overshadowed all other issues at stake in the Malayan elections of April 1964, with disastrous results for the opposition parties. So also, confrontation contributed to forcing some Malayan trade unions into the fold when they, early in 1965, attempted to emphasize their claims by 'work-to-rule' action. The fact that several opposition parties continued to voice their objections to the Malaysia scheme after the federation had come into being and while confrontation was being practised, played directly into the hands of government propaganda. The policy of, for instance, the Socialist Front contributed very largely towards putting the rope round its own neck and no assurance on its own part that, although anti-Malaysia, it was not *ipso facto* pro-Indonesia could persuade the Alliance and the P.A.P. to drop their charge of

disloyalty or to stop taking repressive action against them.

However inane the opposition policy might have been, its playing into the authorities' hands was surely inadvertent. This was not so much the case with the help the Malaysian ruling parties received from the very authors of confrontation. The apparently leftist character of Sukarno's régime, carefully maintained by the Indonesian politicians and constantly emphasized by Malaysia, served to link the Malaysian opposition in the public mind with an Indonesian communist plot and helped to embarrass the opposition, particularly on the left wing. Although superficially this may look like the boomerang effect of confrontation, a more thorough investigation into the nature of Indonesian internal politics might lead to another conclusion, namely that the weakening of the Malaysian left wing was in fact the objective of Sukarno's régime as much as it was the aim of the Malaysian government. As confrontation guarantees a conflict situation which Indonesia's rulers needed badly to keep themselves in the saddle, Sukarno was not actually interested in any solution of the Malaysia question. A solution, which apparently gave him satisfaction, might enhance his prestige, but it would certainly deprive him of a means to stay in power. Because of this he was not interested in strengthening the anti-Malaysian element in Malaysia either, especially when this element happens to be leftist, for this might encourage the P.K.I. Sukarno was interested only in keeping the sore festering. The Indonesian politicians will, of course, not admit this and their official line is to support the Malaysian opposition. But this support was proved hollow when, on the eve of the Malayan elections, Radio Djakarta urged the Malayan electorate to vote for the Socialist Front—a political Judas-kiss of the first magnitude.

If one looks at these consequences of confrontation, the attitude of the United States towards Indonesia becomes clearer. As far as outward appearances go the government

in Djakarta has given the State Department ample grounds for annoyance. Since it became independent Indonesia has adopted a foreign policy of non-alignment in the Cold War and only once — in 1952 — did the United States try to lure Indonesia into the Western camp. It was a clumsy attempt which accounted for the downfall of the essentially pro-Western Sukiman cabinet and for the subsequent loss of much Indonesian goodwill towards America. From that moment onward Djakarta firmly adhered to 'neutralism' though it became the most vociferous of the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist group, and more anti-Western than anti-communist, as Western observers were not slow to notice.

It was this attitude which convinced many in the United States that Sukarno was leftist, if not a fellow-traveller, and this suspicion was strengthened when Indonesia began purchasing arms from the Soviet *bloc*. Relations between Indonesia and America reached their lowest level early in 1958 when the C.I.A. was meddling in the Sumatra rebellion, but this period of tension was of short duration. By August 1958 the United States was selling arms to Djakarta. Although relations never became very cordial, they were sufficiently so to induce Washington virtually to support Indonesia in the final phase of the New Guinea conflict. Whatever distrust there might have been among large sections of American opinion, official Washington never treated Sukarno as it treated Nasser when it abruptly cancelled the loan for the Aswan High Dam, or Lumumba and Souvanna Phouma both of whom it openly opposed. After 1956 Sukarno grew apparently more friendly towards Communism, but this did not prevent the U.S. from giving Indonesia financial assistance amounting to $523.5 million between 1950 and 1961, most of which 'has been given *since* 1956'.[1]

[1] Alex. Shakov 'Foreign Economic Assistance in Indonesia 1950-61', p. 598. Quoted by Herbert Feith in G. McT. Kahin (ed.) *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia*, p. 267, note. Author's italics.

The Indonesians for their part played the game shrewdly. There were occasional violent anti-American demonstrations and at times Sukarno launched vehement verbal attacks on the United States, its policy, its aid ('Go to Hell with your aid') and its Seventh Fleet, but this was just a show to give an outlet to the anti-Western feelings of the Indonesian masses. The government knew perfectly well that it should not antagonize the United States too much, because this might result in its becoming almost exclusively dependent on Soviet, or Chinese, assistance. Whenever the mobs were set against foreign property American enterprises were carefully avoided—at least until early 1965—and U.S.I.S. buildings were attacked only on those occasions when other parts of the non-aligned world were attacking them as well. The P.K.I. was often reproached for displaying its anti-American feelings too enthusiastically. But in March 1962 Sukarno included two communists in his government, as if to show that he might not be able to restrain the P.K.I. any longer if he were unsuccessful in the New Guinea issue, and one may speculate whether the inclusion of a third communist in August 1964 did not serve the same purpose with regard to America's attitude in the Malaysia conflict.

Facing these provocations the United States government followed a policy which, compared with its attitude to some other 'neutralists', not to mention real leftists can be considered remarkably restrained. But the reasons for this restraint are clear. Firstly, in the conflict over New Guinea the United States, already under Indonesian suspicion of having favoured the Dutch with their Marshall Aid during the revolutionary years, could not afford to compromise themselves any longer. Secondly, there may have been the fear of economic retaliation for the United States had sizeable interests in Indonesia, not in New Guinea or in Malaysia. Thirdly, there was the strong conviction that any move designed to frustrate the Indonesian government and to

weaken its prestige might strengthen the position of the P.K.I., the most consistent anti-American organization in the country. Thus there should be no undue pressure which might fan anti-American feelings to a degree beyond control. But there was to be no open support for Sukarno's régime either, for any such traditional policy, as followed in the cases of Chiang K'ai-shek, Ngo Dinh Diem and Moise Tshombe might spoil the image of the socialist, Western-devil-daring young emerging force, which still served to captivate and control the P.K.I. What developed was, on the one hand, a well-balanced policy of support, and on the other, occasional criticism of Sukarno's leftist inclinations and reassuring statements first to Holland, and later to Malaysia. The concern shown over the leftist character of the Indonesian government might at the same time well serve to impress upon public opinion, in Indonesia as well as outside, that the régime's short-comings and inadequacies were due to socialism.

There are indications that the United States' attitude towards Indonesia is less conciliatory over the Malaysia issue than it was in the New Guinea conflict: it is not pure colonialism which is on trial here and Britain represents a higher value in Washington's political calculations than Holland. The Indonesian official reaction is, consequently, more markedly anti-American and less confined to mere words. Urged by P.K.I. trade unions the government took over nominal management of some American enterprises in February 1965 and it did not lift a finger to prevent the open harassing of embassy officials and other American nationals by the communists.

This seemed a departure from the careful policy Indonesia had hitherto followed in this respect. It did not amount, however, to any large and consistent anti-American sweep along the lines of the anti-Dutch and anti-British actions in previous years. The stronger anti-American trend fitted

in well with world-wide uneasiness over United States' actions in Vietnam as it did with the general Indonesian policy of attacking Western imperialism: there were not many Western foreigners left besides the Americans. But it did not mean that the P.K.I. had got out of control or even gained more influence, although such an impression was inevitably created. This impression might well have been created on purpose in order to frighten the United States into believing more strongly than before that Indonesian Communism might eventually benefit if Indonesian nationalism did not get its way.

This time Indonesia came close to the point where American patience might become exhausted: even the ambassador, Howard P. Jones, seemed exasperated. But political calculations were stronger than the feelings of annoyance and the United States made the first move to improve the situation by sending Ellsworth Bunker as special envoy to Djakarta —the same man who in 1962 had been instrumental in bringing Holland to its knees. The new phase in American-Indonesian relations, which many observers expected to start soon, has not yet begun. Whatever changes take place in its attitude, the general policy followed so far by the State Department can only be based on the realization that Sukarno's neutralism is not an open door to Communism; that nationalizing foreign capitalist enterprise is an anti-foreign nationalist manoeuvre rather than an anti-capitalist socialist policy; and finally, that the ruling group in Indonesia are in fact anti-communists who, because of the potential strength of the P.K.I. have to take a rather unorthodox line. The Indonesian revolution has not crossed the threshold between a middle class and a genuine proletarian revolution, and this may well account for America's policy of neutralism in the Malaysia dispute or—to quote the glib words of *Time* (8 January 1965)—for 'the tacit agreement which leaves Malaysia to the British while the

U.S. concentrate on the war in Vietnam'. It also accounts for the fact that, whatever his leftist pretensions, Sukarno has not up to now been considered by official America a 'traitor to the revolution' like Fidel Castro.

The attitude of another Western country, the Netherlands, is hardly less significant. Almost immediately after New Guinea had been transferred to Indonesia the Dutch began to discover that Sukarno was an amiable man, full of humour. Delegations of businessmen and students went reconnoitring in the Archipelago; the governments in The Hague and Djakarta re-established relations· and in mid-1964 Foreign Minister Luns made his triumphant tour of Indonesia as the guest of the man whose ambitions he had attempted to thwart for more than a decade but with whom he now exchanged witticisms for which both are renowned.

In the Malaysia conflict official Holland maintained a strict neutrality. The Dutch newspapers, however, on the whole better informed about and more interested in Indonesia's claims than in Malaysia's point of view, tended to side with Sukarno rather than with Tunku Abdul Rahman. 'The future holds almost as few prospects for the Federation of Malaysia [as for South Vietnam]. The creation of this political monstrosity, which comprises parts of Borneo, has understandably infuriated President Sukarno of Indonesia.' This quotation is taken from the most cautious of the leading Dutch newspapers, one which usually weighs its words well and which is liberal (in the Dutch setting this means conservative) in its political outlook.[1] No one in the Netherlands approved of Indonesia's withdrawal from the United Nations, but the general attitude was one of 'We smile at Sukarno—and he returns the smile. Our national bogy has disappeared.'[2] The significant point about this is

[1] *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 31 December 1964

[2] Fr. de Jong, 'Socialisme en Historie', in *De Nieuwe Stem*, December 1964, p. 719

that those political circles and news media which for many years have been the staunchest adversaries of Indonesia and which had abused Sukarno ever since his name hit the front pages, now seem to be the least critical, and to have joined up in opinion with some left-wingers (left of the not-very left Labour Party, that is) who feel ideologically more attracted to the social basis of the Indonesian régime than to that of the Malaysian government.

Many factors may account for this Dutch attitude. Of all nations in the world the Dutch have the greatest knowledge of Indonesian problems. There are also strong cultural and emotional ties which inevitably help to strengthen friendly relations. The wish to recover at least part of its former economic assets may play a role as well, although for obvious reasons Dutch business proceeds carefully. The Dutch were not willing to jeopardize the honeymoon phase because of Malaysia's—and Britain's—troubles with Sukarno. There is still a strong conviction in Holland that the Indonesian revolution might have been nipped in the bud if Britain had followed a different course in 1945. The ultimate outcome of the revolution in Vietnam, where the British enabled the French to make their come-back in Saigon, might teach them otherwise, but the Dutch have not yet forgiven General Christison for not destroying the Indonesian Republic at once. Neither have they forgiven the British for having hurriedly filled the vacuum in the Indonesian business sector after Dutch enterprise had been forced out in December 1957. Finally there was the psychological-patriotic factor: now that Holland had not been able successfully to resist Indonesia's claims, what could be the prospects for Malaysia—a country which the average Dutchman in his school-days had come to know as two blank spaces on the proud wall-maps of the Netherlands Indies?

Whatever the underlying motives of this attitude, it is certain that none of the above considerations could have

persuaded the Dutch government to enter into such friendly relations with Indonesia after the shabby treatment which its country had suffered between 1957 and 1962, if the Indonesian régime had been really leftist. The Dutch are sufficiently realistic not to ignore the existence of communist or leftist régimes, and also sufficiently business-minded to carry on trade with them, but at the same time it is highly unlikely that the conservative government in The Hague, with its record in international affairs since 1945, would have adopted a neutral policy in the Malaysia question if this had been a conflict between a leftist Indonesia and a right-wing Malaysia. The Netherlands, like the United States, is neutral only in conflicts between countries with, from a political point of view, similar governments. As both Sukarno's régime and the government in Kuala Lumpur, each in its own way, are anti-communist, there is no reason to take sides officially.

Finally, one may ask what role the P.K.I. is actually playing at present. By supporting Sukarno's policy of stepped-up nationalism the P.K.I. has in fact become the prisoner of the very power factors which, as a communist party, it should fight. Furthermore, the appointment of some party leaders to posts in the cabinet tends to weaken the party's morale and its prestige, by becoming linked in the public mind with an utterly corrupt, inept and demoralized governmental system.[1] This situation, not counterbalanced by any actual increase in power, may serve to weaken its political influence as well, and thus diminish the opportunities which the deteriorating economic conditions might offer. The banning of the 'Movement for Sukarnoism' and the Partai Murba in December 1964 and January 1965 respectively did not cause any essential change in this situation, although both groups were anti-communist and the P.K.I. had insisted upon their liquidation. Political organizations

[1] The qualification is Brackman's, op. cit., p. 305

do not carry much weight under a governmental system which is based on emotional feelings rather than on parties.

There are reasons to believe that not all communists in Indonesia are particularly pleased with the line their leaders are following. But communist motives do not concern us. It is not the P.K.I. that is—or was—determining Indonesian politics, but Sukarno himself, in league with the army. Neither Sukarno nor the army can be successfully resisted, the former because of his still tremendous prestige, the latter because of its power. Compared with the situation in 1955 the prospects of the P.K.I. taking over seem more remote. New Guinea contributed to this up to 1962. Confrontation is contributing to it now.

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