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# **DILEMMAS OF THIRD WORLD COMMUNISM**

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**The Destruction of the  
PKI in Indonesia**

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**OLLE TÖRNQUIST**

THIRD WORLD STUDIES





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**Olle Törnquist**

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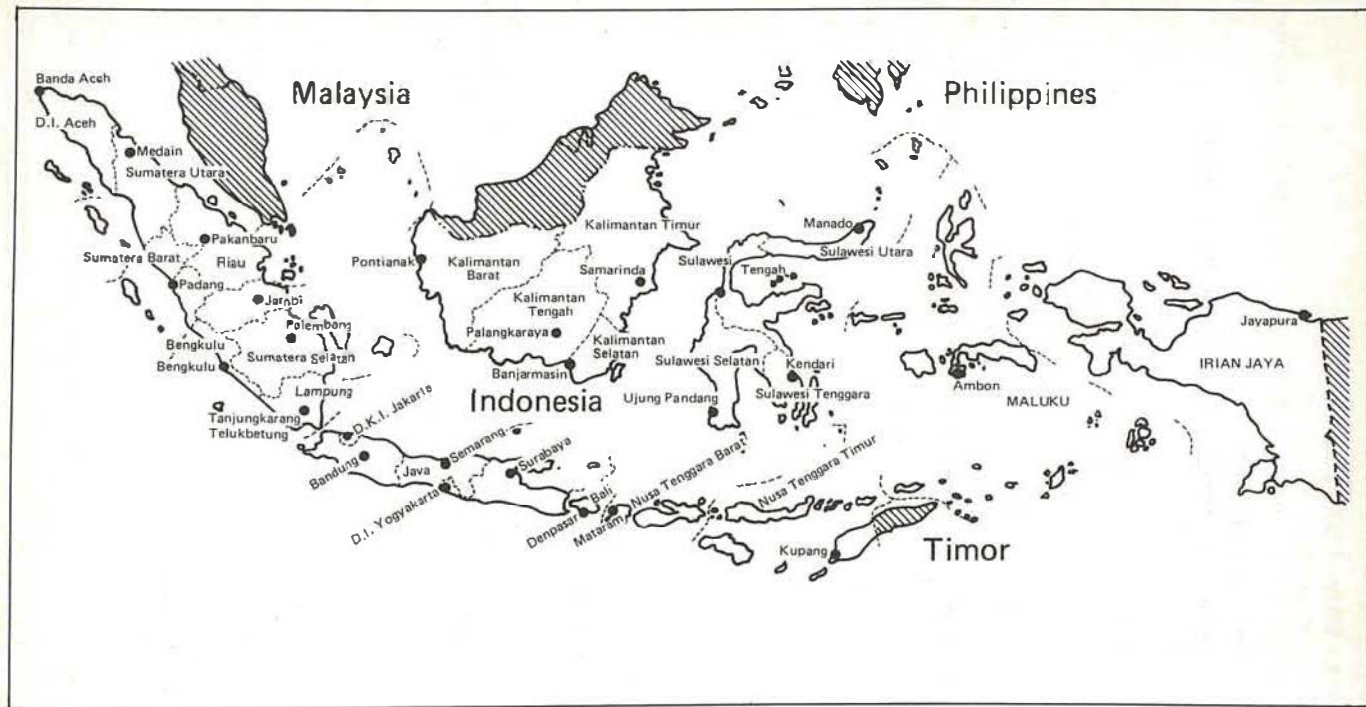
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# Preface

This book is the result of research and studies spanning about a decade. It was first published as a doctoral thesis in Swedish in the autumn of 1982. In this English edition I have excluded a chapter which describes the material on which I base this study, and I have also tried to shorten, clarify and, I hope, improve certain passages in the text. Furthermore, most of the references to works in Scandinavian languages have been left out. Nevertheless, in all its essentials, the analysis and conclusions can be dated April 1982.

My research has received financial support from Uppsala University and the Swedish Agency for Research Co-operation with Developing Countries (SAREC) which also contributed to the costs of this English edition.

Intellectually, I have been supported and stimulated through contact with a vast number of colleagues, comrades and friends in Scandinavia, as well as in Holland, Australia and Indonesia. Unfortunately, were I to mention names I would still only be able to thank a few of all those in Indonesia who have trusted me, and taken considerable risks to help me. The Indonesian academy of science, LIPI (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*), and its patrons certainly showed a considerable degree of integrity by giving me permission to engage in research there. In some way, therefore, both my work and their contributions received official sanction. Nevertheless, they still exposed themselves, perhaps those of you who are former political prisoners most of all, but perhaps others too.

There are also many Indonesians in exile and researchers on Indonesia, primarily working in Holland and Australia, who have been of assistance. I shall not name them all; a relatively comprehensive list is to be found at the back of the book with the references. In many cases, this is not just a matter of supporting my work, but also, as in Indonesia, a question of generosity with both time and hospitality, which for reserved and harried Swedes is almost unknown. (Among all those who are outside Indonesia, I should like to address a special thank-you to my friends Michael and Carolyn van Langenberg in Sydney.)

In Sweden I have, since 1975, had the privilege of working with interested and knowledgeable colleagues, comrades and friends in AKUT, the Working Group for the Study of Development Strategies. Gunilla Andrae,

Björn Beckman, Inga Brandell, Bertil Egerö, Kenneth Hermele, Mai Palmberg, Bosco Parra, Lars Rudebeck (colleague, comrade and invaluable supervisor) and former members of AKUT, as well as Ernst Hollander, Staffan Laestadius, Britha Mikkelsen, M.R. Bhagavan, and many others. Without them this study would have had a limited interest, primarily for some specialists on Indonesia, and would scarcely have become a book. In addition, I thank, among others, "H.A.", Mats Dahlgvist, Sven Ekberg, Lotte and the late Erich Jacoby, Anu-Mai Köll, "S.", Thommy Svensson and John Martinussen. The latter two were, incidentally, the second and first discussants when I defended my doctoral dissertation.

The majority of my research time has been spent in and around the AKUT group. But education, views and encouragement have also been forthcoming through the research seminars at the Skytteanean Institute of Political Science in Uppsala. Not least, Sverker Gustavsson and departmental professor Leif Lewin have been interested in my attempts to build bridges between structures and actors.

Despite all this support, from a personal point of view it would have been intolerable writing this book, and Anu-Mai and I would never have succeeded in working on our theses simultaneously, had Patrik not, at regular intervals, enticed me from my books and papers.

Finally, a big thank-you to Madi Gray for her patience and commitment during the painstaking task of translation.

Olle Törnquist



# 1. The Problem

A wave of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and revolutionary optimism swept the Third World after the Second World War. By the mid-sixties that wave broke on a series of significant problems and setbacks. Major but isolated victories, above all in Vietnam and the former Portuguese colonies, kept optimism afloat for a few years more. But socialists and communists, who were under severe pressure, seldom found the time for evaluation and reappraisal. Instead they vacillated between seeking support and solutions from Moscow or Peking, and being forced to defend their jobs and perhaps their standard of living and their basic human rights.

When problems also became apparent in the liberated areas, and a new, dynamic capitalism was established in several developing countries, while, at the same time, the old industrialized nations were badly hit by economic crisis, large parts of the left-wing solidarity movement in the imperialist countries were affected by an acute disillusionment and disappointment. The labour movement was forced to make the saving of jobs its priority. And as the industrialized countries attempted to resolve the crisis by export promotion measures, partly in order to maintain growth in areas of the Third World, the opportunities for broad solidarity began to shrink. Particularly badly affected have been the progressive movements in the Third World which question the capitalist growth which is so vital to the exports and investments of the industrialized countries.

Most of the progressives in the industrialized countries have, instead, chosen to emphasize the importance of an alternative economic policy, and to struggle against nuclear energy and the arms race (in a Europe which has suddenly become the most threatened part of the world). But they have done so in a way which has consigned exploitation and repression in the Third World to the background. Consequently, it was only in this Western and Eastern European context that endeavours to renew Marxism could take root. Attempts to embark on critical evaluations of problems in the Third World, in order to lay the ground for a new and more conscious solidarity and strategy together with comrades in the developing countries, were simply drowned in disappointment and in well-intentioned but often deeply conservative and defensive "friendship associations".

This book is an attempt to swim against the stream. To be better able to

understand developments in the Third World we must not only renew Marxist theories of capitalism's expanding and destructive force, but also reappraise Marxist and communist theories, which in a number of societies are being used as economic and political weapons.

One must start somewhere. In this book my point of departure is a significant example, that of the Indonesian Communist Party, the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI). Since I introduce the subject with a comprehensive review of the tradition of communist theories of struggle in the Third World on which the PKI based its own policies, I can also use the example of the PKI to conclude with a discussion of general problems, and to open doors to comparative studies which can be undertaken in the future.

The PKI was at different times one of the most important and innovative communist parties in the world. In a country where nepotism and corruption are the order of the day, this meant, to use the PKI's terminology, an outright struggle against feudalism and imperialism. The PKI united millions of oppressed people in their struggle for liberation.

When the social-democratic movement in the Dutch East Indies was reorganized as a communist party in May 1920, the PKI became the first communist party in Asia. Two months later the Communist International (Comintern) decided at its Second Congress to adopt the PKI's strategy for critical collaboration with what the Comintern termed the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and to recommend this as the strategy for waging the struggle in the colonies. The alliance and front policies drawn up by the PKI became the guidelines on which the struggles in, for example, Vietnam and China were fought, and are still fundamental in the Third World.

Impatient left-wingers soon took over the PKI. After a few unsuccessful attempts at rebellion in the mid-twenties, it lost the initiative to what the Comintern at that time called the national bourgeoisie, who monopolized the national liberation struggle.

Only a few years after Indonesia gained independence (1949) did the PKI re-emerge to resume its former greatness. With a regenerated strategy, the PKI became in just over a decade the world's third largest communist party and also the largest political party in Indonesia.

During these years, the PKI anticipated some of the Marxist development strategies which are still dominant today. Furthermore, the PKI tried to discuss how a communist party should fight to realize them. Ideas on peaceful struggle for socialism were developed and efforts were made to apply them; broad alliances and fronts, as well as ruling coalitions with other parties being accepted as equal partners, were entered into.

Needless to say, there were also major problems. But in the early sixties the PKI represented the hopes of a better future for the majority of Indonesians, irrespective of all the hardships of the present.

In the autumn of 1965 and the spring of 1966, however, the party was crushed, and with it the entire anti-imperialist popular movement. The army and bands of anti-communist terrorists murdered about half a

million people. The rivers were stained blood-red. Countless PKI members and sympathizers were arrested. The way was open for an unrestrained exploitation of Indonesia's people and resources.

Fourteen and fifteen years later I visited the country, to find luxury side by side with repression and a constant struggle for survival. I spoke to newly-released political prisoners who now had to find jobs to make ends meet, and who searched for their families to find out if they had survived. They tried to recreate their human dignity, integrity and to draw new strength. Imperialism has not disappeared just because the old theories were imperfect. And people do not give up the struggle for liberation because many have not been successful and because capitalism is now on the offensive.

We ought soon to be able to call a halt to our demolition of once-revered theories — for instance, about capitalism on the periphery being blocked — and instead maintain that, while capitalism is expanding, the question of how it is expanding remains to be solved; likewise, how expansion and destruction combine, and what the social and political consequences will be. But we can never reach the answers to these questions, and hence be able to renew our solidarity and political struggle, unless we re-evaluate earlier theories and strategies. The degree of bitterness of our experience should not be allowed to play a part. For even if we must go beyond Leninism, among other things, it remains true that, as Lenin himself put it, it is more serious not to succeed in analysing a mistake than to have committed one.<sup>1</sup>

## Notes

1. Lenin in Althusser (1978), p.26.



## 2. The Approach

### Objectives

The more specific objectives of this book are to contribute to an explanation of the PKI's failure and to discuss the consequences of that failure for the struggle in the Third World. In the first place I shall analyze the period 1952-65, which is when the policies that ended in catastrophe were drawn up and applied.

Several studies of the PKI's failure have already described the party's organization, programme, strategy and actions, and explained the objective factors which have determined its political development, or explained changes by using intentionalist and/or rationalistic perspectives. I have thus taken it as my task to use these studies critically in order to go further and concentrate on why the party failed and what other movements can learn from its defeat.

Earlier research concerning the PKI is, unfortunately, often disparate, generally historical and rarely directed at answering the pregnant question as to why the PKI failed. Not even Mortimer, who has consciously tried to tackle the problem, can provide a thorough answer. He has contributed a fascinating history of the PKI's ideology which contains many helpful clues. But to his eclectic approach are added problems of systemization, lack of clear conclusions and an absence of a general discussion clarifying the PKI's significance for the struggle in other Third World countries.

Shortcomings in earlier research do not, however, mean that I have to start from scratch. In analysing party strategy, I have built upon the studies of Mortimer, McVey and Hindley, in particular. This has reduced the need to examine countless original sources and has allowed me, instead, to concentrate on new interpretations. It has also given me time to study material dealing with actual social developments and to compare what actually happened with the PKI's analyses.

## The Concept of Strategy

A party's attempt to utilize Marxist theories of social change as a political instrument is first and foremost an attempt to work out and apply a strategy.

Within the communist tradition there are many vaguely formulated concepts of strategy.<sup>2</sup> When presenting an historical account of ideological development (see the next chapter) it is sufficient to investigate and keep different interpretations separate. But in my own analyses of the PKI's strategic problems, unambiguous concepts are required. The concept of strategy does not originate in Marxist but in military discourse. I have, however, tried to stay as close as possible to the way in which the term is commonly used by communists.

By strategy I refer to a plan to mobilize, co-ordinate and organize as many people as possible, to manoeuvre them into a more favourable position, thereby facilitating concrete struggles on those occasions when tactical considerations must be given priority. The strategic objectives are to reach these more favourable positions. Acquired positions of power can be used to make social changes of benefit to members and sympathizers. These objectives I call programmatic.

How does a communist party work out its strategy? The party takes as its point of departure the knowledge that is available on the structure of society, the contradictions between the classes, etc. Then the party uses Marxist theory and method to make its own interpretation of social development, where it is operative. In this way the party tries to gain an understanding of how the objective contradictions in society have developed and how they are likely to unfold. On the basis of such studies, the party can formulate its objectives and present them in the party programme — the programmatic objectives. The party maintains that the objectives are scientific, since they are based on an analysis of how society has objectively developed and how the clash of contradictions sometimes makes it possible for the party to realize its objectives.

But how should the party struggle to realize these goals? The pre-conditions for socialism are emerging, but socialism cannot implement itself. Into the picture in a clearer way than before come the political theories developed since Marx, and the experiences of Lenin, Stalin, Mao and others. Political theory guides the way to deeper analyses of one's own society, in order to discover when and how it will be possible to engage in political struggle for the objectives of the party.

One of the most important tasks in this connection is to distinguish between the different stages. During the first stage, the party may have to direct itself towards strengthening its own position, so that it can take over the leadership when former allies no longer want to participate and the time has come for another stage.

Only afterwards does strategy develop. Strategy concerns the formulation and application of a plan which spells out how the collective resources of



the party can be mobilized to work together during the current stage of the struggle, which has been defined by the theory. During the first phase the theory has perhaps held that it is possible to create a united front including parts of the bourgeoisie and the workers and peasants. The strategy must include a plan for making this collaboration a reality.

In short, the strategic goals are concerned with reaching certain positions of power with the help of those social forces, forms and methods which the political theory regards as possible and necessary and which can be recommended. One example would be to manoeuvre the party into an alliance, thereby gaining some influence. The strategic line is, lastly, the actual plan for the realization of the strategic objectives.

Also included in the strategy are the concrete activities aimed at realizing the strategic manoeuvres. The activities of the party on special occasions and in specified fronts is included under tactics which encompass the struggles which ought to be facilitated by the manoeuvres.

In other words, tactics are concerned with gaining the greatest possible power for the party under the prevailing circumstances, when the strategy has enabled the party to manoeuvre itself into a particular position of power. What is involved here is the taking of separate decisions during historically temporary and often unique circumstances. Consequently, tactics are more concerned with decision-making than with planning political activities.

The objective of this book is not to study the short-term decisions of the PKI leaders, however, but the planning they undertook to guide the political activities of the party, which is why their tactics are relegated to the sidelines. Besides, to study the tactics adopted would require detailed knowledge and practical experience which I do not have.

## **How Does One Examine the Failure of a Communist Party?**

*First, the strategic problem must be identified.* It is usual to start from an exemplary model which one has elaborated oneself. It may be scientifically or politically motivated, worked out alone, or borrowed, from Lenin or Mao for example, and then it is compared to the party's strategy.<sup>3</sup> I do not, however, wish to be politically or scientifically omniscient by trying to identify the strategic goals and lines which are "correct" but from which the PKI deviated.

Critical solidarity and scientific integrity instead demand that I start from a critical reconstruction of the political strategy which the PKI itself developed and tried to put into practice. Then I examine how far the party succeeded in practising its strategy, whether it was possible for it to realize the strategic objectives, etc. If that was not the case, I will thereby have identified one strategic problem which, if it had considerable significance for the party's policies, ought to be investigated more closely.

*The next task is to explain the strategic problems.* Through a serious oversimplification, I maintain that, on the one hand, we can talk about objective causes — factors the party cannot do anything about during the foreseeable future — which can be explained through a structural approach; and, on the other hand, of subjective causes — the party might, for instance, have taken certain significant circumstances into account and even been able to influence the course of events, but it did not succeed in doing so. This can be explained by an evaluation of the actors' strategy and analysis.

An objective cause of a strategic problem might perhaps be that lack of land was a serious obstacle to the implementation of a strategy of land reform, in which case not even the best analyses or strategies could have guaranteed success. (If water is ice-cold, even those who can swim cannot survive.)

A subjective cause, on the other hand, might be an incorrect analysis of how the peasants were being exploited, which might mean that the peasants could not be mobilized by the party, even though they were being exploited, or that their actions would not succeed. (Those who cannot swim, drown, even if the water is warm enough to survive in.)

I should add that sheer good fortune or, alternatively, bad luck also play a role. Events can unfold in a way which is neither bound by laws nor rationally controlled. This development cannot be foreseen by the party, nor can it subsequently be explained by current theories; it can only be analysed descriptively.

When it comes to loose-knit and pragmatic movements, there is, of course, no need to closely study strategic problems in order to understand why they have succeeded or failed. We are instead compelled to carry out studies of structural factors as well as rational or pragmatic decision-making. But communist movements, in particular, are disciplined, stick to their principles and attach great weight to planning their activities. Essential for success are both favourable objective circumstances and an effective strategy. If one of these conditions is not met, it follows that a strategic problem will arise.

There are three reasons for my search for so-called subjective factors, poor analysis and resultant strategic problems. First, communist parties emphasize planned actions from the point of view of what Marxists regard as social changes which conform to social laws. Thus faulty analysis must be regarded as sufficient cause for explaining a strategic problem. Secondly, it is usual for one to look for objective causes within the Marxist tradition of structural theory. From the point of view purely of scientific theory, objective causes can never be a *direct* explanation of human behaviour. But it is, above all, important to use the so-called subjective causes as complementary, and specifically to utilize Marxism and communism as political instruments for scientific scrutiny. Thirdly, my investigation is directed towards a case and a country where there existed relatively favourable objective circumstances for, if not revolution, at least radical



opposition within the framework of long-term strategies. Thus, for that reason too, it is reasonable to examine the subjective causes of the problem more closely.

To examine whether faults in the party's analyses of factors determining developments in society can explain strategic problems, I shall simply compare the central tenets of these analyses with the final results, namely those social changes which actually occurred. By means of its analyses the party tried to predict the *fundamental features* of coming events, so that the leaders could formulate a strategy which would enable the party to gain the broadest possible popular support and counteract its enemies. Can it, for instance, be shown that the various classes did have the interests ascribed to them by the communists, and did the organizations, the military etc. act as they were expected to?

Actual developments are laid bare by undertaking my own analysis independently and with carefully-defined concepts, but using the same general Marxist theoretical instruments as did the communists themselves. To proceed from another theoretical perspective (for instance, the "correct" Marxist theory or a well-established non-Marxist viewpoint), which chooses and evaluates facts in a completely different fashion would be to construct a contradiction in advance between the PKI's view of development and what actually happened. One would be showing the splendid qualities of one's own theoretical perspective and analysis — something which, unfortunately, occurs quite often in both established science and political debate.

Had I found that there were no major faults in the communists' analyses, or that it was simply not possible to predict developments, I would naturally have been forced to explain strategic problems with reference to objective factors or to describe what happened. But at this stage I can already reveal that this is not the case. On the contrary, I have found that the problems originate in insufficient analysis.

Roughly speaking, there are two reasons for a faulty analysis.<sup>4</sup> Either it is simply a poor analysis, and, in other words, the party ought to have been capable of carrying out a better analysis with the available facts and with its Marxist and communist theory. Or the theory prevented the party, while making its analysis, from taking important available data into account, since these might have contradicted central tenets of the theory. (I must point out that an analysis cannot be regarded as faulty if the fundamental features of coming events could not have been predicted from available data. In that case, the strategic problems must be ascribed simply to misfortune, and all we can do is to describe how they occurred.)

In those cases where I do finally conclude that there were certainly important faults in the party's analyses, but that it would not have been possible to have done better with current Marxist and communist theory, because the theory prevented the party from taking account of certain essential facts, I can start work on a new theory.<sup>5</sup> This I can do by making use of those factors which I have found the communists unable to consider,



but which I have identified by comparing the party's analyses with actual developments.

My attempts to contribute to a regeneration of theory demand an independent analytical language, but only at those points where the party's theory had particularly serious faults. This result means that I do not need to question the overall methodological principles and concepts of Marxist theory. Only certain theoretical elements, at a considerably lower level of abstraction, are affected. There is thus no reason to throw out the baby with the bathwater, for either scientific or political reasons. Whether or not one is a Marxist, one ought to continue building on those parts of Marxist theory where no revision is called for.<sup>6</sup>

## Summary

The first main task is to identify the strategic problem by evaluation of how the strategies have been put into practice. The process of research is not reported in this book, but the important results become apparent when the problem is explained.

The next task is to determine whether the strategic problems can be explained by poor analysis or not. This is done by investigating whether there were serious contradictions, and if so what these were, between the party's analysis on which the strategy was based, and the actual developments which the analyses were expected in general terms to predict.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ascertain whether the strategic problems caused by faulty analysis can be explained as resulting from poor analyses, when better analyses might have been possible from the same theoretical perspective. Or ought they to be explained as due to theoretical defects, in which case it is necessary to specify what these defects are and what should be renewed.

## Outline of this Book

The study's point of departure is a historical presentation of the ideas and analysis of the Marxist and communist tradition of theory of political struggle in the Third World. I then present a brief analysis, in outline, of the course of events in Indonesia and distinguish between two periods in which the PKI adopted different strategies, first from 1952 to 1960-63, and then from 1960-63 to 1965.

The rest of the book is built round these two periods. Each period is studied from the point of view of a number of particularly important strategic problems which have been identified in pilot studies. Each problem is then separately investigated according to the method which has been described above. The strategy is first interpreted and reconstructed,

together with the analyses and theories on which it is based. Then the analysis is compared to the actual course of developments, and the contradictions are laid bare. Finally, I examine whether the party might have been able to produce better analyses, and whether the contradictions resulted from theoretical difficulties, and, if they did, whether particular theories could be improved and renewed.

In Part II, "Communist Hothouse", a study is made of the period from 1952 to 1960-63. The period 1960-63 to 1965 is treated in Part III, "Communist Offensive". In Part IV a summary of my answers to the question "why did the PKI fail?" is presented, and then we return to the Marxist and communist tradition, to discuss what the PKI's experiences mean for the general Marxist and communist theses on the political struggle in the Third World.

In the Appendix there is a list of abbreviations, a glossary, a key to certain Javanese agricultural agreements, etc. and a chronology.

## Notes

1. Among the works which directly concern the PKI during the period I have studied are Brackman (1963) and (1969), Cayrac-Blanchard (1973), Dake (1973) supplemented by the important criticism by Utrecht (1975b), Hindley (1962b) and (1964a), Leclerc (1969), McVey (1963), (1969a), (1969b) and (1979), Mortimer (1969a), (1969b), (1972), (1974a) and (1974b), Palmier (1973), Pauker (1969), Taintor (1974), Tichelman (1980) and Krnef (1962b), (1963) and (1965a). This list does not include work concerned with the pre-independence period, nor that which is not directly concerned with the PKI.
2. One of the reasons for using the concept strategy in so many different ways is that different organizations have had different areas of activity. The Comintern, for instance, acted in the global arena. For such an organization, strategy is concerned with the direction of world revolution, while local alliances concern matters of tactics. Organizations whose operations are limited to a single country, on the other hand, often view local alliances as strategic questions.  
Another reason is that uncomfortable strategies are often called tactical, so that disenchanted members should not feel that the organization has abandoned the struggle for highly prized objectives.
3. Cf. Törnquist (1980).
4. Cf. Laclau (1977) pp. 59-62, in connection with his well-known investigation of Milliband's as well as Poulantzas' methods of analysing political problems.
5. Funnily enough, it is usually common for politicians as well as researchers to rush directly towards that task. Without having shown why the old theory is faulty, they frankly conclude that it is problematic, and proceed to construct their own brilliant alternatives. (For a good example, see how Laclau (1977), pp. 59-67, shows that this concerned Poulantzas.) This approach closely resembles two other unacceptable procedures: to compare the party's model with one's own ideals in order to show up the faults of the party, and to prove how superior one's own perspective is, instead of investigating the actual problems of the party's theoretical model.
6. The method described above is my own creation. When, however, I have tried to improve on the logic of this methodology in recent years, I have made particular use of Ernesto Laclau's important discussion on theoretical problem studies: see especially Laclau (1977), pp. 59-62.

# **Part 1**

## **The Communist Tradition**





### 3. Marxist Theory of Struggle in the Third World: The Communist Tradition

The policies of the PKI rested on international Marxist tradition. This is made up of Marxist-inspired theories of how underdeveloped societies change, and of political theories of how the struggle against "feudalism and imperialism" can be conducted with a view to moving straight to the socialist phase, without having to suffer from a fully-developed capitalist phase.

In order for me to analyse the problems of the PKI in applying this tradition in Indonesia, I must thus start by clarifying, in summarized form, what these theories are based on. Furthermore, I must establish a link with the general theories of struggle in the Third World, in order to situate this study of the PKI in the context of struggles in other underdeveloped countries. Finally, it is necessary for me to review the communist tradition as such, in order to define all the terms used by the party in its analyses and strategies.

On the one hand, the terms have theoretical significance. It is only possible to understand them within the framework of a specific theoretical system, in which several alternative ways of combining them are available. To empirically question these concepts first is not fruitful. On the other hand, the PKI did give these concepts an empirical base, which not uncommonly deviated from that of the theories.

#### From Progressive to Parasitic Imperialism

Marx never developed a specific theory of imperialism. He counted on capitalism spreading to countries with pre-capitalist modes of production, as it did in the United States, for instance. When capitalism had evolved socialism would come next, even in Russia. Compared to the pre-capitalist mode of production, colonialism was thus regarded as progressive.<sup>1</sup>

But Marx was also concerned with such questions as how trade with the colonies could counteract capitalism's tendency to undergo periodic crises and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.<sup>2</sup> On the question of Britain's exploitation of Ireland, he even concluded in 1867 that no revolution was possible in England before Ireland had liberated itself.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, it was Marx's positive view of colonialism which, at the beginning of the 20th century, was handed down to the Second International. The majority registered their reservations over certain brutal methods, but on the whole approved of what they regarded as the development of backward areas by civilized countries.<sup>4</sup>

It was, instead, Lenin who formulated modern Marxist theory on the development of imperialism and anti-imperialism, and who laid the theoretical foundations of the communist tradition in this area.

Lenin counted on imperialism paving the way for the spread of capitalism throughout the world. He drew a distinction between monopoly capitalism and competitive capitalism. According to Lenin, competition between capitalists led both to a concentration and a centralization of capital.<sup>5</sup> At the turn of the century this resulted in banking and industrial capital growing together and caused the emergence of a single finance capital. In their endeavours to control competition and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and hence, to eliminate the crises created by competition, finance capitalists attempted to monopolize both production and marketing.

In this way contradictions arose between finance capitalists, on the one hand, and their governments, on the other. Internationally, this was expressed as imperialism.

What then, according to Lenin, were the characteristics of the monopoly form of imperialism?

First, capitalists not only attempted to monopolize known deposits of raw materials, but also potential resources. In the same way they tried to prevent their competitors, even capitalists in underdeveloped countries, from undertaking production which could threaten their monopoly position.

Secondly, according to Lenin, a salient feature of modern imperialism is the export of capital, and not the export of goods, a view adopted by Rosa Luxemburg, among others. If one had a monopoly of both production and marketing, there would be no great risk of overproduction. The quantity of goods produced could thus be controlled, but not the amount of capital. Capitalists had to find a profitable way of depositing their surplus capital. They could speculate, start wars which caused destruction, and then rebuild again. But they could also look for enterprises which had not yet been monopolized and were open to new investments. In this way, according to Lenin, capitalism spread not only to the US, but also to underdeveloped areas.

There would be such fierce conflict over these claims and attractive investments that war would break out not only over one or other colony, but also on a world scale.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, Lenin noted in his theory that monopolies usually inhibit development, and thus imperialism not only spread capitalism but was also parasitic. This was especially blatant in those underdeveloped countries where imperialism assumed a more or less colonial form.

Already in a short analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Chinese revolution at the

beginning of this century, Lenin pointed out that, "All the commanders of Europe, all the European bourgeoisie, are *in alliance* with all the forces of reaction and medievalism in China."<sup>7</sup>

What Lenin meant, and later developed further,<sup>8</sup> was that monopoly capital prevented the development of traditional capitalism in the colonies. The nation state and the bourgeois revolution which had occurred in Europe, and which were regarded as being progressive, could not develop in the colonies because of the effect of imperialism. Imperialists monopolized both marketing and production, and also controlled the state apparatus. Furthermore, they used the pre-capitalist mode of production in order to acquire the cheapest possible labour, uphold the low rate of technical development which was so propitious for the rate of profit, and exercised political control.

Thus the bourgeoisie in the colonies was forced to turn against imperialism. "Everywhere in Asia a mighty democratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining in strength. The bourgeoisie there is *as yet* siding with the people against reaction."<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, monopoly capital placed obstacles in the way of revolutionary work in Europe. This was partly due to capitalist export of capital creating fewer jobs than there might have been and lower wages. It was also due, Lenin said, to part of the proletariat, the "workers' aristocracy", being bribed with the help of riches from the colonies.<sup>10</sup> The European proletariat was in disarray. Thus the national bourgeois struggle in the oppressed countries also became a part of the struggle of the world proletariat.

Finally, with the theory of imperialism propounded by Lenin, one could also explain why it was possible to carry out a socialist revolution in oppressed countries before capitalism was fully developed. Contradictions were clearly illuminated and the capitalists were on the retreat, whereas in Europe one could smooth over contradictions with the help of the wealth from the colonies, at the same time as capitalism continued to gain in strength.

This confirmed the thesis that it was possible to conduct a socialist revolution even in backward Russia. And if it was possible in Russia, why not in the underdeveloped countries?

## **The Example of Russia**

Infinitely stereotyped, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of West European Social Democracy, namely, that, as certain "learned" gentlemen among them put it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask: but what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, influenced by the hopelessness of its situation, fling itself into a struggle that would offer it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of civilization that were somewhat unusual? . . . What if the



complete hopelessness of the situation, by stimulating the efforts of the workers and peasants tenfold, offered us the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilization in a different way from that of the West European countries? ... If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite "level of culture" is, for it differs in every West European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasant's government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?<sup>11</sup>

The Russian revolution thus became a concrete example of the possibility of putting socialism on the agenda, even in so-called backward countries. (When Regis Debray commented on the above text, he added that Che Guevara loved to quote it.)<sup>12</sup>

The Marxists of the Second International claimed that socialism was possible only when capitalism had ripened and outlived itself. The Bolsheviks maintained, however, that the Russian bourgeoisie was so weakened by internal reactionary forces and foreign capital that it did not have the capacity to conduct a bourgeois revolution similar to those in France or Britain.

Meanwhile the Russian bourgeoisie, together with foreign capital and a dictatorial if isolated state, had begun intensive industrial development in certain places. Capitalism also began to spread to the rural areas, creating violent contradictions in its wake.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the people were suffering from Russian losses in the First World War.

Consequently, a small but rebellious proletariat, anti-feudal peasants, dissatisfied landless peasants, an incompetent capitalist class, a dictatorial but isolated and paralysed state — all these combined to create a revolutionary situation.<sup>14</sup>

In 1895 Engels announced his belief that the powers of the bourgeois state had increased to such an extent that the time was past for surprise attacks like those of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871, "when the revolution could be conducted by conscious minorities in the vanguard of unconscious masses". Instead, the time had come for the entire structure of social organization to change. Capitalist society had stabilized. The major victors thus demanded that the "masses themselves grasp what is happening, what they commit themselves to with body and soul", and that they "slowly press ahead gaining position after position in a hard and lengthy struggle". He did not, however, exclude the possibility of a final revolutionary solution.<sup>15</sup>

Lenin did not, however, allow himself to be influenced by Engels' change of position in regard to the tradition of 1848 and the civil war in France in 1871. On the contrary, he pointed out that the position in Russia closely resembled that in France in 1848 and 1871. According to Marx, the bourgeoisie had then allied itself to the remnants of feudalism in the absolutist state, while the young proletariat revolted against the uncontrollable infant diseases of capitalism. What now concerned the Russian proletariat was to shoulder the task of conducting the bourgeois



revolution and to struggle towards socialism at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

If Lenin satisfied himself by saying, simply "That is the way it is in Russia", then the communist movement in Europe today should have been able to engage in more urgent tasks than pinpointing the differences between Russia in 1917 and Europe yesterday and today. I shall return to this point. Here I must emphasize that the importance of the example of Russia for the struggle in the Third World can hardly be overestimated. In the Third World the situation long resembled that of Russia rather than that pertaining in central Europe.

This was part of the reason why Lenin's analysis of the revolution, and his view of the state and the party, gained such wide credence in the Third World.

The state was no more than a tool for the ruling class. It was an isolated bastion which had to be taken and conquered, almost always through an armed confrontation, the attack coming from outside, when a revolutionary situation had developed. While waiting for that situation to develop, the revolutionaries could, on the whole, only propagate their ideas. What was lacking was a strategy for long-term operations.

Under the prevailing circumstances, a totalitarian elitist party would have to lead the way. The state would have to be crushed. The proletariat would have to establish its dictatorship in place of that of the bourgeoisie. In practice, revolutionary politics became synonymous with a frontal attack and dual power. Everything else was classified as reformism.<sup>17</sup>

Lenin never saw any contradiction between that perspective and Marx's ideas on government by the people. What he did was to equate class with party. Only between 1918 and 1920 did he come round to favouring the dictatorship by the party, weighed down partly by the civil war and by not having foreseen the difficulties of enforcing class rule directly and without intermediaries.

Dictatorship of the party was the most natural refuge, and completely consistent. As early as 1903 Lenin had declared, "A revolutionary social democrat is just like a Jacobin, but one who is indivisibly bound to the organization of the proletariat and conscious of its class interests."<sup>18, 19</sup>

Lenin's theory of a social alliance between workers and peasants spread throughout the world. Fundamental was, of course, the assumption that the peasants were in conflict with feudalism, which the Tsar and his citizens were incapable of totally abolishing but which the communists would be able to do away with. If, however, the bourgeoisie were to succeed — a possibility Lenin did not rule out entirely — the communists would lose a powerful ally.<sup>20</sup> Burgeoning capitalism had, at the same time, created a rural proletariat, which had substantial grounds for allying with the workers. Finally, the proletariat in backward Russia was so weak that it simply had to find allies, and consequently meet the demands of the rebellious peasants. Thus the revolution had to start as a bourgeois-democratic process and successively, under communist leadership, move towards socialism.<sup>21</sup>

This, like so much else in this section, is a drastic simplification. Lenin's

view of the alliance with the peasants changed over the years, and a real alliance never materialized. The capitalist *kulaks* were not very interested in a struggle with the feudal lords as long as there was room for both of them. Even the rural proletariat which worked for the *kulaks* was excluded from the feudal economy and was fairly passive and difficult to organize. The poor farmers were heavily dependent on their feudal masters. Thus it was the middle-peasants, the independent small peasants, who fought daily with feudal oppression and also had to contend with a capitalist development which threatened to displace the producers of simple goods.

By 1905 Lenin had come to mistrust the *kulaks*. (That they became popular again in the 1920s during the implementation of new economic policies is quite another matter.) Lenin put his faith instead in the rural proletariat and the poor farmers. But, in the end, he was forced to conclude that it was up to the industrial proletariat to inflict a decisive defeat on the large landowners and the capitalists, before its allies in the rural areas would dare to join the fight.<sup>23</sup> A start had been made towards the enforcement from above of a land reform.

## Lenin's Thesis on the Colonies

Some day someone must seriously investigate the following ridiculous absurdity: no socialist nor communist international has ever, anywhere, succeeded in achieving its own stated aim — of promoting the revolution on the national level . . .<sup>23</sup>

In some way, the Comintern's theses on the national and the colonial question are exceptions to the above. They continue to be fundamental to the political theories which revolutionary movements attempt to apply in underdeveloped countries.

These ideas took shape at the Comintern's Second Congress in 1920, when Lenin, with his newly-established authority, directed special attention to the struggle far from Europe.<sup>24</sup> His view of the struggle in the colonies was stamped in the first place by his own theories of imperialism. But it should also be recalled that the European revolution, contrary to assumptions made at the First Congress in 1919, was losing momentum. When the German revolution was crushed in 1921, the post-war upsurge had definitely been cut short.<sup>25</sup>

It was in this situation that Lenin wrote his "*Left-wing*" *Communism — an Infantile Disorder*, and recommended forming a united front at party level (i.e. from above) with the social democrats, and perhaps even co-operation at government level until a new revolutionary situation arose.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, with his experience of the Russian revolution, Lenin was rapporteur for the commission for national and colonial questions. The secretary of the commission was, moreover, Sneevliet (Maring), who had recently come from the Dutch East Indies, where he had founded the Social



Democratic Party, which in 1920 became the first communist party in Asia, the PKI. He himself had successfully practised a united front strategy, which now in all substance became the front strategy of the Comintern.<sup>27</sup>

Nor should we forget that at that time it was the strength above all of British colonialism which threatened the new socialist state.<sup>28</sup> And the entire communist movement, the communists believed, was suffering from the treachery of the "workers' aristocracy", since the social democrats had been bribed by colonial riches.

Finally, there were a number of national minorities and areas within and on the outskirts of old Russia which became a continuous source of anxiety for the new Soviet state.<sup>29</sup>

All this suggested that the Comintern needed to pay considerable attention to the struggle in the underdeveloped countries — especially since, as Lenin had noted, it was not only workers and peasants but also parts of the bourgeoisie in countries such as China and Indonesia who were turning against imperialism. (The struggle had become more intense not only in Europe but in the colonies during the First World War.) Searching for new allies, Lenin had managed to identify what he called powerful bourgeois national movements.

But the communists were not interested in all underdeveloped countries. Parts of Russia lay in Asia, which was where the British enemy had all its most important colonies.<sup>30</sup> And it was in Asia that the new nationalist movements were on the advance. At that stage no attention was paid to either Latin America or Africa.<sup>31</sup>

Lenin emphasized that the revolution in the underdeveloped countries would, of necessity, have a bourgeois-democratic basis because of the pre-capitalist characteristics of these societies. Since imperialism placed obstacles in the way of a traditional capitalist development and even of the growth of a nation state, broad bourgeois movements had grown up. The communists were, however, weak; there was a small proletariat.<sup>32</sup>

At that stage, the proletariat in Europe and in the Soviet state itself was served by independence movements challenging and weakening imperialism. In addition, it was not necessarily the case that a bourgeois revolution in the colonies would be anti-socialist, as had happened in Europe. The bourgeoisie was forced to turn against colonialism and developed capitalism in order to serve its own best interests.<sup>33</sup>

The bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries was, however, too weak to complete this task. Thus the communists would be able to assume leadership, in the vanguard of an alliance between workers and peasants, when the bourgeoisie was no longer capable of carrying the struggle forward. Then the communists would carry the struggle for socialism further. If, at that stage, the communists received support from the proletariat in the Soviet Union and in the advanced capitalist countries, it would be feasible to steer clear of a fully-developed capitalist stage on the road to socialism.<sup>34</sup>

Communists throughout the world should, therefore, give concrete

assistance to the bourgeois-democratic national movements.<sup>35</sup>

Particular emphasis was placed on the organization of the peasants against feudalism in general and the large landowners in particular. The concept of the soviets, consisting not only of proletarians but also of all the working people, especially the peasants, was promoted as a way of forging an alliance between workers and peasants.

It was, however, Lenin's strategy for the forging of a temporary united front between communist and bourgeois independence movements in the colonies to which the greatest attention was paid. The intention was that, at all costs, the communists would retain their own organization and their political independence — the Leninist party — but that they would at the same time co-operate with and support the powerful bourgeois-democratic nationalist movements.<sup>36</sup>

On this issue the Indian delegate, M.N. Roy, voiced his opposition, both at that congress and at subsequent ones.<sup>37</sup> Roy maintained that Lenin did not realize how much further capitalism had advanced in the colonies. (At the Third Congress Roy added that after the world war the imperialists no longer had any interest in obstructing capitalist development in the colonies, since they were seeking new markets.)<sup>38</sup> Thus it was not at all certain that the bourgeois nationalists were a progressive force with whom communists could and should ally themselves. On the contrary, the Comintern ought only to support the communist movements' own organizations and struggles against the internal as well as the international bourgeoisie.

Roy was also sceptical of the importance of Lenin's strategic proposal for soviets based on the unity of the working people with the peasantry. Roy said that 80 per cent of the people in India had become proletarian, and that "these tens of millions of people have no interest whatsoever in bourgeois-nationalist slogans".<sup>39</sup> Without disregarding the land hunger of the landless, Roy emphasized the role of the proletariat, including the rural proletariat, in the soviets. Finally, he concluded that the revolution in Europe would not be able to get under way until the people of the underdeveloped countries had revolted.<sup>40</sup>

Lenin and the Comintern rejected Roy's criticism, but agreed to a compromise on the political level.<sup>41</sup> It was tacitly understood in Lenin's theses that support for the bourgeois-democratic movements would continue as long as they fought against imperialism and feudalism, and not against the workers and peasants. This was clarified in the compromise. The phrase "bourgeois-democratic movement" was simply replaced by "nationalist-revolutionary movement". Lenin explained that it was necessary to distinguish between reformists and revolutionaries, between that part of the bourgeoisie which worked harmoniously with imperialism or the feudal lords, and those that really joined the struggle.

The meaning of this change is that we communists should, and will, support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonial countries only when these movements are really



revolutionary, when the representatives of these movements do not hinder us in training and organizing the peasants and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit.<sup>42</sup>

In this way, assessment of the political situation was given a prominent place, while basic class analysis and the theory of contradictions between the feudal and capitalist modes of production were set aside.

At the same time, in a relatively simple way, the bourgeoisie was equated with either bourgeois-democratic movements or revolutionary bourgeois movements. By definition, any movement which adopted a revolutionary nationalist policy was bourgeois; its class base was within the bourgeoisie. Nationalism became the ideology of the bourgeoisie.

One could maintain that from a basic analysis of imperialism and of the role of classes in the colonies, the Comintern rapidly moved to an analysis of sundry nationalist movements at the level of political actors, without clarifying for itself when, where and how it was making this transition. Presumably this was connected with Lenin's tendency to see political organizations as an expression of untrammelled class rule.

Should one wish to describe the conflict between Lenin and Roy in a simple fashion, one could start with Lenin's position. He emphasized the conflict between different modes of production. He was concerned with an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle with room for sections of the bourgeoisie and all the "working people". Roy, on the other hand, focused on the class struggle in individual countries which, according to him, were capitalist, on the struggle of the proletariat vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie. Then Lenin and Roy agreed to a compromise in which they allowed the stand of each of the classes in the struggle, and the position adopted by each organization, to determine who was friend and who was foe.

Certain parties voluntarily adopted Comintern's recommendations. Others needed to be "directed". In 1922 Lenin and Sneevliet (Maring) forced the newly-formed Chinese Communist Party to apply Lenin's theses and Maring's experiences from Indonesia. With the "block within strategy" the communists would retain their own political line and simultaneously go and, without dominating, work actively within the Kuomintang as long as it was a revolutionary liberation movement. Sneevliet (Maring) became the Comintern's agent in China.<sup>43</sup>

## Stalin's Colonial Theses

Even at the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924, Lenin's theses were endorsed. But Sneevliet (Maring) had already left China in 1923. His once popular "block within strategy" was undermined. Comintern's line, or rather the policies of the Soviet party, were now more and more directed towards making the Kuomintang a reliable ally of the Soviet Union. The Chinese party was thus not allowed to accentuate its independence to the

degree that it interfered with the leadership of the Kuomintang, on questions like the mobilization of peasants, for example.<sup>44</sup>

Soon the "block within strategy" was replaced by Stalin's idea of a block with four classes: peasants, workers, the middle classes and the so-called national bourgeoisie. Michael Brodin, from the Politburo of the Soviet party, replaced Sneevliet (Maring) as the emissary of the Comintern. Sneevliet opposed this move, and later broke completely with Stalin.<sup>45</sup>

Stalin's block of four classes had three particular theoretical bases. First, Stalin went further than Lenin in his thesis that imperialism obstructed the development of capitalism in the colonies. Lenin's point was that it was the traditional type of capitalism (such as the French or British) which was obstructed. His analyses could well be interpreted as meaning that imperialism in another phase, when it might be less destructive to the colonies, could well allow for at least some form of capitalist development since, according to Lenin, imperialism generally contributed to the spread of capitalism.

But Stalin now determined that the contradictions between imperialism and the general development of capitalism in underdeveloped countries were permanent and universal. Aside from small colonial enclaves, all capitalist development was blocked in the colonies.<sup>46</sup> If a class analysis showed that a domestic bourgeoisie existed, it was taken for granted that under no circumstances could it realize its own genuine interests without opposing feudalism and imperialism. An alliance with the bourgeoisie would be self-evident under all conditions. As early as 1924, Stalin coined the term "national bourgeoisie".<sup>47</sup>

Secondly, in the most drastic way, Stalin came to terms with Lenin's ideological and political conditions for an alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was to be regarded as "objectively progressive" in that it turned against feudalism and imperialism, irrespective of whether it was directly hostile to communism. More or less feudal nationalists should also be regarded as revolutionary, even if they did not bother themselves with democratic rights and did not have a revolutionary programme. The main point was that they fought imperialism.<sup>48</sup>

In the third place, Stalin thought schematically in terms of stages. One had first to break with feudalism and imperialism and develop capitalism. Only thereafter would socialism's time come. This implied a two-stage revolution, a bourgeois-national revolution and later a socialist revolution.<sup>49</sup>

Lenin had also thought in terms of such stages. But his point was that communists would successively take over the leadership of the bourgeois-national revolution from the bourgeoisie, who were incapable of completing such an enterprise on their own. Furthermore, according to Lenin, one could go directly from the first revolution to the struggle for socialism, if one had communists in the leadership who received international support. Capitalism and the bourgeois forces were about to emerge, and one did not have to wait until capitalism was fully developed before engaging in the socialist revolution.



Stalin, on the contrary, said that only in very backward countries, "as in some parts of Africa, for example", could national uprisings open the way for socialism without first passing through a proper capitalist phase.<sup>50</sup>

To summarize the difference between Lenin and Stalin, Lenin concentrated on analysing the actual class struggles, while Stalin, a true determinist, equated a simplified analysis of mode of production and narrowly-defined classes on the one hand, and politics and ideology on the other. Each class had its own interests and was assumed to act according to them. Lenin also based his analysis on simplifications, but was neither blinded nor governed by them. The decisive factors were the actions of the classes and organizations.

Stalin's theories and strategies led to the slaughter of thousands of Chinese in the streets and squares of Shanghai in 1927. As a result, something had to be done about the obviously faulty assumption of unconditionally supporting a national bourgeoisie whose organizations put communists to death.

Furthermore, Comintern was now of the opinion that the world stood at the threshold of an economic crisis which might present a threat to the Soviet Union, but at the same time would lead to a revolutionary upsurge. Shortly before, an extreme left line, including forced collectivization among other things, had been introduced in the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup>

The Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928 — under Stalin the interval between congresses increased — certainly adhered to the thesis of the two-stage revolution, and maintained that in the colonies the development of capitalism was blocked, which was why it was in the interest of the national bourgeoisie to oppose feudalism and imperialism. But it was noted at the same time that the bourgeoisie generally abandoned their own interests, sold themselves to imperialism and feudalism and were opposed to communism.

In consequence, Stalin forced the Congress to abandon all forms of united-front activity worthy of the name. The national bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries<sup>52</sup> came to be shunned like the plague, as they abandoned their own class interests. The social democrats in Europe were likewise hated. In the same way as the Trotskyists, they prevented communists from taking the vanguard role in the revolutionary situation which it had been foreseen would arise.

The watchword of the period was "class against class". Communists should carve their own image in the clearest way possible, devote their energies to the core of the proletariat and establish "proletarian fronts" with individual membership (from below).

As this watchword was an open invitation to communist sectarianism, it not only allowed fascists and Nazis greater room to manoeuvre, but gave bourgeois nationalists in underdeveloped countries a wide margin too.<sup>53</sup>

Otherwise, the most startling thing was Stalin's almost colonial attitude. Socialism would now be built in one country, and the welfare of the Soviet Union was more important than anything else. Underdeveloped countries

were declared to be the rural backwaters of the world, which the urbanized proletariat, especially that of the Soviet Union, would lead and liberate. The delegate from South Africa was heard to mutter that even in the colonies another proletariat was to be found, but on the whole there was no dissent.<sup>54</sup>

Only Trotsky, disbarred and in exile, raised serious criticisms. Indisputably, he raised cogent arguments concerning the government of Stalin, the idea of socialism in one country and the struggle against fascism, but he did not raise comparable objections on the question of the underdeveloped countries. He did, indeed, attack Stalin for his earlier policies on China, and for his continued affinity for the two-stage theory, which was directly supportive of the bourgeoisie, according to Trotsky, because of its recognition of the necessity for a developed capitalist phase. But in concrete political terms, Trotsky had finally found the uncompromising political stand he had been looking for vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, exactly as Trotsky demanded, the proletariat was to play the vanguard role in relation to the peasantry. But this was hardly a road open to the Communist Party in China, for instance, which was searching for a new line, and found it, precisely among the peasantry.<sup>55</sup>

1928 had come and gone. As predicted, there was an international economic crisis, but not a revolutionary phase. Fascism and Nazism made triumphant strides forward, while communists were involved in bitter struggles with social democracy. Sectarianism spread throughout the communist movement. China was an exception, since it was making its own way. In the end, the 1928 line became glaringly absurd, even from the point of view of Moscow's own interests. Both Germany and Italy posed threats to the Soviet state.

In 1935, at the Seventh Comintern Congress, the policy of popular fronts was proclaimed instead. The greatest importance was attached to the struggle against Nazism and fascism. Communists would continue to work independently, if in a less sectarian fashion than before. Work would continue from below, with fronts of non-members who, nevertheless, were influenced by communist doctrines.<sup>56</sup> No longer was the focus on the "proletarian united fronts" of 1928, but on an anti-fascist popular front, with room for "democrats" of all classes. From below, the popular front would become the base of an anti-fascist coalition between governments. In this way, it would be possible to defend or achieve a democratic stage, and save the Soviet state, before the struggle for socialism could again be put on the agenda — and before the struggle for a bourgeois-democratic and national revolution in the colonies could even be discussed. This meant that communists in the colonies ought to stop struggling against non-fascist imperialists, and support them in the fight against Italy, Germany and Japan.<sup>57</sup>

In China it was possible to combine opposition to the Japanese with the domestic class struggle, to which I shall shortly return. But in countries like Algeria,<sup>58</sup> Argentina<sup>59</sup> and Indonesia, the Comintern's policies led to the



isolation of communists from the working-class movements and from the struggle against imperialism.

### **Mao's Silent Revolt<sup>60</sup>**

Because of the defeat of 1927 in Shanghai — a fiasco for which Comintern was to blame — the Chinese Communist Party began to make its own way.

It was not difficult to follow the 1928 recommendation that the party should be isolated from the national bourgeoisie. The communists had been expelled from the Kuomintang. But subsequently, with Mao as the driving force, the struggle in the rural areas involving the peasantry became central, rather than Stalin's new fixation on the urban areas and the role of the proletariat.<sup>61</sup> It was not long before the Chinese communists had acquired a position of such strength that they were able to co-operate with sections of the bourgeoisie, without falling back on a two-stage hypothesis in which the struggle for socialism was lost. In 1948, in fact, the Chinese advocated conditional co-operation with parts of the bourgeoisie in opposition to Stalin, something to which I shall later return.

Nor was it difficult to follow the 1935 recommendation for the building of a broad alliance against fascism and Nazism, seeing that Japan had invaded China. At the same time important sections of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landowners joined the opposition, the Kuomintang became corrupt and Mao took the opportunity to form a broad armed liberation struggle. The struggle against fascism and Nazism, which, according to Comintern, ought to unite nations at the expense of the class struggle, and bridge a gap between colonizers and nationalists, became in China a nationalism joined to class-based social demands.<sup>62</sup>

Most characteristic perhaps of what I refer to as Mao's silent revolt against Stalin and Comintern is that, on a formal level, Mao used the same terminology as Moscow, but increasingly seldom the same conceptual and theoretical context.

It was self-evident that the proletariat would lead the revolution. But, first, the proletariat was regarded as the equivalent of the party, which in turn would lead the peasantry. Locally the peasants would even be able to conduct the struggle on their own, but with the support of the party. There was a sharp contrast between Lenin's somewhat resigned view of an industrial proletariat initiating agrarian reforms from above because the peasantry would otherwise never start rebelling, and Mao's belief in agrarian reform initiated from below.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, in the same way as both Lenin and Stalin, Mao talked of the rural proletariat and the landless peasantry being the most important allies of the urban proletariat. Would they be prepared to take the revolutionary initiative in China while not doing so in Russia? This was most unlikely. Mao defined the poor peasantry so generally that the concept included both

the landed and the independent small and middle peasants. These groups had sufficient strength and independence to be able to start a revolt on their own if they received some support from the party.<sup>64</sup>

Clearly the party ought to be Leninist. But while the Chinese retained Leninist organizational principles, and the desire for an effective and enlightened leadership with totally centralized control, they also tried to complement the élitist cadres through good contacts and co-operation with the masses below. Towards the end of the revolution, it would not be inaccurate to say that the Chinese party was a mass party with a totalitarian leadership.<sup>65</sup>

Mao did indeed speak of the national bourgeoisie. But he was referring to the middle bourgeoisie, the small capitalists who, in comparison to the petty bourgeoisie, had few employees and tended to work for themselves.

The Maoist concept of a national bourgeoisie was, indeed, quite far from the Stalinist one, which regarded it as virtually identical with the entire capitalist class, apart from the direct agents of foreign capitalists. From now on, it will be to Stalin's concept that I refer when I use the term "national bourgeoisie", unless otherwise indicated.

In addition to the middle bourgeoisie, Mao also talked about the big bourgeoisie, the comprador bourgeoisie, and finally, the bureaucratic capitalists. The term "comprador" was originally used to refer to the traders who were dependent on imperialists. Later the term was used for the Chinese who were employed by foreign capitalists during the invasion. In this way the concept generally came to mean "that section of the bourgeoisie which directly served the capitalists of the imperialist countries and was nurtured by them. Countless ties linked it closely with the domestic feudal forces".<sup>66</sup>

The bureaucratic capitalists were defined as the major capitalists in whom both private monopolies and monopoly over state power were united. They also had close ties to imperialist and feudal lords.<sup>67</sup>

Besides making this detailed division of the bourgeoisie, Mao clearly paid tribute to Stalin's two-stage theory and other expressions of Stalin's determinism. But it may well have been a question of defending China's place within the world revolution. If one, for instance, began by talking about an Asian mode of production, China could be taken to occupy a rather special place in which universal communist truths did not entirely hold. If one, moreover, wished to spread the Chinese model, it would be safer not to emphasize unique Chinese characteristics, which might lead others to keep their distance.<sup>68</sup> To a much greater extent even than Lenin, Mao allowed the position of different groups in the class struggle, as well as political and ideological considerations, to play a crucial part in both class analysis and political strategy.

One could continue in this vein for some time, enumerating examples of Mao's silent revolt and at the same time describing the Chinese model. There was, however, another silent revolt which took place in Vietnam, and which was not so different. The Vietnamese, for example, say they had very



little trouble with a national bourgeoisie, since there was none to speak of. One tends to see what one wants to. In the event, the Vietnamese communists had the advantage that the bourgeois-nationalist movement had been broken by the French during the early thirties, after which the communists were able to monopolize nationalism.<sup>69</sup>

To summarize, the Chinese used the same terminology as Stalin and followed the same tendency as Lenin. They allowed analyses of actual developments and political trends to be decisive: nor were they unfamiliar with conditional collaboration with bourgeois movements. In addition, the Chinese started changing their Leninist party into a mass party with a totalitarian cadre in the leadership; they allowed the peasantry to participate; and they laid the foundations of a theory of prolonged war of liberation.

## **New Fronts — Old Lines**

With the end of the Second World War, the preconditions for policies based on a popular front ceased to exist. In China the communists launched an offensive against the Kuomintang. In the Philippines and Vietnam, to cite just two examples, the communists returned to their struggle against the colonial powers and their internal allies.

Moscow had no very great interest in Third World struggles. Stalin had participated in the division of the world at the Yalta conference. He was interested in securing his influence in Eastern Europe. The popular front policy continued in Western Europe in order, it was said, to defend democratic achievements, and advance to true democracy before the struggle for socialism could seriously be embarked on.

Until the autumn of 1947, an unclear but generally very optimistic view of the anti-colonial struggle predominated. According to Varga, the major communist economist of the time, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the underdeveloped countries had come out of the war strengthened. Together they would now be able to liberate their countries. From a strategic point of view, there was no great difference between this and Stalin's policies towards the Kuomintang in the mid-twenties. But the model was still based on the 1935 model of a party-less front dominated by communists (from below).

Towards the end of 1947, Moscow started developing the theory of two camps, the peace-loving socialist camp and the imperialist camp. Writers like Zhdanov and Zhukov<sup>71</sup> claimed that in most Third World countries the national bourgeoisie, and particularly the big national bourgeoisie,<sup>72</sup> sold themselves to imperialism and turned against the workers. Soon the concept of neo-colonialism was coined.<sup>73</sup>

The 1928 Comintern line was revived and complemented with the new people's democracies in Eastern Europe.

The Chinese communists were victorious in 1949. Liu-Shao-Chi promptly

put forward the idea that the Chinese revolution was a model which could be suitable for Asia as a whole.<sup>74</sup> Suddenly Chinese ideas were counterposed to Moscow's. A national, anti-imperialist front, including Mao's national bourgeoisie (the middle bourgeoisie), stood in contrast to the 1928 Moscow concept of a treacherous national bourgeoisie. Furthermore, after the Korean war, the Chinese communist-led peasantry who had fought a war of liberation stood in stark contrast to Russian ideas of a primarily peaceful struggle with workers in the centre.

Gradually, however, Moscow accepted the idea of co-operating with parts of the bourgeoisie, while Peking toned down its emphasis on the armed struggle and continued to pay tribute to the Soviet Union as the undisputed leader of the socialist camp. For the time being, the Gottwald Plan from Prague<sup>75</sup> and Chinese ambition were able to coexist.

### **Old Stalinism and Non-Capitalism <sup>76</sup>**

Stalin thus downgraded the need for armed struggle in revolutionary work. To take just one example, in 1951 the Indian Communist Party gave up the armed struggle against the national bourgeoisie. Indeed, communists continued to assert that the bourgeoisie had sold out their countries to imperialist interests, but the doctrine of the two camps (the peace-loving and the imperialist) was dissolving to make way for neutral positions.

During the fifties, decolonization got under way. Politically independent Third World countries claimed to be independent of both blocks in world politics.

During the years after the death of Stalin, Moscow and to some extent also Peking turned back to the almost permanent co-operation with the national bourgeoisie of the mid-twenties. Khrushchev soon took a step further and indicated that the domestic class struggle should give way to a broad national front against imperialism.

As a result, during the years prior to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, Moscow started collaborating closely with the Indian government, previously so despised. And, together with Nehru, China planned the 1955 Bandung conference where the co-operation of the non-aligned states began, and drew up the five points for peaceful coexistence.

In 1956 in Moscow it was then laid down that it was not only movements under a proletarian leadership which could conduct a victorious struggle for national independence. Even the national bourgeoisie could be accepted as a leading force.<sup>77</sup>

Once more it was repeated that imperialism was so parasitic that it blocked every attempt at industrialization and national economic development in the Third World. This meant that the national bourgeoisie had greater cause to fight feudalism and imperialism than had workers and peasants.

For the same reasons, it was more natural for the national bourgeoisie to



accept assistance from state-led industrialization than simply to rely upon weak private initiatives. That kind of state capitalism, according to Moscow, was worthy of support. Unlike in Europe, it was not based on private monopoly capital. On the contrary, the state in the Third World was not regarded as capitalist, since capitalism was so poorly developed. Progressive individuals in state organs were regarded as having considerable independence — what today is called "relative autonomy". Soon we shall see how Moscow developed this idea further and started talking of how state capitalism should pave the way for socialism.<sup>78</sup>

Khrushchev declared in 1956 that socialism's strength had grown so much that he no longer excluded the possibility of reaching socialism via peaceful parliamentary methods. The Chinese communists did not demur, but did express some scepticism.

But already at the party congress in Moscow in 1959, voices more critical of the national bourgeoisie were heard. Delegates were warned that it was wavering between, on the one hand, turning against feudalism and imperialism, and, on the other, contemplating an attack on workers and peasants, maybe even going so far as to abandon its genuine class interests to collaborate with imperialism.

In a similar fashion, the communist parties were cautioned against becoming reformist when they devoted themselves to peaceful struggle. This cautionary attitude did not lead the Soviet Union to break relations with such countries as India. Nor did Moscow think that co-operation with the national bourgeoisie, within the framework of a national front, ought to come to a halt, unless the national bourgeoisie signed an agreement with US imperialism. But at the international Communist Party Conference in 1960, interest shifted towards what was called the struggle for national democratic states, which would be capable of non-capitalist development — what is now called socialist-oriented development.

A state could be called an independent national democracy if it:

... consistently upholds its political and economic independence, fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its territory... a state which rejects dictatorial and despotic methods of government: a state in which the people are ensured broad democratic rights and freedoms... the opportunity to work, the enactment of an agrarian reform and other domestic and social changes, and for participation in shaping government policy.<sup>79</sup>

What did this mean, and how would it be possible to achieve a national democracy? The principles were the following.<sup>80</sup> Feudalism and imperialism presented obstacles to development. A broad national front, which included the national bourgeoisie, could counteract these by implementing state-led industrialization, nationalization of foreign firms and agrarian and democratic reforms. This would limit imperialism's room to manoeuvre. But imperialism would counterattack. The national bourgeoisie would waver.

In the meantime, state power in most underdeveloped countries,

however, was not directly or chiefly based on a strong capitalist class, as it was in most developed countries. (This limited the relevance of the theory to Latin America, for instance.) Thus there was room for a petty bourgeoisie, various middle strata and even the military to control the state apparatus relatively independently, and to work against a compromise with imperialism and feudalism, irrespective of capitalist desires.

(According to Eastern European Marxists, however, in developed capitalist countries and in countries like those in Latin America, the first strike must be made against the huge private monopolies. This was a consequence of their theory of state monopoly capital.)

In order to implement their policies and establish independent national democracies, the revolutionary nationalists must intensify state industrialization and a far-reaching agrarian reform. To cope with industrialization in a weak economy without exploiting the peasants and risk losing them as allies, the nationalists needed a good deal of international development aid from the socialist countries. To get popular domestic support, the nationalists needed to carry out democratic reforms, so that workers and peasants could make themselves heard, and defend progressive political developments.<sup>81</sup>

It was not clear what role existing communist parties were expected to play. In the case of Egypt, the Soviet Union accepted the outlawing of the party without raising much objection.<sup>82</sup> In the early sixties, when the PKI's policy was not acceptable, there was discussion of whether the Soviet Union ought to support other parties and persons, among others Adam Malik who had recently been Indonesia's Vice-President.<sup>83</sup>

In the long term, state industrialization allowed for the growth of a powerful proletariat, which could organize itself in the shelter of democratic reforms. Socialist development could thus gain momentum with the proletariat leading the peasantry, without going through a fully-developed capitalist stage.

Indonesia was one of the countries which in 1961 were regarded as being national democracies.<sup>84</sup> In recent years, the best examples of non-capitalist development have been Ethiopia, Algeria and Afghanistan. Strong non-capitalist tendencies are also to be found in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau.

In sum East European scepticism of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, and the poor but not strictly speaking proletarian masses, continues. While there has been a revival of the 1950s honeymoon with the bourgeoisie of the Third World, this has been complemented by a romantic attachment to nationalists of an unspecified class who are at the head of a mighty state apparatus.

Even if the discussion of non-capitalist development does not exclude armed liberation struggle (Cuba is sometimes referred to as an example of the validity of the theory<sup>85</sup>) it does nevertheless imply that less drastic methods can suffice. Parallel with this, peaceful co-existence on a global level can continue.



## **Mao's Walking on Two Legs and the Dependency School**

Mao's previously quiet revolt became public and radical during the late fifties and early sixties. In the past, differences of opinion concerned how to take power. Now different strategies for development came into the picture. But, at least as important, the different lines became increasingly linked to separate national interests and contradictions in each country.<sup>86</sup>

The Chinese communists continued to emphasize the decisive role played by the peasantry in the revolution, the importance of a party which was deeply rooted among the masses, and the need for armed struggle with bases in the rural areas. In addition, Moscow was criticized for its bureaucratic autocracy, as well as its policy of peaceful co-existence with the US. The bureaucracy, in particular, was regarded as opening the way to a new form of capitalism in the Soviet Union. Peaceful coexistence seemed to the Chinese to hamper the armed liberation struggle in the Third World.

From Peking's point of view the Soviet Union was now seen as imperialist. The Chinese insisted that revolutionary forces should refrain from co-operating with the Soviet Union, exactly as China was doing. They should stand on their own two legs and become self-reliant.

The struggle in the rural areas would liberate the cities. The struggle in the Third World would ignite the spark in the developed countries.<sup>87</sup> Imperialism was a paper tiger. Technology and industry were important, but took second place to the mobilization and organization of the masses. Where there was a will there was a way. It is quite clear that Mao was at least as great a believer in voluntarism as ever Lenin was.

Furthermore, the Chinese refused to accept that the state in the Third World was not based on monopoly capitalism. Peking referred to experiences in the struggle against the Kuomintang, when, according to Mao, the big bourgeoisie monopolized the most important sectors of the economy. At the same time, it was in alliance with imperialist and feudal forces. Consequently, the big bourgeoisie was almost identical to the comprador bourgeoisie. On the basis of these positions of strength, Mao maintained that even state power was in the hands of the big bourgeoisie, that they almost coalesced with the state apparatus, used the state as their base and became a bureaucratic capitalist class.<sup>88</sup>

The Chinese conclusion was self-evident. When Moscow referred to the national bourgeoisie it generally included the big bourgeoisie, which, according to Peking, was simultaneously comprador and bureaucratic-capitalist. When the Soviet leaders claimed that the state in the Third World did not have a specific class base, and wanted to promote a policy of state industrialization, etc., they contributed to creating the equivalent of the state monopoly capitalism of the developed countries.<sup>89</sup>

On the other hand, the Chinese continued to insist that a national bourgeoisie, in the sense of a middle bourgeoisie, could join in a revolution. It could even participate in the leadership.<sup>90</sup> But hegemony must remain

with the communists. Peking even maintained that the comprador bourgeoisie and the feudal leaders could temporarily take sides against imperialism<sup>91</sup> (as the Kuomintang had done during the war against the Japanese). This exception seems to have become the rule, judging from Chinese foreign policy of recent years, where co-operation with compradors seems to have become commonplace.

The Chinese communists' theses, their cultural revolution and their emphasis on the struggle in the Third World played an important role for liberation movements, especially in Asia but also in Africa (and for the New Left in Europe).

In Latin America, however, it was the Cuban revolution that was primarily seen as worthy of emulation.<sup>92</sup> Here, a small group of intellectuals succeeded in overruling a communist party and showed not only the relevance of the armed struggle, but also that revolutions in Latin America were hardly likely to be traditional bourgeois-democratic. The perspective was anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist, rather than national and anti-feudal. There was a good deal to be questioned in the communist parties' cautious attempts to co-operate with the national bourgeoisie, or at least with the anti-monopoly bourgeoisie.

Even if it had not been so before, it was now apparent that it was necessary to make a special analysis of the conditions in the countries of Latin America, which had been formally independent for so many years and where capitalism was relatively well developed. The dependency theories, originally a reaction to established development theories,<sup>93</sup> offered such an alternative.

It was maintained that Latin America had been capitalist for decades. Every part of the continent, no matter how backward, was linked to the global capitalist system, since its underdevelopment was caused by capitalist penetration. Consequently there was no ground whatsoever for co-operating with sections of the bourgeoisie in an anti-feudal front.<sup>94</sup>

The struggle concerned capitalism in general and imperialism in particular. It was imperialism which had distorted and blocked the capitalist development of Latin America. First, foreign capitalist exports had smashed production in Latin America; then it became more interested in raw materials, other production for export and limited manufacture for the tiny upper class. It was unthinkable to stimulate domestic production for mass consumption. Impediments had been placed in the way of such production for a long time. Furthermore, the people were now too poor to afford to buy most of these products. Consequently, it was not an interesting proposition for the profits on production for export to be invested in other sectors of the economy. A large proportion of the profits left the continent.

Latin America was dependent in two senses: imports were needed to maintain exports, and exports were needed to keep the economy afloat. One could maintain that Latin America was the United States' backyard, a satellite. Similarly Sao Paulo could be regarded as a metropole to the poor areas of



north-eastern Brazil.

At the same time as the dependency theory broke with the thesis of an incomplete capitalist phase with feudal traces, the Stalinist view that imperialism virtually blocked capitalist development was retained.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, that section of the domestic bourgeoisie which nevertheless tried to produce goods for mass consumption ought to have some interest in struggling against imperialism. But when it came to the crunch even these capitalists would presumably side with imperialism against the industrial and rural proletariat, the numerous outcasts and the petty bourgeoisie who were on the brink of ruin, since their domestic capitalism was not independent of world capitalism. The only realistic alternative available to the masses was to break completely with imperialism, to rely on their own strength and to put socialism on the agenda, which, of course, was a threat to the domestic bourgeoisie as well.

~~Dependency theories were refined during the years that followed.~~ Samir Amin developed and adapted the theory to fit African conditions.<sup>96</sup> Other theorists addressed themselves to the balance of trade. Theories of unequal exchange<sup>97</sup> lent a scientific weight to what many in the Third World were feeling — that they were losing money when they were importing and exporting, not only when capitalists exported profits and maintained a skewed economy.<sup>98</sup>

The Latin American Dependency School in general, and André Gunder Frank in particular, were subject to considerable criticism. Most pertinent was Laclau's comment that Frank confused capitalist circulation of goods with capitalist modes of production when he argued that the whole of Latin America had been penetrated by capital. Indeed, capitalist trade could be found, but not always capitalist modes of production. For that reason, it might still be worth while to combat pre-capitalist modes of production.<sup>99</sup> But dependency theories nevertheless had considerable cogency.

In the so-called "foco-theories", the most far-reaching political conclusions were drawn from dependency theories. Stimulated by the way in which a small "petty-bourgeois" group had succeeded in stirring up the Cuban masses and overriding a petrified communist party, many Latin American intellectuals who were susceptible to Lenin's Jacobin qualities soon created small avant-garde armed groups all over the continent. If this vanguard were to launch a guerrilla offensive in the countryside, revealing the true nature of the regime, create embryo dual governments, and finally storm towards the cities, where a general strike would be proclaimed, then a new workers' and peasants' movement should grow up, and the revolution should be successful.<sup>100</sup>

Until the mid-sixties, there was a political basis for all this. A wave of anti-colonialism and revolutionary optimism swept the world. In Moscow there was talk of communism coming about within 20 years, and the schism with China had not yet reached its apex. The old empires were collapsing, and the US was on the retreat. In 1961, in the Bay of Pigs invasion attempt, the CIA was literally forced back into the sea. Subsequently, as has been

mentioned, dependency theories were improved. But at the same time as theoretical weapons were being prepared, the political preconditions for a successful struggle were becoming more distant.

## Reappraisal?

Time passed before we realized this. The Cubans rapidly grew more radical, and the Chinese initiated their cultural revolution. Both needed and were anticipating a revolutionary uprising throughout the world, just as Stalin had done during the collectivization period in the late twenties. In Europe the left became enthusiastic, lagging behind by a few years. But despite the victories in Portugal's former colonies in Africa, despite Vietnam and, most recently, the victory in Nicaragua, problems and failures started piling up in the sixties.

Indonesia is just one of several cases where radical anti-colonialism was toned down. In 1966 Ghana's non-capitalist development came to a halt, not long after it had done in Indonesia. In Egypt the turning-point came a few years later. As early as 1964, Goulart's progressive regime fell in Brazil. In the spring of 1965 the US started bombing North Vietnam, and in Algeria Ben Bella was overthrown only a few months before the Jakarta coup of 1965. These are only a few examples.

In Ghana the petty bourgeoisie and nationalists of indistinct class managed to acquire considerable capital interests.<sup>101</sup> In Egypt the state sector soon became a springboard for capitalist development.

Neither are recent events in Ethiopia and Afghanistan indicative of any real progress. Particularly in Ethiopia, democratic reforms are noticeable by their absence. With a wave of the hand, the Eritrean liberation struggle was declared reactionary when new men took over in Addis Ababa, and the regime pursued the same policies vis-à-vis Eritrea as the Emperor Haile Selassie had. And when the revolutionaries in Afghanistan failed to consolidate their agrarian reforms from above, but found the people resisting them, an intervention from the Soviet Union became a "necessity".<sup>102</sup>

On the one hand, Moscow communists march obstinately on. On the other, a new generation of Soviet development researchers and technocrats show remarkable faith in the ability of transnational companies and the world market to generate development. Not only old dogmas but also large parts of Marxist theory and methodology are making way for a purified empiricism, a belief in "pure facts".<sup>103</sup>

The Chinese communists have revised their theories in an even more remarkable way. Maoism is being squeezed out. Self-reliance is being replaced by something which, as far as I can see, closely resembles the old growth philosophy of the Soviet Union. Pol Pot's extreme policy in Kampuchea culminated in an unbelievable tragedy. In other countries, Maoist groups are languishing. The schism between Moscow and Peking was



followed by a Chinese foreign policy which included approaching both the US and Japan, and open war with Vietnam.

Not only the Maoist but also the Cuban-inspired guerrilla organizations have gone from courageous proclamations to catastrophe and defeat. Even the peaceful attempt in Allende's Chile, which had something in common with the PKI and Indonesia, was crushed. For lack of a revolutionary situation, all that remained was a long-term, somewhat reformist, policy. There was no lack of a revolutionary perspective, but from within the apparatus of state, it was only possible to attempt to revolutionize society from above.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, the different strategies encompassed by the united front of Unidad Popular contradicted one another. The anti-monopoly strategy of the communists placed priority on the workers in advanced industries and on farms, but neglected workers in smaller industries, the sizeable poor of the rural areas, and the partly marginalized of the cities, in an attempt not to upset the petty bourgeoisie and the smaller capitalists. Other groups within the front maintained, however, that these poor people, the marginalized and the workers in small industries should also be mobilized. In this way the petty bourgeoisie and minor capitalists were nevertheless alarmed, but there was no policy to deal with the situation. The bourgeoisie united, and joined foreign capital and the domestic oligarchy. Wage earners and peasants were split.<sup>105</sup>

Régis Debray has put forward convincing arguments against the criticism levelled at Allende for not arming the workers. First, there was a lack of arms. Secondly, there was no united proletariat to arm. The most politically conscious industrial workers were isolated. Finally, any attempt to distribute arms would probably have hastened the coming of the coup.<sup>106</sup>

Today certain hopes are raised by the continuing revolution in El Salvador. But the guerrilla movements have difficulty in mobilizing the workers in the cities, and the repression is nearly as incomprehensible as the genocide of the left in Indonesia. Any compromise which would end the slaughter would surely win the support of the Salvadorean people, even if it meant that capitalism survived.

In countries where great victories have been won, development policies are facing tremendous difficulties. The coup in Guinea-Bissau is a recent example of the problems involved in moving from the self-reliant policies of the liberated areas, based on undeveloped agriculture, to assuming responsibility for an entire country and its rapid development. There are ever-present risks of the leaders either coming up against resistance from the peasantry, or becoming heavily dependent on foreign assistance, which is corrupting and gives the leaders and the administrators the possibility of creating their own class base with the help of the state apparatus — and thus, for this reason too, falling out with the peasants.<sup>107</sup> Is a similar development under way in Mozambique?<sup>108</sup>

This list could be much longer: students in Thailand; genocide on East



Timor; Jamaica. In Iran it was the mullahs who mobilized the masses and expelled US imperialism. If anyone has threatened the industrialized West during the past decade, it is not the workers and peasants, whom we once hoped would take the lead in the Third World and thereby pave the way for the struggle elsewhere, including Europe, but more or less feudal regimes, gloating over their oil.

Even though actual developments have shown that the traditional theories and strategies I have sketched are clearly inadequate, they continue to survive. There is a conspicuous lack of the regeneration of Marxist-based alternatives.

Every attempt to relate the Indonesian experience to a continuing discussion, therefore, becomes primarily a question of referring to the established doctrines and the problems associated with them.

From a viewpoint which is perhaps an ethnocentric European one, however, I would like to add that the increasingly self-critical discussions amongst Marxists in general, and so-called Eurocommunists in particular, do point in a regenerative direction. (Even if most of them are, at present, wholly directed towards European problems.)

Marxists are, for example, questioning Lenin's concept of the state — exclusively the state of the ruling classes — and his strategic conclusions. This is a frontal assault from without. In particular, Nicos Poulantzas has argued convincingly, both empirically and theoretically, that the state is by no means a monopolistic unit, but that the class struggle in society at large is reflected within the state, irrespective of whether the proletariat, for instance, is formally represented or not.<sup>109</sup>

Such a perspective (which should by no means be confused with the idea of taking over the state piece by piece, but rather concerns changing it)<sup>110</sup> opens up interesting possibilities for the development of a more sophisticated and long-term strategy. This is particularly important when the struggle concerns state power in countries where the state apparatus is no longer isolated, and which are fairly weak, despite their autocratic powers. Both in Europe and in many of the countries in the Third World, the state in general and state capitalism in particular are expanding.

A long-term perspective also requires us to differentiate between distinct phases, so that at every phase we can unite as many people as possible, at the same time as preparations for the next phase are being made. Here, however, the European discussion has gone no further than that in the Third World, quite the reverse.

## **From Parasitic to Progressive Imperialism**

The basic thesis in all communist theory on the struggle in the Third World is that capitalism is certainly spread to the Third World by imperialism, but at the same time it hampers or even blocks every form of capitalist development. The imperialists create monopolies and ally themselves with

feudal forces.

The workers in the Third World, and those parts of the bourgeoisie who favour capitalist development as well as those peasants who are ruined by imperialism or damaged by feudalism, have reason to come together and attack both imperialism and feudalism.

Since the bourgeoisie is weak and cannot by itself carry such a revolution to a successful conclusion, according to this thesis, there are opportunities for the workers to take the lead and encourage movement towards socialism, with the help of their comrades in the advanced countries.

In the industrialized countries (according to the same viewpoint), it is in the interests of the workers' movement to support this struggle, since imperialism lends power to monopoly capital, bribes the "workers' aristocracy" and makes development in the socialist countries more difficult.

To a greater or lesser extent, and with different practical consequences, this characterizes the theories of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Castro, the dependency theorists and many others.

The view of the Second International, however, was more favourable to imperialism. On the whole, capitalism was spreading to underdeveloped countries. The most important obstacle to development was not imperialism but the remnants of feudalism. In addition, capitalism must be fully developed before it would be realistic to speak of socialism.

The conflict between the social-democratic and communist theses continues. But it would hardly be an exaggeration to point out that the general perspectives in Lenin's theory on imperialism have become fairly generally accepted, not least because of the dependency theories.

Even Marxists within the communist tradition, however, have for some years been questioning the thesis that imperialism hinders or blocks "true" capitalist development in the Third World. The theory of non-capitalist development and development theorists' occasionally categorical assertions are especially contentious. Examples are put forward from industrialization not only in South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Egypt, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil, but even, for example, from Kenya, the Ivory Coast and several of the oil countries.

It is not an altogether simple task to sketch the main lines of this discussion in just a few sentences.<sup>111</sup> On the one hand, the tendencies towards a new international division of labour have been discussed, since a number of industries are being located in Third World countries where production costs are lower. Most of the goods that the industries there depend on are imported, and most of what is produced is exported. This is why one can maintain that export industrialization can only contribute to development in certain enclaves, in exactly the same way as the production of raw materials does. In addition, wages are so low that the domestic market for mass consumption goods remains too small to support local industry.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that, while wages certainly are



low, as more and more people become wage earners the market will expand. Moreover, international competition necessitates the development of more efficient tools, machinery, etc., which in turn increases the demand for more local production and improved services. And, above all, demands for efficiency prevent foreign capital from retaining an alliance with feudalism which is all too hostile to development.

Finally, it is usually pointed out that the domestic bourgeoisie and the state have acquired greater potential for influencing investment and production, and not only in the oil-rich nations. In order to invest and be competitive, foreign capital is often needed to initiate local production. Even though technological development, marketing, etc. are under the control of transnational companies, significant foreign domination does not necessarily exclude dynamic development, at least not if production and markets are integrated in the world economic system, and not simply loosely incorporated.<sup>112</sup> The conclusion is thus that the paralysing colonial monopolies of production and marketing are being broken up in the Third World, and a domestic market, both for methods of production and for mass-consumption goods, is developing.

There are several different lines to be traced among those who argue against the inevitability of the blocking of capitalist development. Not everyone maintains, as Warren did, that Lenin was incorrect from the very beginning, and that on several points the Second International was right.<sup>113</sup> Another dividing line is the following. On the one side, some try to prove that traditional, relatively national capitalistic development is under way. On the other side, others, of whom I am one, claim that traditional capitalism has had its day, in both developed and underdeveloped countries. What we are now witnessing is an international capitalist system of production evolving from the former global unit, which was primarily based on trade between separate systems of production. This is in line with advanced technological development, which allows for the international co-ordination of different units of production and means that, as local monopolies have lost considerable power, so the major companies have been obliged to engage in international competition. Competitiveness is dynamic.<sup>114</sup> With perhaps few exceptions, all agree that capitalist development is particularly brutal, and that many people are not integrated in modern production but are compelled to live marginalized lives. (Capitalism can both be dynamic and condemn people and places to underdevelopment.) At the same time there is a tendency for differences between individual underdeveloped countries to continue to increase: some are integrated in the international production system, while others are left on the side.

Maybe it is true that imperialism continues to retard a *traditional* European-style capitalist development in the underdeveloped nations in the world. But let us assume that it is no longer true that imperialism prevents a *modern international* capitalism from spreading to several countries in the Third World. In other words, let us assume that imperialism



is no longer necessarily parasitic, but can occasionally be progressive, i.e. by spreading *dynamic* capitalism. If we accept this, we do not also need to maintain that the clock has been turned back to that kind of competitive capitalism which, as we have seen, was espoused by Marx, Luxemburg, and perhaps M.N. Roy, as being progressive. In this case, what happens to communist strategies for the struggle in the Third World, strategies which the PKJ tried to adopt and which continue to be the dominant ones?

To start with, the bourgeoisie becomes a less likely ally. If imperialism no longer presents an obstacle to capitalist development then ever-larger sections of the bourgeoisie have the opportunity to satisfy their interests in collaboration with foreign capital. That this may occur for other reasons, and that capitalists in an underdeveloped country are still made up of different, often warring, fractions, is quite another matter.

Between a bourgeoisie which favours traditional nationalist capitalist development and a comprador bourgeoisie, which functions more or less as the local extension of foreign capital, there is room for the growth of an increasingly significant domestic bourgeoisie, which collaborates with imperialism from a domestic base.

The models of state capitalism which are becoming more common are hardly likely, from this perspective, to lead to a bureaucratic capitalist class with simply a parasitic politico-administrative power base. The state does incorporate significant parts of direct production and circulation, in which politicians, military men and administrators may very well be able to complement their political base with an economic one.

Furthermore, the peasantry will probably be split between those that in some way or other profit from the capitalist system, and those who are marginalized. It is hardly likely that they will engage in a common anti-feudal or anti-capitalist struggle. The opportunity for broadly-based support, on anti-feudal grounds, from the peasantry for the communists, who shoulder the bourgeoisie's revolution, is disappearing. (This is what Lenin dreaded might happen in Russia.)<sup>115</sup>

This does not, however, necessarily mean that those who suffer under capitalism make up some kind of unified proletariat. Many combine small-holdings with wage work, petty trading and other things. Others are forced into the towns without having found a job in industry, for instance. Instead they often struggle to make ends meet as waiters, petty traders, and so on, which definitely does not contribute to the growth of a closely united proletariat. Yet a unified proletariat is the *sine qua non* of communist political theory. In the meantime, there is no place for the majority of the oppressed in production, but only, according to traditional communist theory, as a *lumpen* proletariat.

By comparison, the relatively permanently employed workers are reasonably well off. Obviously their political significance is growing. But a form of capitalism which can afford to raise wages somewhat, and give limited social security to those who participate in dynamic production processes, hardly opens the door to traditional communism; but perhaps

instead to a class alliance of the conservative social-democratic type.

So much for speculative perspectives. This review of the communist tradition puts many explanations of the PKI's failure in context. Now they must be formulated and tested in a concrete investigation. But even the view from the "research front" must be taken into account when examining the PKI's problems and when trying to relate them to the international discussion of today. Did the PKI's failure, for example, have anything to do with the tendencies to capitalist development in the Third World, which we can now see so clearly, but which were already evolving towards the end of the fifties and in the early sixties?

## Notes

1. Cf. e.g. Tornquist (1979) pp.170ff., Palma (1978) pp.886-889, and Barratt-Brown (1974) Chap. 3.
2. Ibid. The rate of profit is an expression of the level of profit in relationship to the total capital invested. If investments rise in proportion to wages, then the rate of profit on invested capital has a tendency to fall. Thus, either investment must be limited, or the degree of exploitation must rise if the rate of profit is not to fall.
3. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.15.
4. Ibid. pp.15ff. Even Rosa Luxemburg, who wrote the first major Marxist book on imperialism *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913), argued that capitalism was progressive. Through the over-production of the advanced countries and subsequent need for new markets, capitalism would spread. Her political conclusions, however, differed from those of the Second International.
5. The concentration of capital means that every individual capital grows, e.g. factories become larger. The centralization of capital means the reduction of the number of individual capitals, as they are fused, or merged into corporate enterprises.
6. For the above, very brief, account of Lenin's theories, see, e.g., Tornquist (1979) pp.171ff. and Barratt-Brown (1974) Chap. 3, which also summarizes the main body of serious criticism. Or why not Lenin, 1960, CW 22 pp.685ff. written in 1916, which is brief and worth reading.
7. Lenin's *Backward Europe and Advanced Asia* (1913), in Lenin (1969) pp.82ff. See also McMichael (1977).
8. I will return to this in the next section. The most important sources are to be found in Lenin (1969) (e.g. *The Right of Nations to Self-determination*, 1914) and in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.14-45 and appended documents.
9. See fn. 7, above.
10. According to Lenin, the labour aristocracy formed the base of social democracy or reformism, and was, *inter alia*, represented by the Second International, which did not disassociate itself from colonialism nor from the First World War.
11. A text by Lenin from January 1923, which argues against Menshevism. Lenin (1960) *Our Revolution* (CW 33) pp.477-9.
12. Debray (1975/74) p.219.
13. When Lenin wrote the *Development of Capitalism in Russia* in 1899, he argued polemically with the Russian populists, who talked about the impossibility of capitalism and wanted to use pre-capitalist modes, for instance village communalism, in the struggle. Lenin showed that the opposite held, that capitalism was emerging and that this was progressive, and necessary to the struggle for socialism. There may be cause to recall that Lenin had no intention of moving from pre-capitalist modes directly to socialism.
14. For the above, when no other references are made, cf. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.17-20, McMichael (1977) p.208.



15. Quoted from Engels in Arvidsson and Berntsson (1980) who cite Engels' new foreword to *Class struggles in France* (1895).
16. See Marx (1871) *The civil war in France*, as discussed in *Marxistisk statsteori* (1978), and Arvidsson and Berntsson (1980) pp.101, 103-112 and Note 14 above.
17. For an interesting discussion of the above, cf. Poulantzas (1978b) pp.81ff. "Dual power" is generally taken to mean that revolutionaries establish an alternative state apparatus and state power.
18. Lenin at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1903, quoted in Deutsch (1952). "Jacobinism" usually refers to the enlightened minority's often brutal centralized leadership.
19. For the above on the state and the party, where nothing else is indicated, cf. Lenin (1960) *The State and Revolution* (CW.29) pp.470ff., *The State* (CW.29) pp.470ff., and *Theses and report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat* (CW.28) pp.457ff.
20. Laclau, (1971) p.29.
21. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969), pp.17ff. and the next section, 'Lenin's Theses on the Colonies'.
22. Alavai (1973) pp.296-304. Petras (1978) esp. p.54.
23. Debray (1975/74) p.15.
24. Cf. for example, Lenin's report on the international situation to Comintern's Second Congress, in Lenin (1969) pp.276-282.
25. Ibid. Also Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.26.
26. Ibid. Cf. Poulantzas (1974). The United Front strategy was adopted in December, 1921.
27. For Snecvliet, see Williams (1980).
28. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.28. Cf. also Halliday (1978) p.21 on Afghanistan, where no communist party was established because the regime was engaged in fighting the British.
29. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) on the Baku Conference *et al.*, pp.31-38, and appended documents.
30. Some of the first seeds of the Stalinist policies, which later were to subordinate Comintern's policy to the interests of the Soviet state, were sown now. Lenin was very clear on that. It grew all the more evident at the Third Congress in 1921, when the struggle in the colonies was totally ignored; at that time the British were more or less prepared to leave Moscow in peace. Ibid. pp.28ff., 41.
31. A notable exception is the Indian M.N. Roy, to whom I shall shortly return, who, in 1919, was one of the founders of the Mexican Communist Party. Lenin did not even wish to compare Latin America with Asia and Africa, but preferred to draw parallels with Eastern Europe.
32. For this, and the review of Lenin's theses immediately below, see Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.26-31 and appended documents (*inter alia* extracts from debates in the commission referred to, theses, and the plenary debate, pp.150-167). See also articles and documents in Lenin (1969) up to 1920.
33. On the question of countries like China, which were not wholly colonized, Comintern talked about semi-colonialism. I merely use the terms colonies or underdeveloped countries.
34. Lenin was no stranger to the idea of direct intervention by Comintern or the Soviet Union. On the question of the actions of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis former Tsarist colonies like Turkestan, Lenin, referring to the weak proletariat and the importance of mobilizing the peasants, said, "Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there." Lenin from the above commission, in Lenin (1969) pp.284ff. Cf. Halliday (1978) and (1980) on Afghanistan, for example.
35. Nevertheless, Pan-Islamism ought to be fought, since Turkish imperialism was counterposed to that of the West, and large landowners were not least amongst those who were to be spared. After criticism from the PKI's delegate, Tan Malaka, Comintern yielded on the question of Pan-Islamism in 1922, on condition that communists would be very vigilant. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.42ff.
36. With a number of revisions (which are described in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.152-155), Lenin's draft was adopted by Comintern. The full draft is to be found in Lenin (1969) pp.268-275.



37. For Roy's criticism, see Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.27-31 and appended documents.
38. On this point, see *ibid.* pp.42ff.
39. Extract from Roy's address to the Commission on National and Colonial Questions at Comintern's Second Congress. *Ibid.* p.151.
40. Aside from Roy's view that the revolution in the underdeveloped world was a prerequisite for the European revolution, his criticism of Lenin sounded similar to that of the extreme left in Italy at whom Lenin directed his '*Left-wing' communism — an infantile disorder* (1960 CW 31) pp.17ff.
41. Both Lenin's and Roy's theses were adopted, with certain revisions, and especially Roy's were altered. Ironically, later, over a period of several years, it nevertheless was Roy's original theses which were distributed by Comintern. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.29.
42. Extract from Lenin's report from the relevant commission to the plenary session of the Second Comintern Congress. *Ibid.* p.157.
43. *Ibid.* pp.51ff.
44. *Ibid.* pp.44ff., 53-56 and Williams (1980) pp.88ff.
45. *Ibid.* p.89.
46. This was most clearly put by Otto Kuusinen in 1928. See Palma (1978) p.897, but the ideas were not new; they had been first put into practice around 1924-25.
47. Cf. Gordon (1973) pp.198ff. and McMichael (1977) pp.208ff.
48. The last-named from a speech at the University of Svrdlov in 1924. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.186.
49. This was clearly expressed at Comintern's Sixth Congress in 1928, see, e.g. the programme in *ibid.* pp.236ff.
50. *Ibid.*
51. See Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.56ff. and appended documents.
52. In 1928 a certain amount of attention was paid to the countries of Latin America, which were distinguished from "colonial and semi-colonial countries" on the one hand, and even more "backward countries" like some in Africa, on the other. Argentina and Brazil were simply called "independent countries". (See fn.49.) For a competent analysis of how this new interest for Latin America fell outside the framework of Comintern's theoretical perspective, see Debray (1975/74) op.cit. pp.38-46. See also Laclau (1977) on populism.
53. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.56ff. and documents, and cf. Poulantzas (1974).
54. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.57ff. and p.233, and other appended documents.
55. *Ibid.* p.58 and pp.239-242 (extracts from Trotsky's criticism of the proposal for a new Comintern programme). See also Deutscher (1952).
56. Cf. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.59ff., and Poulantzas (1974).
57. *Ibid.* pp.166ff. and Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.59-62.
58. *Ibid.* pp.60ff.
59. Debray (1975/74) pp.38ff. and Laclau (1977) on populism.
60. Where nothing else is indicated, see Sudama (1978) and Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.55-67 and documents.
61. In addition to the above note, see Mao Tse Tung's class analysis from 1926, Mao (1968).
62. The best documentation of this is still to be found in Snow (1963).
63. Cf. pp.8ff. above. See also Alavi (1973) pp.304-316.
64. *Ibid.* Cf. also Petras (1978) who argues instead for the key role of the proletariat.
65. Schurmann (1973) seems to me to have the clearest analysis of the organization of the Chinese party.
66. Mao (1968) and the explanatory fn. pp.9ff.
67. Mao (1947) in Mao (1961) pp.167ff.
68. Cf. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.96ff.
69. Cf. Gordon (1973) pp.201ff. and Viet Nam Workers' Party (1976).
70. See, first, Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.63-69 with appended documents.
71. See both documents in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.261ff., 265ff.
72. *Ibid.* p.263.

73. For Moscow, Indonesia was, however, a remarkable exception, presumably because the bourgeoisie continued their armed struggle against the Dutch despite the fact that they overruled the left. At the UN the Soviet Union had a good reputation for putting forward the Indonesian case, and it had no reason to lose face there just for the sake of the left in Indonesia. McVey (1969a).
74. See extracts from the relevant speech in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.269-273.
75. In the first place communists in Prague worked together with the social democrats, but managed to manoeuvre themselves to a dominating position with the support of a number of front organizations, mass demonstrations and the fraternal communist nation, after which the party was able to consolidate its position of unlimited power.
76. When nothing else is mentioned for the period up to 1959, see Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.67-76 and documents, and for the following period pp.76-82, 87-92 and documents.
77. Indonesia was mentioned as an example. See the 1956 article by Zhukov in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.289.
78. Alavi (1972).
79. Extracts from the conference in 1960, Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.308ff.
80. For a competent review and discussion of non-capitalist development, see Palmberg (1973).
81. Cf. Amílcar Cabral, who expressed part of the problem thus: the petty bourgeoisie must commit class suicide and leave aside their class interests; Cabral (1969) pp.46-51. For an interesting discussion of Latin America's place on that question see Debray (1975/74) pp.46-49.
82. Cf. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) pp.91ff.
83. See below, Chapter 14.
84. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.88.
85. Ibid. p.88.
86. For this reason it is not possible to outline the main lines in the Sino-Soviet dispute in only a few sentences. I have presented the background, and now turn to some of the Chinese theses on the struggle in the Third World. For a review of the Sino-Soviet conflict, see *ibid.* pp.67-107 and documents. These are the very pages which are my main source for the paragraphs below, until the start of the discussion on Latin America.
87. Cf. M.N. Roy's ideas from the early twenties, see above, pp.12ff.
88. Mao (1947) in Mao (1961) p.167. Also Wertheim (1974) pp.301ff.
89. Cf. *ibid.* On Moscow and the big bourgeoisie as part of the national bourgeoisie, see above p.27.
90. Carrère d'Encausse and Schram (1969) p.75.
91. Ibid. p.72.
92. For the Cuban revolution see firstly Tutiono (1968), Karol (1970) and Debray (1975/74). On the importance of the Cuban revolution for Latin America as a whole, see Debray (1975/74) and (1977).
93. Established theories maintained that underdeveloped countries suffered from a lack of capitalism and that the problem was to remove the obstacles. Dependency theory said the opposite. The underdeveloped countries were underdeveloped because they had been swallowed up by capitalism and imperialism. The problem was not how to stimulate more capitalist development, but how to get rid of capitalism and imperialism.
94. For a classic in this genre see Frank (1967) and (1969). Cf. also (1972).
95. Paul Baran (1957) was a pioneer who stuck to that perspective, based primarily on Comintern's of the late twenties.
96. See Anin (1970).
97. For a competent summary and critical discussion, see Andersson (1976).
98. The kind of unequal exchange which is normally referred to is, to put it very roughly, based on differences in productivity between industrialized and developing nations being less than wage differentials, which is why underdeveloped countries are paid less for their work than industrialized countries.

99. See Laclau (1971).
100. Still unsurpassed in Debray's self-critical analysis of this struggle (1975/74) and (1977). Debray participated in the spread and application of the foco-theory.
101. Beckman (1976) is brilliant.
102. Halliday (1980).
103. See Kridl-Valkenier (1980).
104. Debray (1975/74) pp.238 and 282.
105. Cf. de Vylder (1974) pp.92, 148ff., 181, 190, 194ff. According to the preliminary results of Bosco Parra's research, it originates in the communists' traditionally narrow definition of the proletariat when undertaking a class analysis. The many poor people who did not belong to the core of the proletariat had never been properly organized. Lecture by Parra, 8 May 1981. Uppsala. Parra (1981).
106. Debray (1975/74) pp.258-269.
107. Rudebeck (1982).
108. Egerö (1982).
109. See especially Poulantzas (1978a), (1980a) and (1980).
110. Poulantzas (1980b) pp.258ff.
111. I have made some previous attempts. See Törnquist (1979) and Törnquist and Brandell (1979). For an extreme viewpoint, see Warren (1980).
112. Therborn (1979) pp.98-101 wants to distinguish between dependence and dominance, and between incorporation and integration. Canada, for example, is dominated by the US, but integrated in the world economy.
113. Warren (1980): partly implicit, but nevertheless appallingly clear.
114. Cf. Beckman (1980) and Törnquist (1979).
115. Cf. p.171, above.



## 4. The PKI: Communist Tradition and the Course of Events in Indonesia

Which sections of the communist tradition did the PKI try to apply in Indonesia? While trying to answer that question, it might be appropriate to give a very brief presentation of the way in which events developed in the country and the historical background.<sup>1</sup> In analysing the strategic problems of the communists, I shall assume that the reader has some background knowledge of Indonesia. (The Chronology in Appendix 3 should help to fill out this background.)

"What is it like in Indonesia today?" is a question I am often asked. My reply is, "It's like fighting for a train ticket."

The selling of tickets starts an hour before the train is due to depart. Considerably earlier, the best tickets have already been hooked by those with thick wallets, through their contacts. About half an hour before the ticket office opens, public corruption is in evidence in the form of a number of agents who stand in the front of the queue. Each buys, say, 20 tickets to sell to those who can afford to avoid being crowded. The others are brutally shoved around as they try to fight for their places in the queue. If a soldier happens to come by, he regards it as quite natural to walk round the mob to the front and buy his ticket first.

That's how most things work in Indonesia.

Indonesia is a large country. Its length is equivalent to that between Ireland and the Urals, its breadth to that between Scotland and Spain. Indonesia is made up of 13,000 islands. There are over 150 million people, giving Indonesia the fifth largest population in the world. Most of them are crowded onto the island of Java, which is the world's most densely populated agricultural area.

Indonesia is strategically located on the trade routes between Europe and east Asia. It is rich in raw materials (oil, tin, bauxite, coal, timber, rubber, etc.) but, despite recent expansion, still lacks industries. About 70 per cent of the population are engaged in agriculture. Many of the others are bureaucrats, petty traders and service personnel. Each year 1,400,000 people come onto the Javanese labour market, with another 600,000 on the outer islands. Within production, however, there is only place for 600,000 to 700,000 new workers annually throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

Indonesia is a beautiful tropical country. But the rain forests are being

devastated by reckless cutting; plastic goods create litter; poisonous exhaust fumes and the sweet smell of cretek cigarettes combine with a stench of poverty so penetrating that even the air in the rich quarters is spoilt.

Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world. But Islam is mixed up with many other faiths including animism. There are also Hindus, Buddhists and some Christians. The national language is Indonesian, which is understood by most of the 350 ethnic groups, who have 250 languages of their own. Javanese culture is highly sophisticated, although by now deeply undermined by commercialism.

## Colonization

Indonesia was already populated 3,000 years before Western history begins. The culturally advanced pre-colonial societies in the archipelago were based on agriculture and considerable trade. During the 14th and 15th centuries the trade and religion of the Ottoman empire reached the islands. During the 16th century the Portuguese arrived and, in the following century, the Dutch East India Company, which monopolized trade.

At the beginning of the 19th century, around the time of the Napoleonic wars, the British started a more direct process of colonization, primarily of Java. Soon the Dutch returned and continued exploiting the country. The last major Javanese resistance, led by Prince Diponegoro, was crushed. Colonial trade was complemented by the cultivation of cash crops, particularly coffee and sugar.

But Dutch capitalism was too weak for private colonization. Instead the state took the lead. A comparatively indirect method was chosen: the regional and local aristocracy was bribed and forced their subjects to produce both for consumption and for the Dutch. This was known as the cultivation system, or *Culturstelsel*.

It was not until the end of the century that Dutch colonialism began to be privately managed. Large plantations were established. A few years later, the islands surrounding Java began to be of economic significance for the production of rubber, various minerals and finally oil. By this time, the Dutch controlled virtually the entire Indonesian archipelago.

In the meantime, Java was still the most fertile island from the point of view of agriculture. Most of the people lived there and the island remained the economic, political and administrative centre. (This book deals primarily with Java, where the PKI was most deeply rooted.)

In Java, particularly in the western province, there was private ownership; the Asian type of agriculture with a centralized bureaucracy; as well as local, almost communalistic, cultivation. Aside from foreign-owned plantations, the properties were seldom large. Expatriates did not have the right to buy land belonging to any of the villages. The Chinese minority had considerable influence within the sectors of trade and petty production.

## Modern Nationalism

At the turn of the century in the rural areas, there arose new opposition to the Dutch and to the local gentry who acted as their agents. In particular, private landowners and religious leaders (often the same people) who did not ally themselves with the colonial powers had an interest in turning against feudalism, which was strongest in the areas dominated by private landownership and which was maintained by the Dutch. The ideology of Islam was important in the mobilization of the masses. But it was not possible to co-ordinate the struggle on a national level.

With the growth of plantations, mines and better communications, a small proletariat was created. It would not be long before trade-union organization would begin.

Expansive colonialism demanded administrators. The number of wage workers from Holland in state and private employment rose. Some were conscious of political and trade-union issues. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Dutch, moreover, started limited education of local administrative personnel, both in Holland and in Indonesia. They had very limited opportunities for advancing in their careers, and some of them were radicalized.

Obstacles were also put in the way of private Indonesian business activities. Indonesia had been allotted the role of supplier of raw materials. Nearly all commercial production and significant trade was monopolized by the colonial powers.

Now there existed the preconditions for a national struggle against pre-capitalist modes of production and colonialism. Local intellectuals, administrators and businessmen reached the private landowners and religious leaders whose interests were being thwarted and who had mass support. The movement was founded in 1912 and was called *Sarekat Islam*. Soon it gained unprecedented general support.

Isolated from the mass organization, a small social-democratic party (ISDV) was founded in 1914. It was rooted in the trade-union movement where, amongst others, Sneevliet, who is already known to us, was active in the leadership.<sup>3</sup> ISDV started working within *Sarekat Islam* in order to break its own isolation and to hasten what was referred to as the anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggle which had been started by the bourgeoisie. This work of unification was later adopted by Comintern in its thesis on the colonial question.

After the First World War the Dutch intensified their imperialist exploitation. *Sarekat Islam* was threatened. High hopes of rapid results were dashed. The movement was split and weakened. ISDV, which in 1920 became the PKI and joined Comintern, could not take over the mass movement. It, too, was weakened by splits and disputes about how the struggle should be carried on at the same time as repression intensified.

The leadership was seized by a wing which advocated a rapid proletarian intervention before the upsurge was finally over. Soon the strategy of the



PKI deviated not only from Lenin's thesis but even from Stalin's recommendations. Comintern tried to change the line of the party but did not succeed. In local revolts in Western Java in 1925 and 1926, as well as in 1927 in Western Sumatra, the isolated party was crushed. Those leaders who survived were put in concentration camps or went into exile. The PKI did not regain any real significance until the late forties.

It was, instead, a handful of young intellectuals who monopolized the business of providing nationalism with a specific ideological content. While they educated themselves, introduced a common Indonesian language, discussed, wrote, made speeches, split into factions and were imprisoned, they swept different class interests and contradictions under a carpet of populist nationalism: Indonesia's pre-colonial greatness would be regained. The workers and peasants were neither organized nor mobilized. The intellectuals relied particularly on the ability of the anti-colonial patrons and religious leaders to gather the masses behind them. And yet the poor peasant, for instance, got the feeling that the land question would be solved if only the country gained its independence. These happy events were part of the dream of the pre-colonial realm. Thus there were substantial, if passive, classes supporting the national movement.

In the wake of the depression of the thirties, even more miserable conditions arose in the colony since exports decreased. But there was no movement with the strength to mobilize the discontented. In the middle of the decade, a few communists were engaged in trying to build a broad anti-fascist popular front, according to the recommendations of Comintern of 1935. Temporarily the anti-colonial struggle made way for the front. But neither the Dutch nor the Indonesians showed any interest in the idea.

On the contrary, many Indonesians greeted the Japanese as liberators when they expelled the Dutch in 1942 and occupied Indonesia. The feeling of the colonial power's invincibility disappeared. An end had come to the paralysing control of the Dutch.

Soon, however, the Japanese made their real intentions clear. They introduced slave labour and expropriation of (among other things) agricultural produce. But the new repression, together with greater margin to act for the domestic classes and political groups, formed the base for a new nationalist resurgence.

Socialist and communist groups worked illegally. A number of anti-colonial and to some extent anti-feudal movements, cemented together by Islam, worked partly underground and partly with the consent of the Japanese. Finally, certain leaders, among them Sukarno, chose to work openly to some extent with the invaders. These leaders thereby gained access to a sizeable propaganda machine and were able to reach the masses throughout the colony.

When Japanese fortunes of war changed, the nationalists were given greater room to manoeuvre. The Japanese regarded them as a buffer against the Allies. Towards the end even military organization was possible. On 17 August 1945 the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed. Sukarno from Java

and Hatta from Sumatra were the obvious leaders. But the resistance movement as a whole was split politically, regionally, and by religion.

Nevertheless, the new leaders succeeded in rapidly creating a government and they gained some control over the abandoned state apparatus in important parts of the country. They defeated those persons and groups who openly competed against Sukarno and his men. But he was forced to give up strong centralized presidential power in favour of parliamentary democracy.

The PKI, which was being revived, was initially part of the opposition. But exiled leaders who adopted the popular-front policy, and had Moscow's positive view of the bourgeoisie, soon took over. A version of the European coalition and popular-front government was built. At the same time, the Dutch regained control of large areas of the outer islands and moved in on Java. The government fell in 1948. Nationalists with openly bourgeois ideas, under the leadership of Vice-President Hatta, built a new government, continued the struggle against the Dutch, but were open to compromises, not least with the assistance of Washington.

## **The Communists Isolate Themselves**

During the next few months the PKI tried to alter its strategy. Musso, an old leader from the twenties, was brought in, as well as the new hard line from Moscow against both the national bourgeoisie and the US. The PKI refused, however, to work with those communists who stood outside the party and who had made common cause with radical nationalists and opposed the earlier unconditional collaboration between the PKI and the conservative nationalists. This earlier alliance was accused of Trotskyism. Now it was time for the PKI itself to come into the limelight. Those communists who had joined other organizations, in the spirit of the popular front, should join forces with the PKI. The party would start militant work among the masses and control a "front from below" with bourgeois forces.

But when the communists were threatened at their strongest point, in Solo (Surakarta), the leadership was unable to control the membership in Madiun, only a few miles away. The so-called Madiun revolt was crushed by government soldiers and PKI leaders were executed. Then the struggle against the Dutch continued, with communists at the forefront but in subordinate positions.

In Washington it was realized that the colonial era was drawing to a close, and that in any case the US had no interest in maintaining the monopoly of the old colonial powers in developing countries. The US threatened to curtail its Marshall Aid to Holland unless the country came to terms with the government in Indonesia, which was now friendly to the West and anti-communist. The UN also adopted a similar position.

Peace and independence in 1949 meant substantial guarantees both for



Dutch companies in Indonesia and for new foreign investors.

After Madiun, those communists who were hesitant about the new policy of confrontation continued in 1948 to follow the old popular-front policy. However, a young group of leaders, schooled in the militant struggle against the Japanese and the Dutch, offered resistance and tried to implement the hard-line policy of 1948. The four central figures were Aidit, Lukman, Njoto and Sudişman. They saw to it that there were extensive strikes, and in January 1951 gained control of the central organs of the badly-weakened party. (They remained in the leadership until the autumn of 1965.) Widespread strikes continued, in a bid to shake the government. But in the autumn of 1951 a new threat against the party arose. The government started a far-reaching series of raids against the communists. The new leaders were forced underground.

### **Communist Hothouse (1952-1960/63)**

The hard-line policy adopted in 1948 by the PKI, the roots of which lay in Moscow and Peking, had thus led to considerable difficulties in 1948 and 1951. During the wave of anti-communism which occurred in 1951, the new leaders reappraised the situation and decided to follow their own much more careful strategy with a long-term perspective.

The PKI retained the objective of building a "front from below", keeping a dominant position in it. And in the future the party would also develop its own organization, rather than encourage communists to work within other parties. But at the same time the party returned to Lenin's 1920s criticism of the extreme left. The party did not allow itself to be provoked by the government as it had been in 1948. And when the government fell in 1952, because it refused to sign a security treaty with the US, the PKI approved of both its own "front from below" and a united "front from above" with groups held to be bourgeois-nationalist. The PKI could contemplate government co-operation without demanding a dominant role, and could even consider lending critical support to a more modestly progressive government, even if the party itself did not participate in the government.

This the PKI analysed in terms of collaboration with the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, which was regarded as being primarily represented by the Nationalist Party (PNI). The enemy was the comprador bourgeoisie, represented by the Islamic Masjumi Party and the Western-oriented Socialist Party (PSI).

In this way the PKI made use of Stalin's early theses on the national bourgeoisie as a domestic bourgeoisie in whose own interests it was to act against imperialism and feudalism. Mao's concept of a comprador bourgeoisie was added to Stalin's thesis. In other words, the PKI's concept of the national bourgeoisie comprised the entire capitalist class with the exception of the major capitalists who were classed as comprador.

At the same time the PKI practised Lenin's and Mao's method of first



analyzing actual events. The PNI represented a more radical form of nationalism than the pro-Western Masjumi Party. It was also less anti-communist. This was more important to the PKI than that the PNI had hardly any support from Stalin's national bourgeoisie nor from Mao's comprador class, whereas the Masjumi Party had a base in both groups.

At the same time, though the PNI was based primarily in the bureaucracy (a modern *prijaji*<sup>4</sup>), it could be correctly classified as a radical nationalist party according to a Leninist analysis. This was however, used as proof of the nationalists also being a national bourgeoisie in the Stalinist sense, and they were thus expected to behave like such a class, according to Stalin's doctrine.

Under the leadership of Aidit, the PKI became inspired by China's successes in mobilizing the peasants, but did not adopt Peking's ideas on armed struggle. The PKI emphasized the importance of gaining sponsors, of achieving peace so as to be able to work and of conducting the struggle in peaceful forms, keeping in mind the approaching parliamentary elections.

The Leninist party theory was not sacrosanct either. Side by side with all the informally dominated fronts for workers, peasants, women, youth and so on, it was decided, perhaps following the Chinese example, to make the PKI both a cadre and a mass party. It would have a totalitarian leadership with a large number of members supporting it, and be well rooted among the masses.

This drastic change of course was worked out and began to be put into practice late in 1951, and was adopted at the party congress in 1954. Stalin's post-war policies had, indeed, begun to wear thin by the time of the party congress in Moscow in 1952, but the base of the PKI's new policy was primarily to be found in its own analyses of the situation in Indonesia. Even internationally, the party was a pioneer. It was not until 1956 that Moscow openly adopted the policies which the PKI had already worked out in detail and had been practising for several years.

Soon the PKI's new policies began to bear fruit. The party and its various front organizations grew rapidly. In just a few years membership increased from about 10,000 to over half a million. In 1952 the PKI worked for the creation of a nationalist-led government, which was followed by a more radical one the following year. Indonesia played a significant role in the new neutralism and anti-colonialism. The 1955 Bandung conference was a milestone. Now President Sukarno championed the cause of radical nationalism.

In 1952 a military coup, supported by the socialists, was foiled. Pro-Western and anti-communist forces began to be isolated. The Masjumi Party split. One faction, *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU), orthodox Muslims with broad support especially among relatively well-off peasants in eastern Java, built their own party and moved politically towards the PNI.

Simultaneously, however, the dissatisfaction of the business community, the military and the Islamic leaders increased on the outer islands which

were dominated by Java, where the communists had improved their position and where importers were favoured at the expense of exporters. In Jakarta the nationalists wanted to create a domestic bourgeoisie at the expense of the exporters of raw materials, who were dominated by foreign interests. As a result of the growing dissatisfaction, smuggling and minor regional revolts increased. Discontent spread to the central leadership of the army, which succeeded in bringing down the PNI government in 1955. Shortly before the first free elections were due, a cabinet of Masjumi and PSI ministers took over again.

But the elections in 1955 were a defeat for Masjumi and the PSI, and a success for the PKI, among others. The PKI became the fourth largest party, preceded only by the PNI, Masjumi and the NU. These were the parties which succeeded in exploiting traditional contradictions along religious, ethnic or regional lines, or based on patron-client relationships. After lengthy negotiations, a new nationalist government was installed.

The communists, however, did not manage to get representation in this government either. And regional uprisings spread at the same time as economic problems, corruption and paralysis shook the politicians in Jakarta. In local elections in 1957 the PKI strengthened its position. But, now that the party had become the largest in Java, co-operation with the PNI, which had lost votes, began to suffer. Among the masses in Java the PKI and the PNI often competed for votes from the same broad group, the *abangan*,<sup>5</sup> which was not closely tied to Islam, either in its modern or orthodox forms.

President Sukarno started talking of the need for stronger presidential powers. Vice-President Hatta, who was from Sumatra and represented the outer islands, resigned. There was an intensification of the struggle against the Dutch to reunite *Irian Jaya* (Papua Western New Guinea) with the rest of Indonesia. Most of the Dutch companies were taken over in 1957. The army marched right into company boardrooms. The economy was badly shaken. Communications between the islands almost broke down. Regional revolts spread during 1958. In Sumatra and Sulawesi an independent state was proclaimed. Masjumi and the PSI were sympathetic to the rebels, and so was the U.S.

The central leadership of the army, under General Nasution, supported Sukarno. The price was the declaration of a state of emergency, and a tightly-controlled democracy in which Sukarno, supported by the PKI among others, shared power with the army.

Sukarno protected the PKI, which in return offered him a strong and radical popular base in addition to the looser and more conservative support he received from the PNI and the NU. Within both the administration and the economy, the military gained ever-increasing influence with the help of the state of emergency and their control of companies formerly owned by the Dutch. Ideologically, government policy was fairly radical. But the conservative nature of the support for the PNI and the NU meant that it was only feasible to realize a progressive foreign

policy. Strikes were illegal. The workers' and peasants' movement, led by the PKI, was forced to act very carefully.

During these years, the PKI appears to have gradually accepted what later came to be called non-capitalist development, with a predominant state sector led by nationalists whose class base was unclear. The PKI's policies appeared to be intended to put such a development strategy into practice.

In 1960 the party adopted a more critical stance.<sup>6</sup> Strong resistance was offered by the army. Even Sukarno reacted, and dissolved parliament, while new elections were postponed indefinitely. At the same time, however, Sukarno proclaimed a land reform, banned Masjumi and the PSI, and saw to it that the army did not destroy the PKI.

The party started to voice doubts about non-capitalist development only a few years after Moscow had proclaimed it in 1960. The PKI opposed the characterization of Indonesia as a national democracy<sup>7</sup> and started talking in terms of Mao's bureaucratic capitalists, who were to be found within the administration of state in general and in the army in particular.

### Communist Offensive (1960/63-1965)

By now the PKI was the third largest communist party in the world. It decided to try to utilize the radical nationalists to avoid any future pitfalls. Sukarno's position as anti-imperialist standard-bearer was indisputable. This was so in the struggle for *Irian Jaya*, which was victorious in 1962. When the pro-Western regional rebellions were crushed, Sukarno was acclaimed, and this tradition continued when Indonesia opposed the new British-influenced state of Malaysia, calling for tough confrontation policies instead.

The PKI made sure that all the demands it was agitating for could be justified by reference to their necessity in the Sukarno-led struggle against imperialism. These included nationalization, purges in the state apparatus and an economic policy based on self-reliance. In this way a contribution was made to the neutralization of an attempt to liberalize the economy in 1963, an attempt encouraged by the US, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and others.

In similar fashion, the PKI tried to motivate an offensive to force through agrarian reform, and saw the chance of moving forward by relying on its increasingly strong peasant movement, without the party deviating from Sukarno's policies.

This meant that the PKI broke with the non-capitalist and peaceful co-existence approach of Moscow, moving towards Peking's ideas of uncompromising anti-imperialism and of self-reliance. Furthermore, the PKI's offensive among the peasants meant a confrontation with the conservative rural base of the PNI and the NU in Java, thereby posing a threat to Sukarno's concept of *Nasakom* (unity between nationalists,



Muslims and communists).

The state of emergency had come to an end with the crushing of the rebellion, and *Irian Jaya* was incorporated into Indonesia. The PKI was allowed slightly more freedom of movement. But many of the military leaders saw the chance of retaining their power, partly by transferring attention to Malaysia and partly by preventing any economic liberalization or rationalization of the state enterprises, which might have posed a threat to the influence and economic base of the military. A form of radical nationalism was in the interests of the army.

In addition, the communists' peasant offensive was unsuccessful. Major contradictions arose between different peasant groups, on socio-economic, religious and political grounds. In the autumn of 1964, the PKI was forced to fall back.

The party maintained its position in Jakarta, and in 1965 wanted to intensify the continuing purge of so-called bureaucratic capitalists. With rumours that Sukarno was in poor health, and that the army was planning a coup, proposals which would affect the army were also being discussed. The PKI demanded the *Nasakomization* of the army — that is, to give nationalists, Muslims and communists who favoured Sukarno some influence — and also the setting up of an independent militia with Chinese arms.

During the night of 30 September and 1 October 1965, a number of junior officers led by Untung, the head of Sukarno's bodyguard, tried to arrest leading generals in order to force them to confess, before Sukarno, to plotting a coup. The actions of Untung and his men were known to, and supported by, PKI leader Aidit, though he had not properly informed the party or got the go-ahead from it. A small number of PKI members were also involved in some of the actions taken against the generals.

From the start, these actions were doomed to failure. Several of the generals were killed. The Defence Minister, General Nasution, escaped. General Suharto, head of the strategic reserves, was left alone, presumably because he had led the Untung group to believe he would remain neutral.

Suharto, the number two in the army, led the attack on the younger officers. Sukarno had offended him by appointing another general as temporary head of the armed forces. Afterwards, Suharto and Nasution blamed the PKI for the murders and used the opportunity not only to crush the communists, but also to undermine Sukarno's position.

## The New Order

What followed in the autumn of 1965 is incomprehensible. Suharto and Nasution ordered loyal troops to flush out, arrest and murder the supporters of the left. Students, the children of the wealthy whom the PKI had never succeeded in reaching, were brought out onto the streets. Muslim gangs

started a holy war, together with conservative nationalists, partly to take their revenge on the left, which had wanted to redistribute the land, and partly to eliminate rival Chinese businessmen. The PKI, the left-wing nationalists, the trade-union movement — the entire popular mass movement was crushed. Between half a million and a million people were murdered, particularly in Central and East Java, in Bali and in North Sumatra.

The PKI's view was that the actions of Untung and his followers should be regarded as an internal affair within the army, and that the party membership should remain passive and rely on Sukarno's ability to deal with these contradictions. But when the actions of Untung did not succeed and the party was under threat, the PKI was paralysed. The PKI leaders were not assembled in Jakarta and thus were not able to meet. The party had not been informed of what was afoot. Aidit fled, or was duped into escaping, to the PKI's stronghold around Solo and Yogyakarta, where he was soon arrested and murdered on Suharto's orders. Only Secretary-General Sudisman, of all the well-known leaders who remained in the country, managed to stay in hiding for a year.

Sudisman lent his support to a Mao-inspired self-critique which called for armed guerrilla struggle in the rural areas. An attempt to start such a struggle at Blitar in Eastern Java, led by Central Committee member Hutapea, was crushed in 1968.

For as long as possible Sukarno tried to defend both his own and the PKI's politics. But in the spring of 1966 Suharto finally took over, formed a government and deposed Sukarno in 1967. Humiliated, Sukarno died in 1970.

The new order meant that the army first led a purge and assumed state power. Then the doors were opened to technocrats and foreign capital. The US, Japan, Holland and a number of other Western nations, together with the IMF, went in with substantial economic support. "Guided democracy" and the economy which Sukarno had built up continued, but now under the leadership of the army. Not even the Muslims, who had backed the army against the communists, were given any significant room to manoeuvre.

It would, however, be incorrect to speak of an insulated military dictatorship. Keeping pace with the gushing oil and the brutal capitalist development promoted by the state, the economy has found its feet and the regime has gained some freedom of action, both in relation to foreign capital and domestic criticism. I believe there are some signs which point to the eventual undermining of the regime. But this, as well as so much else in this background chapter, I shall have reason to return to later in the book.

## Notes

1. For Chapter 4, see Törnquist (1975), Svensson (1977) and (1980). (Cf. also the fascinating contemporary communist analysis by Dingley (1927) and, e.g., the following selection from the standard scholarly literature: Anderson (1972b), Crouch (1975), Feith (1962), Hindley (1964a), Kahin (1952), May (1978), McVey (1965), (1967), Mortimer (1974a), Pluvier (1978), Reid (1974b), Robison (1978), Tichelman (1980) and Wertheim (1959). Evidence of developments after 1952 will be presented in detail in later chapters.
2. Research Minister Sumitro in *Far Eastern Economic Review* (1977) p.39.
3. See above p.3:10ff.
4. *Prijaji* refers to the traditional Javanese aristocratic and bureaucratic class, closest to the royal family. The *prijaji* were by no means strictly religious Muslims; on the contrary, Islam was often interwoven with Hinduism or animism. For instance, Parallel to the *prijaji* are the *santri*, indicating doctrinally pure Muslims. By comparison to the *prijajis* the *santris* often had commercial interests, rather than political-administrative ones. Finally, there are the *abangan*, who could be described as the underlings of the *prijaji* and who share the same cultural norms.
5. See fn. 4 above.
6. Cf. Moscow's more critical attitude at the same time, Ch.3, p.29. above.
7. For example, the communists were not represented in the government. (Later some representatives had to be taken in, but they were given no direct powers.)



## **Part 2**

# **The Communist Hothouse**



## 5. The PKI in Disarray<sup>1</sup>

On 17 August 1945 the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed. The days of the old aristocracy and collaborationists were numbered unless they could adapt to the way in which the wind was blowing.<sup>2</sup> Many of their sons had revolted both against the position of their parents and against the Dutch. This young generation of intellectuals and administrators, some with roots in the aristocracy, now acquired leading positions. The least difficult way to rise in society was through having education, contacts and the right opinions, rather than through business or property.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to unite all parts of the colony — with its different ethnic and religious groups, classes and strata — against the Dutch imperialists, within a nationalist movement, kept them together. Their chief representative was President Sukarno. They were organized mainly in the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI), which was strongest in Central and Eastern Java and in Bali.

Intellectuals influenced by Western ideology and cosmopolitanism were also able to gain considerable authority in the young republic. They were comparatively well educated and had administrative experience and international contacts. They had been uncompromising in their struggle against the Japanese. They managed to get a parliamentary political system established. After only a few months, presidential powers were drastically curtailed, and a socialist, Sutan Sjahrir, was made Prime Minister. The socialist party was called *Partai Socialis Indonesia* (PSI).

But the strongest groups, organizationally, ideologically and militarily, were those based on Islam. They had been the favourites of the Japanese, who needed moderate allies in their war against the West. The Japanese had also helped the Muslim bourgeoisie in its attempts to take over the businesses of the Chinese middlemen.<sup>4</sup> There was, however, no Indonesian capable of running the large Dutch plantations. Vice-President Hatta generally represented the interests of the Islamic groups, which by no means lacked influence in Java, but were even stronger in the outer islands. The different groups co-operated within the Masjumi Party, short for *Madjelis Sjuro Muslimin Indonesia*.

It may seem, therefore, that Indonesia already had a system of political parties in the Western sense. Centrally there was a considerable resemblance. But the leaders were those who had held power traditionally,



irrespective of their anti-colonial or anti-feudal interests. They gained mass support, or support from other leaders, by playing on personal loyalties. The leaders were patrons who protected and defended their clients politically, economically and administratively, but who also took advantage of them.<sup>5</sup>

The PKI, however, barely existed. Most of the old leaders who had survived first the repression of the twenties, and then the Japanese occupation, had gone into exile. When young communists who remained in the country tried to rehabilitate the party, they joined the radical opposition in which Tan Malaka played a decisive role.

Tan Malaka<sup>6</sup> had been PKI leader in the early twenties. Soon he was forced into exile and became the Comintern's representative in South-East Asia. When the PKI chose to follow an extreme-left line around the mid-twenties, partly under the leadership of Musso and Alimin, whom we shall soon meet, both Malaka and Stalin disapproved. In 1926-27 there was an attempted revolt which Malaka himself tried to prevent.

Later Malaka left Stalin's Comintern. While Moscow devoted itself to sectarian politics, Malaka tried to create an independent national communist party, with little success. When, however, in 1945, Sukarno, Hatta and the socialists took the lead, following relatively conservative policies, Malaka was the only well-known charismatic nationalist who was able to return swiftly from exile and start building an alternative, an opposition that was partly influenced by communism.

Malaka advocated an uncompromising struggle against both the old and the new forms of colonialism and feudalism. Faithful to the Comintern's ideas of the twenties, he tried to build a broad front in which there was room for all so-called anti-feudal and anti-colonial forces. The front objective was to replace the leaders of the new republic with radical nationalists who more consistently wanted to develop the revolution.

This, then, was the opposition of which PKI was a member for just under a year. Then the party returned to other old PKI leaders, who brought with them Moscow's optimistic view of the anti-colonial struggle, which, they said, ought to be conducted within the framework of a modified popular front, while paying great attention to the bourgeoisie. The PKI separated from the opposition and instead backed the government in power when it tried to crush its radical critics.

The communists built an unofficial party alongside the legal PKI. Several leading communists were members only of the unofficial organization. On the surface they appeared to act as members of other organizations, such as the socialist labour party, *Partai Buruh*; the trade-union movement, *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI), in which the largest and most important union was the plantation workers' *Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Indonesia* (Sarbupri); the peasant movement *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (BTI); or the semi-military youth movement *Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia* (Pesindo).

The unofficial PKI co-ordinated the activities of the communists in different organizations, and formed a left-wing front, *Sajap Kiri*. In both

parliament and the cabinet the front had a considerable number of representatives, so it was able not only to promote left-wing policies, but also to participate in the elimination of the radical opposition and to agree to compromises with the Dutch. The most important unofficial communist, Amir Sjarifuddin, became Prime Minister in a popular-front government which survived from mid-1947 to January 1948.

## **A New Hard Line — and Setbacks**

During the period of the popular-front government, the communists acquired considerable influence among the armed forces, which were still mainly made up of different groups in each area without an effective central leadership. In the meanwhile the Dutch troops advanced. The areas controlled by the republic shrank. On the outer islands the Dutch created small states whose leaders were willing to be co-operative. The Renville Agreement, which the government signed in January 1948, was so unfavourable a ceasefire agreement that it led to the fall of the popular-front government.

Moderate nationalists, socialists and Muslims, led by Vice-President Hatta, built a new government. The left was offered minority representation, which it did not accept.

At the same time, a split occurred in the Socialist Party. Those who supported Hatta's government formed their own party, *Partai Socialis Indonesia* (PSI). The left joined the opposition. A new front, *Front Demokrasi Rakyat*, was created. Sharp criticism was levelled at Hatta's government. The front drew closer to the old ideas of Tan Malaka about an uncompromising struggle against the Dutch.

While the government continued the armed struggle, it also tried to eliminate all communist influence, especially in the armed forces. The opposition responded with successful strikes especially amongst plantation workers.

When the old communist leader Musso returned from exile in the Soviet Union in August 1948, the communists with their former policy of making concessions took firmer shape. Musso was soon made the new leader of the party.

With him he brought Zhdanov's line and Moscow's new tougher view, which was partly influenced by the Chinese revolution. He was able to accept the way local leaders had come to terms with his former policies. A new strategy was hammered out and referred to in the document *Djalan Baru*, "The New Road".<sup>7</sup>

The PKI engaged in self-criticism for having left the government in January and for having accepted earlier concessions to the Dutch. Now instead, the party said, the bourgeoisie in general and the "big national bourgeoisie" in particular had taken over, under the leadership of the PSI, Masjumi and Hatta. These were prepared to relinquish their own national-

bourgeois interests and sell out the independence of Indonesia to imperialist forces spearheaded by the US. They were compradors. The communists were thus forced to shoulder the historic task of the bourgeois nationalists, and carry out the democratic and national revolution.<sup>8</sup>

The communists should step forward and unite all truly progressive forces in and around the party. Those political movements where the communists held top positions should be dissolved and their members should join the PKI. In turn, the PKI should build and control a national "front from below". In the international arena, the party should take its stand within the only true peace-loving progressive camp, the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union.

Musso talked openly about his "Gottwald Plan" (Prague, February 1948). This included not only a communist-dominated front from below, initiated by several organizations but with an individual (personal) membership, but also mass action which would enable the communists to achieve government power and successive control of the state apparatus.

Presumably it was intended to pursue an intensified military struggle against the Dutch alongside the mass action. Particularly in the occupied areas, there were units which sympathized with the communists and which were as strong as the government's. There the PKI would be able to seize the initiative.<sup>9</sup>

The communists started to put their strategy into practice. Unofficial communists came forward. There were strikes and occupations; poor peasants demanded that the endowments (*tanah bengkok*) of the village leaders should be divided up; there were invitations from the PKI to the PNI and Masjumi to negotiate about the initiation of a national front, which, as everyone knew, the communists intended to dominate. Needless to say, the PNI and Masjumi rejected the invitations.

Even though the PKI's policies were now closer to Tan Malaka's line than in 1946 and 1947, there was no broad co-operation within the left either. Malaka was of old a main opponent of the leaders of the revolt in the twenties. Musso and Alimin.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he refused to toe the Stalin line, and so was promptly called a Trotskyist. A somewhat more apt name would have been Titoist.

The Hatta government used the new PKI strategy as an excuse for an open counter-attack. The armed forces were to be reorganized, professionally trained and placed under central command. There was a risk of communist sympathizers, especially in Pesindo, being disarmed.

Armed conflicts soon broke out, primarily in Solo (Surakarta) near the border of East Java. These were manageable for the moment, although the town had a Wild West atmosphere. But when similar conflict spread to Madiun, more than 100 kilometres to the east, and the young communists took over the town in September 1948 for defence purposes, the dams burst.

The actions of the local communists in Madiun had not in any way been planned by the leadership of the party.<sup>11</sup> When, however, the leaders



arrived, the relations between the rebels and the government in Yogyakarta (nearly 200 kilometres to the south-west) were so strained that there was no way out. The Hatta government and, after pressure from the army,<sup>12</sup> even President Sukarno accused the communists of trying to take power in the whole country. Musso and the PKI maintained that they had the choice between fighting and total defeat.<sup>13</sup>

Army units crushed the communists in Madiun. Musso and former Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin were amongst those who were killed. The rebellious communists were declared outlaws, and anti-communist Muslims took this as an opportunity to "clean up" the villages. In the final analysis, their control of the land was threatened by the poor peasants mobilized by the PKI. According to the PKI, about 10,000 people were killed in the aftermath of the Madiun affair.<sup>14</sup> Renewed attacks from the Dutch prevented an even greater massacre. Once again communists and government soldiers fought on the same side.

### The PKI in Disarray

The Madiun revolt caused the PKI to be thrown into disarray. The leader of the Socialist Party,<sup>15</sup> Tan Ling Djie, dissociated himself from the revolt and did not accept Musso's *Djalan Baru*.

Tan Ling Djie maintained that the communists ought once again to become active in other parties and political groups while the PKI should lie low. Mass actions which could be stigmatized as communist ought, for the time being, to be shelved in favour of parliamentary work.

Several young Musso followers did, however, manage to escape from the area of conflict around Madiun. They continued the struggle against the Dutch.<sup>16</sup> One of the members of Musso's Politburo, D.N. Aidit, is moreover credited with having taken himself to Vietnam and China.<sup>17</sup> Today former PKI leaders dispute this and assert that Aidit hid in Sumatra.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps uplifted by his experiences abroad, whether true or false, he started working openly with the PKI in July 1950. Aidit, Lukman, Njoto and Sudisman built a team which took upon itself the task of picking up the fallen mantle of Musso. All were in their mid-thirties and former members of Musso's Politburo. But they had been schooled more by stalwart struggles against the Dutch and the Japanese than by the international communist movement.<sup>19</sup>

Aidit's fraction worked quickly and dynamically to restore the PKI to the condition recommended by Musso. They recommenced the publication of the party's theoretical periodical, *Bintang Merah*, and soon claimed that they were distributing 10,000 copies, even though at that point the party could not have had more than half that number of members.<sup>20</sup> They persuaded the communists in the Labour Party, *Partai Buruh*, to join forces with the PKI. And Pesindo became the PKI's youth movement, *Permuda Rakjat*. They split, and played the older leaders off against one another, with Tan Ling

Djie and his Socialist Party at the head.

In the Aidit group's eyes, Sukarno's and particularly Hatta's government had betrayed the revolution when, at the round-table conference in 1949, they had negotiated Indonesian independence at the cost of substantial concessions. Furthermore, the largest party in the government, Masjumi, had close connections to the fanatical Muslims of West Java who formed *Darul Islam*.<sup>21</sup> This organization refused to recognise the new republic, fighting instead for an Islamic state. In addition, it was obvious that the government and the President intended to pursue former colonial economic policies, even if a domestic bourgeoisie in subordinate positions would complement them.<sup>22</sup>

The Aidit fraction and dissatisfied labour and peasant leaders thus jointly organized militant strikes and occupations, in stark contrast to the caution displayed by the older leaders. Many trade-union leaders supported him because they were more impressed by Aidit's determination to take up the struggle again, and start rebuilding the labour movement, than by his sophisticated political ideas.<sup>23</sup> Late in 1950, for example, about 700,000 plantation workers went on strike for 50 days.<sup>24</sup> Peasants and workers who occupied abandoned plantations refused to budge. Many peasants refused to lease their rice paddies for the cultivation of sugar. The colonial economy was shaken to its foundations, and the government could offer no alternative.<sup>25</sup>

The Natsir government, led by Masjumi, succeeded the Hatta cabinet in September 1950. In February 1951 it declared strikes in all important companies to be illegal. The government was bolstered by the state of emergency, which had formally been in operation since 1939.<sup>26</sup> The outlawing of strikes sharpened contradictions.

In January 1951 the Aidit group finally managed to take over the reins of power in the Politburo. Aside from the four-man leadership, there only remained Alimin. The issue that caused the fall of the old leaders was their desire to stick to the treaty with the Dutch over *Irian Jaya* (West New Guinea). The Tan Ling Djie fraction turned against the PNI and Sukarno, as most communists had consistently done since 1948, and maintained that the inhabitants of *Irian Jaya* ought to determine their own future.

The Aidit group, on the other hand, argued that the entire former colony ought to stand united against imperialism. There was, moreover, a possibility of joining together at the parliamentary level with the PNI against the government. If the PKI did not demand the absorption of *Irian Jaya* into the Indonesian republic, the communists would insulate themselves from public opinion and the political dynamism of nationalism.

The opposition did indeed succeed in toppling the Natsir cabinet in March 1951. The formal pretext was the issue of local self-government, but in reality strikes and compromises with the Dutch played an equally important part.

The opposition had formed a joint front, the BPP, and the PKI sensed the

coming of a new dawn. Perhaps here were to be found the seeds of the communist-dominated front which Musso had been seeking.<sup>27</sup> In the long run, perhaps even a popular democratic government would become possible.

All these dreams were shattered by the coming to power of the Sukiman government in April 1951. Sukarno succeeded in reuniting the PNI and Masjumi. The government followed tough pro-Western and anti-communist policies. The PKI was furious and returned to its anti-government activities.

In August the government ordered extensive raids against its opponents generally and against communists in particular.

Despite trade-union threats of confrontation, the government dared to retain a de facto prohibition of strikes, by introducing a regulation stipulating three weeks' obligatory notice and negotiations before a strike. If the attempts at mediation were unsuccessful, the government could prescribe another cooling-down period. The new law was passed as an emergency ruling, without proper treatment in parliament.<sup>28</sup>

In his report to parliament in October, Sukiman himself said that about 15,000 people had been arrested for anti-government activities.<sup>29</sup>

The PKI was paralysed by the new wave of repression. Many of its leaders were arrested.<sup>30</sup> Was the party facing the same problem as in 1948 — that of accepting defeat or offering violent resistance?

Aidit, Lukman and Njojo managed to go underground. They chose quite a different line from Musso's in 1948. The communists would not allow themselves to be provoked, but would continue to work openly. It was the government and its lackeys who would be forced to display their anti-democratic policies.<sup>31</sup>

These defensive tactics bore fruit. The PKI did not accuse all the ministers, and were careful to avoid those of the PNI. In parliament the government was subjected to sharp criticism even from anti-communists. And in February 1952 it fell, because of its attempts to negotiate a "mutual security aid" agreement with the United States.

But the Aidit four-man leadership, which was sitting re-reading Lenin's *"Left-wing" Communism — an Infantile Disorder*, planned more than a new tactic. This became obvious when Aidit, during negotiations with the government, suddenly agreed to give critical support to a cabinet led by the PNI, even though communists would not even be represented. The party even agreed to limit the number of strikes. And one month later, in May 1952, when Wilopo, a PNI member, formed a government and the PKI celebrated its anniversary, cheers were heard for President Sukarno — the man whom only a few months earlier had been called semi-fascist and a communist-hunter. It was only during the second time around that the astounded members at the meeting joined in the ovations. By this time Alimin had been joined by Aidit when he led the cheering.<sup>32</sup>



## Notes

1. In this comprehensive outline I have primarily, and where no other reference is specified, made use of the following research: Anderson (1972b), (1976), Feith (1962), Hindley (1964a), Indonesian Political Thinking (1970), Kahin (1952), McVey (1969a), Pluvier (1978), Reid (1974a) and (1974b), Wertheim (1959) and Törnquist (1975). Since the chapter holds little that is new from a research point of view, I have only specified sources in a few cases.
2. According to the Indonesian historian Onghokham, a surprising number of conservatives soon joined the revolution. These were, among others, the so-called *pamong praja*, the local bailiffs or administrators of the Dutch. The most obstinate were to be found among the aristocracy on the outer islands. Interview, 18 October 1980 in Jakarta.
3. Cf. Reid (1974b) pp.3ff.
4. Wertheim (1959) p.121.
5. Sartono (1980) gives a clear indication of the myriad organizations that grew up round different leaders and collapsed with them. Sartono talks about *bupakism* (*Uapak* = father, protector, respected man).
6. The most comprehensive study of Tan Malaka in the period up to 1945 is to be found in Poeze (1976). Helen Jarvis at the University of Sydney is working on a more analytical book on Malaka.
7. *Djalan Baru Untuk Republik Indonesia* (1953).
8. Cf. also Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) pp.74ff.
9. Soerjono (1980), especially p.88.
10. The communists on Sumatra were nearer to Malaka, who was himself a Sumatran. But national co-operation between, e.g., Alimin and Malaka was impossible since, in the words of a veteran communist, "they had been quarrelling since 1926". Interview No. 59, Jakarta, 1980.
11. This is corroborated also by researchers such as J.M. Kroef in periodicals like *Problems of Communism*. Cf. Kroef (1958b) p.17, fn.6.
12. Pauker (1969) p.15.
13. PKI's version of the Madiun affair is related inter alia in Aidit (1953) pp.103-137: The Madiun revolt was completely and utterly provoked by the government.  
From the side of the local Pesindo leadership, the claim is made that the communists took over power together with the deputy mayor, after an attempt by him to send reports upwards about attacks on the left, which ought to have been sent by the ordinary mayor, but which he did not do, were declared illegal. "When Musso and Amir Sjarifuddin and others arrived, they were not angry with us, but realized we had been provoked." Interview No.59, Jakarta, 1980. Prime source.
14. According to other veteran communists, however, Musso was livid, and tried unsuccessfully to reach Sukarno with an explanatory message sent by courier. Interviews 61 and 62, Jakarta, 1980.
15. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.77.
16. The former leader of the Socialist Party, not to be confused with the breakaway PSI members.
17. Even the young leader of the revolt, Pesindos Soemarsono, escaped. He was arrested near Semarang by the Dutch, who did not know who he was, so that he was later able to flee to Sumatra. There he lived a quiet life as a teacher for several years, partly so as not to make things difficult for the PKI leadership. In the sixties he returned to Java and joined those who were critical of party leaders, often from the left, but usually for their autocratic ways. Soemarsono is regarded and now regards himself more as a nationalist than as a communist. Interviews No. 35, 58, 61 and 62, Jakarta, 1980. Primary sources.
18. See, e.g., Hindley (1964a) p.23.
19. Interview Nos. 20, 24 and 58, Jakarta, 1980. One of those interviewed talks about how he indirectly helped Aidit to get to his parents in Sumatra for a few weeks. Thereafter Aidit returned to Jakarta where the person interviewed saw him. The person who helped Aidit directly was then chairman of the harbour workers' union, Sjam of the PSI. Later Sjam was to play a key role in the events of September-October 1965. It ought, however, to be pointed out that the source referred to is today a

- severe critic of Aidit, for which reason these details ought preferably to be further checked.
19. For details about the four, see Hindley (1964a) pp.23-25. Mortimer (1974a) pp.29-42 or Cayrac-Blanchard (1973) pp.186-194.
20. Hindley (1964a) p.24.
21. As regards *Darul Islam* see, e.g., Utrecht (1978) and Horikoshi (1975).
22. During the Natsir government, already in 1950-51 Finance Minister Sumitro formulated a plan for the creation of an Indonesian bourgeoisie. See, e.g., Feith (1962) p.174 and Sutter (1959), especially pp.772-78.
23. Interview No. 8, Amsterdam, 1980. and Nos. 29, 58 and 62, Jakarta, 1980. Primary sources.
24. Tedjasukmana (1958) pp.112ff., Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) pp.80, 84. According to Tedjasukmana (1961), pp.221ff., in 1950 144 strikes were registered, mainly on the plantations, involving more than 490,000 workers. In 1951 there were about 319,000 workers involved in 541 strikes. The sources, which I have been able to study myself, are statistics from the Ministry of Labour, (Interview No. 55, Jakarta, 1980.) There the number of disputes during 1951 is given as 2,754. Cf. differences in Hawkins (1967) p.266.
25. For an illustrative case study of sugar cultivation, see Gordon (1979a).
26. See e.g., Tedjasukmana (1958) p.113.
27. The BPP was, however, not a front from below with individual membership, but from the top, between parties. (To acquire leading positions the communists had to rely on a few members to be particularly knowledgeable, active and well co-ordinated and therefore able to take the initiative, in a front from below, despite the small size of the party.)
28. See, e.g., Tedjasukmana (1958) pp.113ff. The Minister of Labour at that time was responsible for the law, Tedjasukmana himself, who was on the right of the *Partai Buruh*, says:

Sukiman wanted to act against the strikes but could not get any support. I simply suggested prohibiting them. It was an audacious idea. "You must become Minister of Labour", they said. ... If one cooling-down period was insufficient, we just prolonged it. ... The communists were furious. But I knew that their mouths were bigger than their muscles. So I was able to persuade most of them not to strike, and I encouraged their employers to compromise. If they nevertheless went on strike, we sent in police and military units. Sometimes, in certain small and unimportant companies, I allowed the workers to strike, especially if the trade-union was not communist led. I knew that neither the parties nor the trade-union movement were strong. All that was needed was a strong man.

(Tedjasukmana now works with trade-union education, among other things, within the organizations allowed by the regime, with the support of West Germany.) Interview, Jakarta, 25 October 1980.

29. Feith (1962) p.189.
30. Aidit (1951) in Aidit (1961a) p.28 and Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.260.
31. Aidit (1951) in Aidit (1961a) pp.5-12.
32. Brackman (1963) p.175. Hindley (1964a) p.257. Aidit's speech can be found in Aidit (1961a) pp.31-47.

## 6. A New Strategy

What had actually happened? What was the basis of these concessions and what was the idea behind them?<sup>1</sup>

### Strong Enemies<sup>2</sup>

According to the PKI, Indonesia's political independence was limited and did not mean the country was economically independent. Indonesia had been forced into a union with the Netherlands under the Dutch royal family. The Dutch government determined the scope of Indonesia's economic policies and foreign relations. Furthermore, Indonesia was bound to pay considerable reparations to the Netherlands. The foreign capitalists had regained their former plantations, companies and rights. Dutch experts had decisive influence in both the civil and the military administrations. The government in the Netherlands refused to relinquish *Irian Jaya*.

Indonesia's own trade and industry were, in other words, very small and weak. Indonesian Chinese had during the colonial period acquired a relatively strong position, often as middlemen. They were branded as foreigners and colonial lackeys, particularly by competing Muslim capitalists. But much of the trade, industry and handicrafts the Chinese were engaged in was as a matter of course, part of the national economy, according to the PKI, even if they ought to produce more and trade less. Presumably many were interested in such a development, but rival Indonesians prevented them by various prohibitions and political restrictions. The Chinese required political protection, particularly against the extreme Muslims. The nationalists were not friends of the Chinese either. So it was that some Chinese capitalists were not unfavourably disposed to the only non-racial party, the PKI.<sup>3</sup>

Muslim businessmen, on the other hand, were not only anti-communist, but had also, for hundreds of years, fought against state control and regulation. During the twenties this had been progressive, and they had even worked together with the communists against the colonial state. And during the forties they often joined with the nationalists. But now that the



Dutch had finally been driven from the palace, the Muslim capitalists wanted not only to take over the profitable business dealings of the Chinese, but also to transfer a good deal of the old and often state-run colonial economy into private hands. The Muslims were involved not only in trade, handicrafts and petty industries all over the country, but also in the export-oriented small plantations on the outer islands.

When the PKI talked about the Muslim capitalists, as it did above, the party usually took Masjumi as its point of departure, since this was the umbrella organization of several Muslim movements. In government Masjumi had conducted a bitter anti-communist and remarkably pro-Western policy. The PKI said that Masjumi had tried to destroy the progressive alliance between workers and peasants and rebuild the colonial economy. Masjumi had intimate contacts with groups which were openly fighting against the republic and which terrorized the population, especially *Darul Islam* on West Java. According to the PKI, Masjumi's policies favoured the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie.

It can and has been disputed whether it is reasonable to say that Masjumi was the organization of the comprador bourgeoisie. The PKI's analysis was based more on the politics of Masjumi than on its social base. Rex Mortimer maintained.<sup>4</sup> That is true, but not especially remarkable. Both Lenin and Mao allowed concrete actions in general and political activities in particular to weigh heavily when determining who was friend and who was foe. Lenin found what was most important was whether a movement fought against imperialism and feudalism or not, as well as whether it was anti-communist or not.<sup>5</sup> No one has maintained anything but that Masjumi's policies were anti-communist and that the party sought to co-operate with foreign capitalists.

Even when the PKI hinted that an organization which was bent on pursuing comprador policies, virtually by definition had its class base amongst the comprador class, this was anchored in Lenin's tendency to regard political organizations as expressions of direct class rule.<sup>6</sup>

The PKI used a similar analysis when dealing with the PSI. With education and international contacts the socialists acquired considerable influence over the state apparatus. They took as their point of departure the arguments of the Second International about a partially progressive colonialism and capitalism. Capitalism must first be fully developed: only later could there be talk of socialism. Foreign capital spread capitalism to Indonesia and with control from the state this could have positive effects. If Masjumi stood for private capitalism, then the PSI leant towards state capitalism in a mixed economy.

In the eyes of the PKI, the PSI's policies were a gross betrayal. From 1952 the PKI launched a bitter attack against the PSI. Aidit said that the socialists were playing the game of the compradors at the same time as the leaders were not slow to line their own pockets through their foreign partners. The socialists also tried to work against the communists by splitting the trade-union movement.<sup>7</sup>

This type of analysis was also rooted in Leninism.<sup>8</sup> And when leading socialists tried to conduct a coup d'état together with senior officers in October 1952, the PKI could rightly attack the "democratic socialists" for being undemocratic.

Where, then, did the PKI find its national bourgeoisie? The party did not make many precise definitions on questions of class structure. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the PNI had moved away from Masjumi during the Natsir government. Later the PNI and Masjumi were reconciled, but the nationalists repudiated Sukiman's virulent anti-communism. The PNI and later also Sukarno wanted to continue the struggle against imperialism in general and against the Dutch in particular. The PNI contemplated working together with the PKI and it was Sukarno who, in October 1952, saved the country from the coup instigated by the socialists and senior military men. The PNI and Sukarno refused to transfer state property to private ownership, and preferred to talk about nationalization and assistance to domestic trade and industry at the expense of the export of former colonial products. Thereby, said the PKI, the PNI and Sukarno had started pursuing policies which were in the interests of the national bourgeoisie. Finally, the nationalists spoke out against "feudal remnants".<sup>9</sup>

Naturally, it is correct, as Mortimer among others has pointed out, that the national bourgeoisie did not exactly flock to the PNI.<sup>10</sup> On the contrary, as has already been indicated, the PNI attracted a new generation of young administrators and intellectuals whose roots were in Java's old aristocracy. Their career opportunities were to be found in the central and local administration and not in the economy. The picture of a middle-strata party was not altered by some businessmen, many wealthy peasants and the sizeable number of urbanized petty bourgeoisie who, nevertheless, were PNI members. At the same time, all agree that the PNI, before long supported by Sukarno and later following in his tracks, started pursuing an anti-imperialist policy, talked of the need for measures against feudalism and accepted the PKI.

In this case, too, it seems to me that the leadership of the PKI had a foothold in Leninism when they maintained that the PNI and Sukarno tried to pursue progressive bourgeois politics.<sup>11</sup> Whether the PKI was right or wrong is quite another matter.

When the PKI moreover maintained that the PNI's base was in the national bourgeoisie, it was of course mistaken, but this view was in line with Lenin's and particularly with Stalin's outlook that parties practised direct class rule.<sup>12</sup> Progressive bourgeoisie or not, the PKI leaders emphasized the risk that the PNI and Sukarno would form an alliance with Masjumi and Hatta instead of seeking co-operation with the left. This happened in 1948, under the Sukiman government. At all costs the PKI had to prevent this being repeated.<sup>13</sup>

## The Rural Situation

The revolution had ground to a halt in the villages as well. The sultan in Solo, to take one example, had certainly lost his ability to exploit the peasants directly. And many peasants had regained control over land which collaborating village leaders had helped Dutch sugar companies, among others, to lease. The PKI leaders, however, emphasized that most of what they called feudal institutions and relations had survived and played a decisive role. Indonesia was, according to the PKI, not only semi-colonial, but semi-feudal as well.

The situation of the peasants, who comprise some 70 per cent of the Indonesian population, is no better than it was in the past. Serious and important remnants of feudalism are still extant in Indonesia: these are; the right of the large landlord to monopolize the ownership of lands which are worked by the peasants, the majority of whom cannot possibly own land and are therefore forced to rent land from landowners under any and all conditions; the payment of land-rents to the landlords in the form of commodities, which commodities comprise a very great majority of the yield of the harvest of the peasants resulting in misery for most of the peasants; the system of land-rent in the form of work on the lands of the landlords, which places the majority of the peasants in the position of slaves; and, lastly, the accumulation of debts, which strangles the majority of the peasants and places them in the position of slaves to the landowners.<sup>14</sup>

That the PKI characterized Indonesia as semi-feudal with a feudal past has been criticized, starting from more or less explicit theories that Java and its agrarian societies in particular, in contrast to the commercial Muslim ones, were characterized by an Asian mode of production rather than a feudal one.<sup>15</sup> From such points of departure, a good deal of the PKI's analysis can be called into question, particularly whether they in fact neglected to analyse political and ideological dependency relationships in the rural areas of Java. But the fundamental thesis that the power of the lords is dependent on a concentration of land and must be attacked by redistribution of the land — continues to survive. And, needless to say, no one questions whether the PKI's outlook harmonized with communist tradition.

## The PKI's Weakness

On the whole, the situation was dismal. The opposition was powerful, while the PKI was badly damaged. At most, the party had 7,000 members.<sup>16</sup> In late 1951, thousands were in prison. There was no way of co-ordinating activities and there were still many internal conflicts to be resolved.

The communists had been routed from the state apparatus and disarmed. Strikes had been forbidden by the government, without the opposition being able to do very much about it.

The PKI was, furthermore, not deeply rooted amongst the peasants.<sup>17</sup>



With the exception of certain plantation areas of Sumatra, it was a Javanese party.<sup>18</sup> Finally, the anti-communism of the Cold War was rampant. There was war in Korea, and the PKI was not regarded as being reliable. Pronounced Muslims called the PKI impious materialists.

### Long-term Strategy

The PKI's about-face in late 1951 and early 1952 was thus based on the leadership's realization that neo-colonialism had Indonesia in a tight grip and that the PKI was weak and threatened. The revolutionary resurgence of the second half of the 1940s had ground to a halt. Musso's objectives were now too advanced and his strategy unrealistic. The PKI did not have a hope of joining any government, and had even less chance of dominating a national united front from below. Instead the party was once again isolated.<sup>19</sup>

The leaders of the PKI were now looking for a theoretical perspective which fitted a neo-colonial situation in which the communists were weak. There was little new to be found in Moscow, which had lost interest in the Indonesian revolution. Much could be learned from comrades in China and Vietnam, but there the communists had long since managed to acquire a dominant position in the nationalist movement as a whole. According to the PKI, an armed struggle was not appropriate for Indonesia, where the communists had no liberated areas nor sanctuaries in neighbouring countries. First, said Aidit, the party should strive to retain legal possibilities for struggle. Armed struggle could not be a goal in itself.<sup>20</sup>

Instead the leaders of the PKI turned back to Lenin's views of the twenties to find a perspective that could be applicable. In particular Lenin's ideas of how communists ought to act when a revolutionary situation was conspicuous by its absence (in *"Left-wing" Communism — an Infantile Disorder*) appealed to the Aidit leadership. The communists should look for temporary co-operation with other progressive forces, maybe even take part in broad-based governments.<sup>21</sup>

The same doctrine of co-operation characterized Lenin's and the Comintern's theses on the struggle in the colonies. If communists are weak, they ought to make common cause with revolutionary-bourgeois movements against imperialism and feudalism, but should take care not to be swallowed by them.

In this the PKI rooted its new independent line. The leadership of the party refused to import and copy viewpoints that were opportune within the communist movement. Instead it tried to adapt and apply the theoretical framework of the twenties to the specific situation in Indonesia. The PKI belonged to one of the few parties that could not in a simple fashion be accused of mechanical formalism, economism and other tendencies rooted in Stalinist dogma. On the contrary, the serious criticism was often concerned with the leaders of the PKI not sticking sufficiently strongly to

their principles.<sup>22</sup>

When the PKI's opponents joined forces and rolled up their shirt sleeves, Musso answered in similar fashion. Aidit, however, refused to be provoked into taking up the fight with their opponents on their terms.<sup>23</sup> Instead, it was necessary first to try to split the enemy, defend the party's opportunities for working, and build a strong government. Then it would be in a position to go on to the attack.<sup>24</sup>

This had little in common with rigid thinking in stages. The PKI did indeed use Stalin's words in talking about Indonesia being semi-colonial and semi-feudal and about the need for completing a national and democratic revolution before one could start discussing the struggle for socialism. But, at the same time, the PKI maintained, with Lenin and Mao, that the communists could lead the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution towards socialism without having to endure a fully-developed capitalist stage.<sup>25</sup>

The more modest ambition which the Aidit leadership now embraced was concerned with creating the preconditions for a struggle against imperialism and feudalism; only later would the time be ripe to talk about controlling a number of fronts and of completing the revolution of 1945.<sup>26</sup>

## **Democracy!**

Thus the PKI leadership were concerned, first, to co-operate with those who defended democratic rights and thereby gave the PKI the opportunity of propagating, mobilizing and organizing. Other forces had to be isolated. In particular, the leaders of Masjumi and the PSI had shown themselves to be bitterly anti-communist. The PNI and Sukarno, on the other hand, were clearly not averse to working against either the PSI or Masjumi, nor to accepting the support of the PKI.

The Aidit leadership simply decided to offer its critical support to the PNI and Sukarno, in exchange for which the PKI would be able to operate legally and be accepted as a reliable national force.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, the PKI came to lend its critical support to the PNI-led government of Wilopo in early 1952 without the communists even being represented.

This front from above was expected to give PKI the possibility of legally reinforcing its position. The Aidit leadership adhered to Musso's idea that the PKI ought to create its own profile and that all communists should work within the party. On the other hand, the leadership now advocated a "mass party of Leninist type". Since the PKI leaders counted on being able to work in peaceful and democratic ways, at least during the period in which the party was building up its position, there were no reasons to copy slavishly the small and strictly cadre-led illegal parties. Furthermore, the Chinese party had demonstrated the importance of the party retaining intimate

contact with the masses. But one should retain Lenin's view of a communist party. His principles were valid irrespective of whether the party worked legally or underground.

The Aidit group thus retained the organizational principle of democratic centralism and a totalitarian cadre in central and regional positions, besides the many members and candidates for membership at lower levels.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of all members being schooled and politically conscious, at least familiar with the policies of the leadership. But they should be schooled while taking part in the struggle. It was regarded as sectarian to set high requirements for admission. The general perspective was, however, one of a party which led the masses rather than one that was controlled by the spontaneous consciousness of the people.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside the party, but closely related to it, the communists would also organize various fronts from below.<sup>30</sup> The most important was the trade-union movement SOBSI, by far the largest confederation of trade unions in Indonesia: the peasant organization BTI;<sup>31</sup> the youth movement *Pemuda Rakjat* (formerly Pesindo); the women's organization Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*);<sup>32</sup> the veterans' organization Perbepsi (*Persatuan Bekas Pedjuang Seluruh Indonesia*); the organization of cultural workers (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakjat*); a student teachers' organization, IPPI (*Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia*); later on, in 1956, an organization for students, CGMI (*Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia*); and Baperki (*Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia*), formed in 1954 to organize ethnic minorities, especially the Chinese.

Through these fronts from below, the communists wanted to build a social alliance between workers, peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie, under their own informal leadership. If such an alliance were to grow in strength, the PKI would be able to influence the front from above, thanks to Sukarno and the PNI, in a radical direction.

But, and it is particularly important to note this, co-operation with the PNI and Sukarno was a precondition for the alliance being built at all, and for it to be strongly forged. The party leadership was not unaware of this.<sup>33</sup>

Why should the PNI and Sukarno give the PKI the opportunity to work legally, building fronts from below and creating the preconditions for a communist-dominated people's democratic government? The PKI itself calculated that the PNI and Sukarno both needed a measure of democracy to win the support of the masses, especially against Masjumi and the PSI. The latter, the PKI maintained, followed policies which were in the interests of the imperialists and the feudal lords. The PNI and Sukarno, on the other hand, followed policies which served the interests of the national bourgeoisie.

What guarantees did the PKI have for believing that the PNI and Sukarno would continue following such policies and that they would be successful?



At this point the PKI leaders did a theoretical about-turn. Hitherto actual events and political actors had been analysed. Following Lenin it was said that different actors had their place in different classes and fractions. But the important thing for Lenin, as well as for the PKI, had been what the actors actually did.

The Aidit group now began to regard the PNI and Sukarno not as political actors but as being almost identical with the national bourgeoisie. After that, what the PNI and Sukarno actually did was no longer the crucial factor, but instead the PKI focused on the deterministic schedule that Stalin developed in the twenties. This determined how the national bourgeoisie *had* to act. Obstacles not only hampered capitalist development in underdeveloped countries, according to this schedule, but blocked it. In order to realize its objective interests, the national bourgeoisie was, therefore, *obliged* to move against imperialism and feudalism.<sup>34</sup> Since, according to the Aidit group, the PNI and Sukarno could be analysed in the same way as the national bourgeoisie, they would be forced now and in the future, to turn against feudalism and imperialism, unless they wished to commit suicide or be duped. To succeed they were forced to dissolve the political power monopoly and mobilize the masses. Therefore, they would be forced to defend democratic rights.<sup>35</sup>

By the communists and nationalists revealing that Masjumi and the PSI pursued policies in the interests of the feudal lords and compradors, the PKI calculated that the Muslim masses and the socialist workers would finally look for other representatives. The communists were hoping to absorb a large number in front organizations like SOBSI and BTI, and believed many would move closer to the PNI.<sup>36</sup>

It would be possible to persuade the national bourgeoisie to abandon their own interests since they were too weak to be able to lead the struggle against imperialism and feudalism to victory. But the communists, with their own alliance between workers, peasants and the petty bourgeoisie, ought to assist the national bourgeoisie, remind them of their class interests, and force them onwards, in the end under the leadership of the communists.<sup>37</sup>

Both in 1928 and again in 1948, Stalin had repudiated the national bourgeoisie; in 1948, at least, the "big national bourgeoisie", on the grounds that it threatened the communists, had not moved against feudalism and imperialism and thus abandoned its class interests. But the PKI preferred to quote Stalin's more moderate views of the mid-twenties, when he criticized the PKI, among other reasons, for not co-operating with the national bourgeoisie.<sup>38</sup> Quite recently Mao and the Chinese communists demonstrated how successful their front politics had been. Furthermore, co-operation with Sukarno and the PNI simply meant that the PKI only needed to build up their own strength. Later, when it was time for serious discussions on the national and democratic revolution, one had to be prepared for hesitancy on the part of the national bourgeoisie. But by then the communists would be strong enough to take matters into their own hands.

## Anti-imperialism!

On the same basis, the Aidit group decided that the nationalists, whom they equated with the national bourgeoisie, had objective interests in developing a national economy of a traditional capitalist type, but that they were blocked by imperialism and feudalism.

To counteract the imperialists, the nationalists had to protect and strengthen private domestic trade and industry. They had to try building up an interconnected and balanced economic structure which would enable the country to become less dependent on the export of raw materials and the import of finished products. They had to nationalize foreign companies, refuse to devalue at the expense of the primarily foreign-owned exporters, and see to it that domestic producers received the raw materials, machinery and credits they required, while at the same time protecting local industry from foreign competitors. Finally, trade with the socialist countries ought to increase, thereby decreasing dependence on the capitalist world market. All this demanded state ownership of the most important enterprises and state control of the economy as a whole.<sup>39</sup>

The PKI had no clearly worked-out theory and analysis of the Indonesian state and state apparatus. Obviously Lenin's extreme idea of the state, as the instrument of the ruling class which had to be conquered from without, was rejected. The PKI leadership wrote that state power did indeed rest on the compradors and feudal lords. But, as we have seen, other classes and fractions could also make themselves felt, either directly or indirectly, in parliament, in the government and in the state apparatus.<sup>40</sup>

This meant that the PKI relinquished the idea of a frontal assault on the established state and refrained from building up its own dual power. Instead, class struggles were seen to exist within the state and these were seized upon. In no way did this necessarily mean that the party abandoned its revolutionary outlook to the benefit of gradual attempts at taking over. Awareness of major contradictions, and in particular of drastic changes, still remained.<sup>41</sup>

So as not to disturb but rather to support the work of the national bourgeoisie for a national economy, the workers' struggle had to be limited to primarily anti-imperialist actions, against foreign capitalists for example. Domestic trade and industry had to be protected. Socialism was not on the agenda. But even a national economy would give the workers more jobs and a higher standard of living. Imagine what would happen if all the riches that left Indonesia every day were to remain, the communists and nationalists argued.<sup>42</sup>

Another and equally important reason for the workers having to content themselves with struggling against anti-imperialism was that the peasants were not interested in socialism. There were few workers but many peasants. Indonesia's national and democratic revolution must take as its point of departure the agrarian problems. Workers must enter an alliance with the peasants. For the peasants, the struggle concerned getting rid of the

imperialists and the remnants of feudalism, and winning a bit of land for themselves. If the workers fought for socialism at that time, then they would isolate themselves from the majority of the people, the peasants, the PKI leadership maintained. The alliance with the peasants had, for the time being, to rest on anti-feudal grounds.<sup>43</sup>

### **Anti-feudalism!**

The communists were convinced that the peasants had bourgeois interests in counteracting the remnants of feudalism. Since the weak national bourgeoisie would not be able to completely solve the peasant's problems with the feudal lords, there was room for the communists, who could carry through a consistent bourgeois land reform, and, later, led by the workers' interest in socialism, prescribe collective solutions.<sup>44</sup>

In the introductory phase, however, the struggle of the peasants against the remains of feudalism would be promoted by the national bourgeoisie, in whose objective interests it was to move against feudalism. A national economy presupposed the accumulation of capital and expanded markets, which were being blocked by feudal forces.<sup>45</sup>

This was the PKI's guarantee that it would be able to reach out and finally root the party not only in the plantations but also in the villages amongst the peasants. The communists would be able to work together with the PNI and Sukarno in fundamental anti-feudal matters, and become acceptable into the bargain.

In the meantime, the PKI emphasized the need for the communists to make haste slowly. To begin with, former slogans about the land being nationalized or belonging to the village were withdrawn. Formerly, demands such as these had been made when it was realized that the land on Java was insufficient for all the peasants.<sup>46</sup> Now, however, the PKI held that state or collective ownership made the peasants suspicious and that such demands were in the interests of the workers rather than the peasants. First the land had to be taken from the monopolistic feudal landlords. Then the peasants would realize that they had to work together. In the meantime the slogan would have to be: private land to those who till it.<sup>47</sup>

The communists would have to begin at the beginning, with elementary schooling, social activities, help for self-help and so on. Careful bread-and-butter demands ought to be formulated and connected to Indonesia's traditional culture. The most important aspect of these activities was not how radical they were, but how many were drawn to them and how successful they were. Not only men but women and young people must be mobilized. This was the way a non-sectarian mass party must work, said the Aidit group.<sup>48</sup>

Nor should the PKI appear anti-religious. In 1954 the party subscribed to the *Pancasila*, the five principles which Sukarno had adopted when he proclaimed Indonesia's independence and rejected the concept of a



Muslim state. This meant that the PKI, among other things, supported the principle of "belief in one God".

## Notes

1. In this chapter I intend to reconstruct the new strategy which the PKI leadership outlined in 1951/52. The references I cite are nevertheless in some cases documents from the mid-fifties. When this is the case I have, on the basis of previous research — particularly Hindley (1964a), Kroef (1965a) and Mortimer (1974a) — been able to draw the conclusion that the later documents confirm previous decisions and attempt to apply them. It is also obvious that the draft versions of many congress documents from 1954 were drawn up between 1952-53. See, e.g., Aidit (1961a) pp.66 and 113, as well as Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) pp.92ff.
2. Unless other references are specified, my main references for this section are Aidit (1952) pp.56ff., (1953) p.121, and (1954) p.133 in Aidit (1961a) as well as Aidit (1954) pp.244ff. and (1957) pp.31-39 in Aidit (1963).
3. Interview with the late Siauw Giok Tjhan, former leader of the Indonesian Chinese in Baperki, close to the PKI, in Amsterdam on 1 and 2 October 1980. Cf. also Aidit (1959) pp.318 and 433ff. as well as Aidit (1960) p.180 in Aidit (1963).
4. Mortimer (1974a) pp.56ff., 63ff. and 156ff.
5. Cf. pp.20-7, above.
6. Cf. pp.21, above.
7. See, e.g., Aidit (1952) pp.36ff. and (1953) pp.61ff. in Aidit (1961a).
8. Cf. pp.13, above.
9. See, e.g., Aidit (1952) in Aidit (1961a) pp.44ff., 88ff. and Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) pp.260ff., 267ff. Cf. Hindley (1964a) pp.48ff. and 52ff.
10. Mortimer (1974a) p.61.63ff. and 154ff. made this point most forcefully. Cf. also Tichelman (1980) pp.207-299. It was, however, not unusual to speak of the middle class in the PNI. Cf. Wertheim (1959) and Kroef (1956).
11. Cf. pp.18-23, above.
12. Cf. pp.21-3, above.
13. See fn. 9, above.
14. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.82. Cf. also Aidit (1953) in *ibid.* p.133 *passim*.
15. This is clearest in Tichelman (1980).
16. Cf. Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.262.
17. See, e.g., Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) pp.116ff.
18. Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.263.
19. For an early document, see Aidit (1951) in Aidit (1961a) where these insights are already hinted at during the Sukiman government's wave of arrests.
20. Hindley (1964a) pp.29ff., Mortimer (1974a) pp.57ff. Cf. Aidit (1951) e.g. p.9 in Aidit (1961a).
21. Aidit (1960) in Aidit (1963) pp.185ff. Cf. Aidit (1951) in Aidit (1961a).
22. See, e.g. Mortimer (1974a) where problems of PKI's analyses and strategies are in the first place explained as being due to poor class analysis, party theory and state theory which lack principles. The same pattern is repeated in a number of self-critical documents which have been produced by surviving PKI leaders. See e.g. documents in PKI (1971).
23. See, e.g., Aidit (1951) in Aidit (1961a) pp.9-12.
24. Hindley (1964a) pp.55-59.
25. See, e.g., Aidit (1957) pp.58, 60ff. and Aidit (1960) p.174 in Aidit (1963). Cf. also pp.18-20, 22-3 and 25-7, above.
26. Cf. Aidit (1955) in Aidit (1961a) pp.31 ff., and Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961b) pp.50ff.
27. Cf. Mortimer (1974a) p.59.
28. If there is one thing on which all veteran communists whom I have spoken to still agree, it is that there was a lack of democracy in the PKI under Aidit.

29. See, e.g., Aidit (1951) and (1954) *inter alia* pp.182ff. in Aidit (1961a) and Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) pp.270-277. Cf. Mortimer (1974a), where he says that the PKI's new view of the party did not have anything to do with traditional Leninism, by referring to *What Is To Be Done* which must surely be the most extreme book Lenin ever wrote. That Lenin adapted his view of the party to the current situation is already clear from a comparison with "*Left-wing*" Communism — an *Infantile Disorder*. As far as I understand it, Lenin had simply a general principled view of the party from which he then drew different conclusions, depending on the situation at the time, for instance whether peaceful struggle was possible or not.
30. Hindley (1964a) pp.54ff.
31. In the early fifties the PKI did not control the BTI completely, but soon acquired control. In 1953 BTI and the peasant organization RTI, which was also PKI-dominated, joined forces and in 1955 the communists saw to it that the membership of the peasant organization Sakti also joined the BTI. Hindley (1964a) pp.165ff.
32. Formerly called Gerwis.
33. Cf. Aidit (1952) in Aidit (1961a) pp.48-54 and Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.268.
34. Two unusually clear examples of the determinism of the PKI (party = class organization) can be found in Aidit (1952) in Aidit (1961a) p.34 and in Aidit (1960) in Aidit (1963) pp. 162ff. Otherwise see, e.g., Aidit (1954) pp.248, 268ff., Aidit (1955) p.94, and, on the question of the historical analysis, Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963). Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) p.52.
35. Cf., e.g., Aidit (1952) p.55 *passim*, (1953) p.121 *passim*, (1954) p.130 *passim* and especially pp.133ff. in Aidit (1961a) and Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.268.
36. Cf., e.g., Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1961a) p.132.
37. See, e.g., Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) pp.268ff.
38. See Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) pp.265ff.
39. See, e.g., Aidit (1952) pp.40ff., (1953) pp.82ff., 85ff., 93 in Aidit (1961a) and Aidit (1954) pp.254ff., 268ff., and Aidit (1955) p.94 in Aidit (1963).
40. See, e.g., Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.83, Aidit (1955) p.94 and Aidit (1957) pp.44ff in Aidit (1963) as well as Mortimer (1974a) pp.6ff.
41. Cf. above pp.15-17 and 36-7. This is yet another example of PKI's unconventional pioneering spirit. Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) pp.135ff. which apparently meant that there were only two alternatives: Lenin's, or reforms to make the capitalist system more bearable.
42. See, e.g., Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.90 *passim*, Hindley (1964a) pp. 142ff., Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1963) pp.252ff.
43. See, e.g., Aidit (1953) p.90 *passim* and p.113 *passim* in Aidit (1961a), as well as Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) pp.252ff.
44. See, e.g., Aidit (1952) pp.40ff. and (1953) pp.82ff. in Aidit (1961a).
45. See, e.g., Aidit (1952) pp.40ff. and (1953) pp.82ff. in Aidit (1961a).
46. McVey (1969a) pp.65ff.
47. In the first place, see Aidit (1953) p.113 *passim*, but also note similar thoughts in Aidit (1952) pp.420ff. in Aidit (1961a).
48. Ibid. and Huizer (1974).

## 7. Modifications of the Strategy, to 1960-63

### A National Coalition Government

At the time of the election campaign of 1955, the PKI's Politburo had already developed its strategy further. Thus far, discussions had concerned an introductory phase in which conditions for the struggle would be created, in order to complete the revolution of 1945 and establish a people's democratic government. The phase was rather indistinct within the framework of a long-term strategy. Now, in 1955, this phase was formalized and fairly clearly distinguished from the long-term objectives of the people's democratic government.<sup>1</sup>

In the vanguard of the first stage was to be a national coalition government in which all revolutionary forces should be represented on the basis of the already existing democracy.<sup>2</sup> This was a broad coalition government supporting democratic rights and freedoms, national unity against separatists, an anti-imperialist policy and certain measures to be taken against the remnants of feudalism. It was a government which depended on a united front from the top, like the coalition government of 1945-47 and the popular front government of 1947-48;<sup>3</sup> a kind of "historic compromise", as the Italian communists of today would call it. (There are, however, differences between these parties on such questions as long-term democracy and so on.)

During the period of the national coalition government in the second phase, the ground should be prepared for the transition to a popular democratic government which could carry on with the national and democratic revolution of 1945. The same forces could continue to be represented but on the basis of a new democracy, a people's democracy. In order to arrive at that point, the government would not only depend on a united front from above, but it should also be built on and be dominated by a front from below, an alliance between workers and peasants in the first place, which the PKI intended to create and lead.<sup>4</sup>

One of the purposes for making this change was, of course, to deprive their opponents in the election campaign of the argument that the communists intended to dominate other social forces and introduce an Eastern European or a Chinese model. They had Musso's 1948 policies in



mind. The PKI did, indeed, retain its long-term perspective, but the prospect of a people's democracy receded. Soon many of its high-flown ideas were hidden by the PKI's adherence to Sukarno's ideas of a coalition: first a coalition government, a *gotong royong* cabinet, and later a *Nasakom* government with nationalists, Muslims and communists,<sup>5</sup> under the leadership of Sukarno and later also of the army.

## **A New Idea of Democracy**

The PKI counted on being able to participate in a coalition government thanks to its gains in the general elections. Then the party would acquire a dominant position for itself by strengthening the alliance between workers and peasants. But even the PKI's view of democracy changed. This occurred during the years 1956-59, at the same time as the PNI lost its desire to defend the communists. The power of parliament was reduced. The PNI lost votes to the PKI. Future elections were called into question, and there was a drastic increase in the powers of the army.

In exchange for protection, the communists increasingly adopted the ideas of Sukarno and his leadership of the national struggle. The army leaders and Sukarno did, indeed, introduce a state of emergency and a "guided democracy" which reduced the PKI's chances of success in the general elections. This also meant a reduction in their opportunities of working completely openly and of being sheltered by a liberal democracy. But, at the same time, there was now a chance that the PKI, with Sukarno's assistance, would be able to acquire a relatively privileged position under a guided democracy, while parties like the PSI and Masjumi would be pushed aside.

The PKI acted as it had in 1952. It promised Sukarno critical support in exchange for protection from persecution. The PKI accepted reduced freedom of action and a more active role for the army, while their main enemies, Masjumi and the PSI, were prevented from campaigning openly, and could not lead the PNI astray or persuade sundry generals to attempt a coup.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Class Character of the State**

Parallel with all this, the PKI was forced to tackle the question of the class nature of the state. In 1957 the army had taken over the majority of Dutch-owned businesses and forced through a guided democracy with the support of Sukarno. A few individual nationalists acquired more and more power at the expense of the parties and other organizations.

It seems the PKI gradually came to accept that an extensive centralized state apparatus, led by nationalists of indeterminate class, had a greater role to play than a national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie was weak, the

PKI argued in 1959. It was mainly concerned with trading and was dependent on feudal forces.<sup>7</sup>

This was in line with the growing discussion on non-capitalist development. But even here the PKI was a pioneer. The view that the state in countries like Indonesia did not have a distinct class base was also relevant here. The view that within the state apparatus classes other than feudal lords and compradors could make themselves felt was already being maintained by the PKI. In addition, they could take possession of the state, since the state was not as firmly anchored in the bourgeoisie as it was in developed capitalist countries.

Thus the way was open for a struggle between various more or less class-based groups within the government and the state apparatus.

Finally, the PKI, influenced to some extent by Mao, discussed the role of the "bureaucratic capitalists" as an important domestic enemy together with the PSI and Masjumi. Under this label the PKI referred to those politicians, officers, administrators and others who used their political positions to make the state an instrument in the hands of imperialist and feudal interests, enriching themselves in the process.<sup>8</sup> With the support of the masses, the progressive forces within the government and the state apparatus ought to expose, flush out and replace these bureaucratic capitalists.

The PKI was not prepared, however, to classify entire groups, such as army officers, as bureaucratic capitalists. Even within the army the struggle between good and evil was being waged, between those who were against the people and those who were for the people. Actions that treated everyone alike could only lead to repression and would isolate the communists from the nationalists and other "pro-people" forces within the state apparatus and the government. What was important was to win as many people as possible to the cause of democracy, national unity and anti-imperialism. To this end, the class struggle had to be subordinated to the national struggle.<sup>9</sup>

## Notes

1. Aidit (1955) in Aidit (1961a) pp.305-19. See also the more detailed examination in Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961b) pp.19-63, esp. pp.50ff.
2. Using the logic of the PKI, the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie ought all to belong here. One could, however, envisage the existence of patriotic property-owners, i.e. the NU. In 1956 the PKI was even prepared to include a party like Masjumi if the leaders signed the government programme. Ibid. p.38.
3. In the programme of the PKI from 1953, adopted at the congress in 1954, it is said that the PKI was included in a coalition government of 1945-47 and in the communist-led government of 1947-48, but that the party was not able to make the transition to a people's democratic government primarily because of the lack of a strong alliance between workers and peasants. (PKI (1954) p.7.) In the same year Aidit referred to both these governments, not only the one led by communists, from the period 1945-48 as "United Front Governments". (Aidit (1953) in Aidit

(1961a) p.89.) That means the idea of a coalition government was not altogether new, even though recent self-critical communists like to say that it was, and add that it was around 1955 that things began to go badly wrong. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) pp.395-399.

4. See Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961b) pp.11ff.
5. *Nasakom* = *NASionalis Agama. KOMunis*; among the political parties the PNI, NU and PKI were those primarily referred to.
6. With regard to the PKI's new views of democracy, see firstly the documents from the central committee's meetings in 1956, 1957 and 1958. Aidit (1956) pp.19-62, (1957) pp.123-159 and (1958) pp.361-383 in Aidit (1961b). Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) pp.711f.
7. See, first, documents from the 1957 and 1958 meetings of the central committee in Aidit (1957) and (1958) in Aidit (1961b) pp.123-159 and 361-383, the central committee meeting of 1959 in PKI (1959), Aidit's report to the seventh congress in 1959, in Aidit (1963) pp.317ff. i.a., as well as the document of the meeting of the central committee in December 1960, in PKI (1961).
8. For some of the earlier attempts at definition by the PKI, see Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961b) p.31 and Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) p.318. The categories become more clearly defined from 1962, see, e.g., pp.445, 460ff., 473-476 in Aidit (1963) and Aidit (1974) pp.73ff. Cf. Leclerc (1972) p.79, Oey (1971) pp.76ff. and 328 and Mortimer (1974a) i.a. p.258.
9. The thesis of subordinating the class struggle to the national struggle was adopted at the meeting of the central committee in December 1960; see PKI (1961).



## 8. Five Strategic Problems: 1952-60/63

Around 1960-63 the PKI was one of the largest communist parties in the world. Clearly the strategy I have outlined had borne fruit. Nonetheless, it also embodied basic problems. In preliminary studies I have identified five important problem areas by trying to see whether the party's strategies could have been put into practice and its objectives realized.

The first problem — *the national bourgeoisie and other monstrosities* — is concerned with the co-operation of the PKI with the PNI and Sukarno, in order to favour the national bourgeoisie at the expense of the imperialists and compradors. It did, indeed, lead to the colonial economy being shaken, but also to economic and political crises.

The second problem — *the new lords of anti-imperialism* — is the history of how a breeding ground for the party's enemies, especially within the army, was prepared by nationalization and other forms of state intervention directed at imperialism and pitted so-called bureaucratic capitalists against policies in favour of an independent and non-capitalist economy.

Problem number three — *the democratic cul-de-sac* — is concerned with how the party's efforts to mobilize and organize the people in peaceful ways and rely on general elections could not be realized. Parliamentary democracy became more and more limited and did not include the party in any coalition government. "Guided democracy" enabled the head of the army and Sukarno to domesticate the party's activities.

A fourth problem — *the mobilized peasant society* — focuses on the party's careful mobilization of the peasants while at the same time supporting and seeking shelter from the nationalists. But the anti-feudalism of the nationalists faded. Mobilization did not break traditional loyalties and relationships of dependency. On the contrary, it tended to be based on them.

The fifth and final problem — *inhibited workers' struggle* — refers to the PKI's idea that the workers should direct their efforts towards fighting against imperialism and defending their jobs and standard of living; it should not disturb the national bourgeoisie, but, on the contrary, support the struggle for a national economy and create an anti-feudal alliance with the peasants. But the standard of living fell and many jobs disappeared. Most strikes continued to be illegal and in the end workers in nationalized

factories could be accused of sabotaging the economy of the country, and, if that did not suffice, the guns of the army could be called in against the workers.

Here we have five stimulating and significant points from which we can learn something. Let me attempt to explain them, one by one, in the following five chapters.

## 9. The National Bourgeoisie and Other Monstrosities

### Towards a National Economy

In the chapter on the PKI's overall strategy, I showed that the part which dealt with the co-operation of the party with Sukarno and the PNI, in order to start building up a national economy, was based on Stalin's theory that capitalist development in an underdeveloped country was impeded by imperialism and feudalism. According to the PKI, the domestic bourgeoisie consisted of a national fraction and one comprising compradors. Compradors were based on neo-colonial structures. The national bourgeoisie, on the other hand, tried to build a self-generating national capitalism and consequently ought to move against imperialism and the feudal lords. Since Indonesia was firmly in the grip of neo-colonialism, the national bourgeoisie would not be able to deal with the enemy alone. Either it would give up and relinquish its own interests to make common cause with the compradors, or it might win the critical support of the masses led by the PKI, and, with them, build a national economy.

At the political level, the PKI maintained, as we have seen, that the PNI and Sukarno primarily represented the interests of the national bourgeoisie and had their base in that part of the capitalist class. The compradors were represented primarily by the PSI and Masjumi, whose fundamental base was neo-colonialism, according to that viewpoint.

Consequently, the PKI should give critical support to the PNI and Sukarno in the struggle for a national economy, as it was in the interests of both the working class and the national bourgeoisie. Masjumi and the PSI should be isolated.

Among the concrete questions which the PKI maintained communists and nationalists could agree on, *as a start*, in the struggle for a national economy, included the following in 1953 and 1954: that the union and the economic agreements with the Dutch should be revoked; that domestic industry and business ought to be protected from foreign competition; that foreign plantation owners should be forced not only to increase production but also to plant rice and cotton on some of their fields for the use of the people; that the trade boycott against China should be ended; that prices should come under state control; that farmers' tenancy agreements be



improved: that there should be reinforcement of their negotiating position vis-à-vis the feudal lords, usurers and, for instance, the sugar, tobacco and tea companies; that the land occupied by peasants and workers should not be returned to foreign plantation owners.<sup>1</sup>

In 1956 the party added that the national economy which communists and nationalists were fighting for would benefit the entire population and not just a few businessmen. Corruption had to be combated. Large foreign companies should be taken over by the state and not by private capitalists. The state should control imports and exports. On the question of the five-year economic plan which the government had started discussing, the PKI pointed out that no further burdens could be laid on the masses, but that costs should be borne by foreign capitalists and other wealthy people.<sup>2</sup>

At the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow in 1956, the Soviet party developed an analysis and strategy closely resembling that of the PKI's. Aidit and his policies were at a premium.

## **From a Colonial Economy to a National Economic Crisis**

How successful was the PKI's strategy for a national economy, and did its analyses tally with actual developments?

### **Progress**

Some advances are undeniable.<sup>3</sup> By supporting the nationalists the PKI contributed to the divorce between first the PNI and later Sukarno from Masjumi and the PSI. Sukarno had persuaded the PNI to co-operate with the Masjumi-led Sukiman cabinet, but in 1952 this was replaced by the PNI-led government of Wilopo.

Wilopo fell when his government did not take a stand for the workers and peasants who occupied Dutch plantation land in northern Sumatra. The next stage was that Masjumi and the PSI were left out of the government when the PNI's Ali Sastroamidjojo formed his first government in 1953. The PKI was not included in Ali's coalition either. But in the view of the PKI, compared to previous policies, a considerably more progressive policy was now introduced.

The Ali cabinet did, indeed, try to start work on a national economy. It was primarily its anti-imperialist foreign policy which bore fruit. Attitudes towards Holland, which refused to release *Irian Jaya*, and towards Dutch capital in Indonesia, were appreciably sharpened. The trade blockade against China was lifted, connections with the Eastern bloc were made, and in 1955 the epoch-making Bandung Conference was hosted by Indonesia. It was there that the Non-Aligned Movement was formed.

Ali's first government fell in 1955, when the military refused to knuckle under. In the absence of Sukarno, Vice-President Hatta saw to it that, for almost a year, Masjumi and the PSI were able to lead the work of government. The PNI, the NU and the PKI made considerable gains while

they were in opposition, and these were reflected in the results of the first election in 1955, while Masjumi did not live up to expectations and the PSI collapsed. On 15 January 1956 the PNI, the PKI and a small Muslim party, the PSII, engaged in a massive joint demonstration<sup>4</sup> against the government's soft line towards the Dutch. Later that same year Indonesia unilaterally revoked both the union with the Netherlands and the much-hated round-table agreement of 1949.

In March 1956 Ali Sastroamidjojo was thus able to form his second government. Once again the PKI was excluded and, what was worse, Masjumi was given a few ministerial posts. But Masjumi did not succeed in building a government with the NU, which excluded the PNI and, of course, also the PKI.

### Problems

Despite the progress made, problems abounded. The PKI certainly succeeded in promoting an anti-imperialist foreign policy, and the colonial economy started breaking up. But there was nothing to replace it, least of all an embryo national economy.

The plantations in North Sumatra, for instance, had already been truncated during the liberation struggle. Workers and peasants occupied the fields, which not infrequently had been abandoned, and rice and other foodstuffs were cultivated.

In Java the sugar industry was one of the things that collapsed. In the 1930s Indonesia was second only to Cuba as the world's largest exporter of sugar. The sugar companies were the largest employers after the state, and were bigger than all the other foreign companies put together. Profits were substantial, being based on cheap land and labour costs. With the help of Indonesian collaborators, politicians, administrators and village leaders, the companies partly tempted and partly forced the peasants, sometimes entire villages, to hire out their irrigated rice paddies and cultivate sugar there.

With the liberation struggle, the peasants were given the chance of controlling the land and their own labour. After independence the exports were insignificant, and no profits were made. Farmers often continued cultivating rice, for example, but for several decades the subsistence system had been in bad shape, and could not offer a secure haven now.<sup>5</sup>

Mackie summarizes the situation and writes that the colonial economy was marked by extremely low wages and costs, high productivity in the plantation sector, and major investments in mines, trade and communications, as well as a stable currency, and a remarkable ability to adapt to changes on the world market. After 1950 all of this was reversed.<sup>6</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the foreign capitalists often refrained from making new investments or expensive maintenance.<sup>7</sup> An exception was the production of oil, which expanded somewhat and was profitable. But it was the foreign companies, not the state of Indonesia, which controlled the inflow of hard currency.<sup>8</sup>

### A Bourgeois Fiasco

Masjumi and the PSI had already tried to create a capitalist class in Indonesia by a programme of state credits and protective measures.<sup>9</sup> But the income from exports did not suffice for these major investments. In order to save, Masjumi and PSI-led governments limited imports and state expenditure. To defend and if possible increase exports, the currency was devalued and attempts were made to control the workers' and peasants' movement.<sup>10</sup>

Nationalists and communists found such a restrictive policy unacceptable, as it was in the interests of the export companies but not of the people. It was said that reduced imports would negatively affect the country's own attempts at industrialization, since these often required foreign raw materials and machinery. If we run short of money, we must demand more from the imperialists who are daily making tremendous profits from the Indonesian people, the nationalists and communists argued.<sup>11</sup>

When they were in government, the nationalists consequently did not give foreign capitalists any support. The government refrained from devaluing the country's currency at the same pace as its real monetary value sank, thereby supporting importers at the expense of foreign-dominated exports.<sup>12</sup>

There is, of course, a limit to the extent to which foreign companies can be fleeced, since if there are no further prospects for profitable business deals, very soon there will also be very little for a government to derive. It thus became essential for domestic industry to establish itself rapidly and become independent of subsidies based on uncertain income from exports, if the nationalists' and communists' line on the building up of new industries was to succeed. The government started by regulating exports and seeing to it that domestic businessmen were given credit on favourable terms, and nearly all the import licences available.<sup>13</sup>

But this had the same effect as if the tremendously important expansive funds had been invested in non-productive trade rather than in dynamic production. When the nationalists started controlling essential imports, they became involved in short-term profitable projects and did not even reach the point of implementing an import-substitution policy in which domestic production would be favoured to replace expensive imports.<sup>14</sup>

Now a policy of old-school-tie politics broke out, which maybe did not create<sup>15</sup> but certainly encouraged Indonesia's much-discussed corruption. Licences, credits, orders and so on were often issued on the grounds of political sympathies and other connections, and were not dependent on whether someone was a dynamic capitalist who could import what was required to start production.<sup>16</sup>

Many used the credits to raise their own standards of living, by buying a house, a car, etc.,<sup>17</sup> while they often allowed their affairs to be run by skilful Chinese, who were already established but faced the growing prospect of losing their chance of engaging in trade and petty production. Herbert Feith, for instance, said that only half of the import firms in 1955 did any



real work, and that many of these were borderline cases. Within the merchant navy sector it is maintained that only five out of 65 companies operated on a sound economic basis.<sup>18</sup>

At most only about 10 of all the monstrosities born during the fifties grew into real capitalists, according to one shrewd critic.<sup>19</sup> The PKI, on the other hand, safeguarded its co-operation with the PNI by defending this corruption against what the party regarded as a far more corrupt anti-corruption campaign started by Masjumi and the PSI.<sup>20</sup>

### **Chinese Capitalists Curbed**

If all this were not enough, the whole project also weakened the only competent capitalists in the whole country, the Indonesian Chinese. These were regarded as being virtually as wicked as the Dutch; they ought therefore to be replaced by "real" Indonesians. In 1954, for instance, the PNI-led government declared that 85 per cent of imports ought to be reserved for "real" Indonesians. Similar restrictions faced Chinese businessmen in other sectors.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, the nationalists usually contented themselves with measures designed to curb and limit the affairs of the Chinese. They often needed the Chinese as middle-men or "executive capitalists". But many Muslim businessmen wanted tougher measures, and talked about the Chinese in the same way as some Europeans had once talked about Jews. The inflammatory campaign against Chinese businessmen went in waves and of course the entire Chinese community was affected, not only the businessmen.<sup>22</sup>

What was decisive, however, was that the PNI never tried to unite domestic capitalists who wanted to strengthen their position vis-à-vis imperialism in general and the Dutch in particular, and the Chinese businessmen tended to form part of these local capitalists. On the contrary, anti-Chinese activities were given room to flourish. The PKI certainly opposed this, but they were not prepared to do anything which might threaten their co-operation with the PNI.<sup>23</sup>

### **Conflicts with Domestic Exporters**

The economic policies of the nationalists and communists affected the foreign-owned export trade, which at the same time was to be milked dry. But domestic producers for export and domestic businessmen also felt the squeeze. Usually they were Muslims who were primarily based on the outer islands.

Inflation and the over-valued currency were already badly affecting export interests. The tendency of the nationalists to favour "their businessmen", the fact that the nationalists were predominantly Javanese, and their co-operation with the communists did not improve matters. Soon the nationalists and communists were on a collision course with domestic Muslim businessmen and producers in the export sector. Both they and their exports were actually needed in the struggle for a national economy.

Smuggling on the outer islands thus continued to increase, while regional

and local army leaders turned a blind eye. When Ali Sastroamidjojo's second PNI government came to power in March 1965, regional rebellions arose which were difficult to put down. In addition, Brigadier Zulkifli Lubis tried getting rid of both the government and the commander-in-chief, Nasution, during 1956. In western Java *Darul Islam* was still on the rampage, demanding a Muslim state. In December Vice-President Hatta, representing the Muslims and the outer islands, resigned after fierce conflicts with President Sukarno about how to deal with the political crisis.

In the end even Ali's government resigned, in March 1957, and a state of emergency was proclaimed. In reality, the initiative now lay with Sukarno and the army under the command of General Nasution.

Since the army and the trade-union movement then attacked Dutch companies — among them the Dutch shipping company, KPM, which took care of nearly all transport between the islands — the rebellion on the outer islands was fanned. Most of KPM's ships disappeared to other waters and the outer islands were isolated.

In February 1958 the leaders of the rebel movement issued an ultimatum demanding that these regions should be given complete autonomy, that the PKI be disbanded, that all ministers with left-wing sympathies should be sacked and that Hatta should be reinstated as Vice-President. If the rebels' demands were not met, they threatened to secede from the republic. The government refused to back down, and shortly afterwards the PRRI, *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia), was proclaimed. It was founded by the rebel movements in Sumatra and North Sulawesi. The new government invited all rebel movements to join it.

The rebels were supported by the CIA and several leaders of Masjumi and the PSI. But the army central command decided to back Sukarno, and the foreign oil companies in Sumatra continued to rely on the government in Jakarta. Soon the revolt was crushed.

The unsuccessful revolt was a severe defeat for Masjumi and the PSI, as well as for the Hague and Washington. Sukarno, the PNI, the NU and the PKI, and above all the army command, basked in the warmth of victory. The army went so far as to forgo revenge on the rebels, gladly accepting their support against Sukarno and the PKI.

But the victory of the nationalists and the army over the rebels, and the support of the communists for the government, did not in any way contribute to the creation of a national economy. Contradictions between Jakarta and the outer islands, and between the nationalists and the Muslim businessmen in particular, had not been resolved but lived on.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, rather than moving from a colonial economy to a national economy, Indonesia had moved to a national economic crisis. The economic policies of the nationalists and communists had torn the colonial economy to shreds, curbed the dynamic business enterprise of the Indonesian Chinese, put spokes in the wheels of the Muslim capitalists and, when really trying to be constructive, had created a parasitic group of corrupt importers.

Production stagnated. Exports declined, and the gap between exports and imports rose. Prices rocketed. Ever larger sections of the economy were taken over by the state apparatus, including the army. Private business deals were still possible, but they were now mostly speculative, not productive.<sup>25</sup>

### **Deterministic Blinkers**

Actual developments thus indicated with marked clarity that the PKI's national bourgeoisie, primarily as represented by the PNI and Sukarno, did not have the ability to build a national economy, despite the support of the communists.

If, consequently, there were faults in the PKI's analyses, what had gone wrong?

The PKI could, indeed, have come up with a better analysis using the theories to which the party subscribed.

First, it would have been necessary to decide whether to apply Lenin's or Stalin's perspective. What was done, as I have shown, was to make use of parts of both theories. The PKI used Lenin to identify the national bourgeoisie, but went on to analyse and predict its behaviour, future positions and capacity on the basis of Stalin's quite different concept of a national bourgeoisie.

It must not have seemed feasible to apply Stalin consistently. A clear-cut class analysis on that basis would probably have led to the identifying of the Muslim capitalists as the national bourgeoisie and Masjumi as their principal representative in the political arena.<sup>26</sup> According to Stalin's determinism, the national bourgeoisie would then turn against feudalism and imperialism, which had hardly been the case with either the Muslim capitalists in general or with Masjumi in particular, after the independence of Indonesia.

If, on the other hand, the PKI had decided to apply Lenin consistently, it would first have got rid of Stalinist determinism, which laid down how a national bourgeoisie perforce must act. Instead of starting from the conviction that capitalist development was blocked, and that the national bourgeoisie therefore had to turn against feudalism and imperialism to safeguard its own interests, it would have been possible to employ Lenin's less categorical thesis on a shackled capitalism and concentrate on analysing how the national bourgeoisie and the other groups actually did behave, without using over-simplified prognoses as blinkers.

If the PKI had applied Lenin consistently, it would, secondly, most likely still have concluded that it was the PNI and Sukarno whose policies were progressive-bourgeois. They took action against imperialism and spoke disparagingly about the feudal lords, and they were not markedly anti-communist. And it was precisely the concrete activities of the actors which both Lenin and Mao had focused on.

But naturally that does not mean that Lenin offered no class analysis. He



was, indeed, a voluntarist, but regarded it as important to know not only whether an organization pursued bourgeois policies, but also whether it had any chance of putting its ideas into practice. Had the PKI stuck to Lenin, its analysis of the bourgeoisie would have been considerably more comprehensive than was the case.

As we know, the leaders of the PKI were satisfied with generalizations of the following type: the imperialists control almost everything, the Chinese businessmen some parts, and the Indonesian capitalists only a little, perhaps nothing, though this can become considerably more. I can find no evidence that the PKI examined more closely the composition of the bourgeoisie in Indonesia. What, for instance, was the distribution between traders, industrialists, plantation owners, export-oriented agriculturalists, senior employees in the business sector, owners and administrators in the transport sector, and so on? And how could one distinguish between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to the traders and craftsmen who had only a few employees?

It has seldom happened that a party as large as the PKI has held a class fraction, the national bourgeoisie, in such high esteem, placed so many hopes upon it and accommodated itself to it, while knowing so little about it. Even the fact that Masjumi had a firm foundation in the national bourgeoisie seems to have been an issue which the PKI did not regard as worthy of analysis.

Towards the end of the 1950s, the PKI did indeed begin to show more interest in what was called the vacillating position of the national bourgeoisie. It was hinted that the national bourgeoisie still had strong ties to imperialism and the feudal lords, and that its interests were primarily commercial rather than productive. According to the PKI, this was why the PNI did not consistently move against imperialism and feudalism.

In the same breath, however, the PKI issued assurances that the political significance of the PNI was still decisive, and that, if progressive forces could only lend the national bourgeoisie even more powerful support, it would choose — and dare — to build a national economy. Since there were so few national capitalists, there was, furthermore, little risk of conflicts between them and the workers.<sup>27</sup>

The only significant correction of the party's course was that the PKI complemented its support for the national bourgeoisie with a growing interest in the role of the state. I shall return to this in the following chapter.

## **The Ethnocentric Bourgeoisie**

The question remains whether a consistent Leninist analysis would have placed sufficient emphasis on the tendency of the nationalists to turn to the state apparatus, to patronage and corruption, instead of to productive enterprises in order to enrich themselves and safeguard their own interests.

Expressed more drastically, the problem is whether even the "best" traditional Marxism would have been capable of taking into account that the nationalists neither wanted nor were able to generate a dynamic capitalist development policy, bearing in mind that the nationalists nevertheless turned against feudalism and imperialism and had the strength to liberate the country from a good deal of colonialism, exactly like Marxism's ideal "progressive bourgeoisie". I doubt it.

Within the Marxist tradition it is as obvious that every consistent anti-feudal and anti-imperialist position is bourgeois-nationalist as it is that the Indonesian relations of production, which are not capitalist, are to be called pre-capitalist. Capitalism succeeds feudalism.

In this connection it does not matter whether we talk about an Asiatic mode of production instead of about feudalism, since that too is pre-capitalist. Every consistent opposition, with the exception of the workers', against pre-capitalist modes of production and imperialism is of a bourgeois nature, whether those involved are aware of it or not.

Feudal or Asiatic classes can, naturally, also turn against imperialism. But according to both bourgeois as well as Marxist theories, it is unthinkable that feudal or Asiatic classes would be able to liberate their country from colonialism to the extent that the Indonesian nationalists did, without breaking with the pre-capitalist mode of production. This seems reasonable to me. Certainly it might be exciting, for example, to analyse Sukarno as some sort of remnant from an Asiatic mode of production, but at the same time it would be difficult to account for his indisputable strength.<sup>28</sup>

What is wrong with Marxist theory is not, in the first place, a fixation on feudalism at the expense of the Asiatic mode of production, in my view. More important is the lack of efficient theoretical tools for analysing how capitalism coexisted with and dominated pre-colonial modes of production in such a complex way that, for instance, it is almost impossible to identify anything as being wholly capitalist or feudal. Consequently, it does not suffice to simply throw together or "articulate" a number of theories about distinctly disparate modes of production.<sup>29</sup>

Let me exemplify what I mean by returning to a concrete analysis of the Indonesian nationalists. They were hardly a traditional bourgeoisie, large or small — neither were they feudal lords, nor probably remnants of the Asiatic mode, since they were suddenly able to force the colonial forces to their knees.

What drives someone to become a capitalist is the necessity of investing a substantial portion of profit in new production in order to make new profit. But for most of the nationalists the chance of enriching themselves through productive investments was smaller than if, for instance, they made use of influential posts in the state apparatus. In production and trade, the imperialists had unassailable advantages. Those who dared to beard the lion in its den were primarily the Indonesian Chinese, since they were forced to do it. They were excluded from agriculture, administration and

politics. The nationalists were in the opposite position. They had long-established contacts within the administrative apparatus and political life. The Muslims had an intermediate position, with a base in politics and in the economy.<sup>30</sup>

It was thus obvious to many nationalists that they could make the largest, safest and speediest profits by interesting themselves in the state. The colonial economy was built on the exploitation of cheap labour, raw materials and exports, as well as the import of finished products. It was very difficult for the nationalists to get into production or trade, but the state had overall control of exports and imports, licences and concessions. In other words, it was simpler for them to take over the state, and enrich themselves by developing different systems for services and favours, than to try to compete against imperialist companies.

The nationalists found it simpler to satisfy their "bourgeois" interests by taking over the state in the struggle against the feudal lords (or whatever they should be called) and against imperialism. Then the nationalists needed to be able to live off a colonial economy which they themselves had helped to break down. Furthermore they had to defend themselves against dynamic Muslim and Chinese capitalists who put private interests before public ones.

In Europe the bourgeoisie advanced where feudalism was weakest, within the economy. In most of the underdeveloped countries, however, the growth of the bourgeoisie was stopped, since the imperialists, the capitalists of Europe, were economically stronger. Many Indonesians who otherwise might have become private capitalists now took to administration and politics, the areas where imperialism was relatively weak.

## Notes

1. PKI (1954) pp.10ff.
2. Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961b) pp.36-54.
3. For a more detailed treatment of the progress made, see, e.g., Hindley (1964a) Chap. XXI.
4. Ibid. p.253.
5. Gordon (1979a) i.a. pp.252 and 260ff.
6. Mackie (1971) pp.16ff.
7. Hawkins (1967) pp.231ff.
8. Paauw (1967) pp.184.
9. See, e.g., Feith (1962) p.174 and Sutter (1959) pp.772-8.
10. See, e.g., Sutter (1959) pp.126-83, Mackie (1971) i.a. pp.53-69, Glassburner (1962) i.a. pp.122ff. and Sievers (1974) pp.212ff.
11. See, e.g., Rocamora (1974) pp.173-93, Sutter (1959) pp.1193-1225.
12. See, e.g., Feith (1962) pp.378ff. and 490.
13. See, e.g., *ibid.* pp.373ff. and Sutter (1959) Chap. XXIV, especially pp.1017-35 as well as fn. 11 above.
14. Cf. Robison (1981) pp.19ff.
15. Cf. Higgins (1957) pp.163.
16. See, e.g., Feith (1962) pp.375ff., Rocamora (1974) pp.173-193 and Sutter (1959) pp.1017-35.



17. Jaspan (1968) pp.16-22.
18. Feith (1962) pp.375ff.
19. Interview with Professor Sarbini, former head of economic statistics, Jakarta, 16 October 1980.
20. Hindley (1964a) pp.253.
21. See, e.g., Feith (1962) pp.375ff., Kroef (1958a) pp.205ff. as well as Twang (1979) pp.70ff. and Panglaykim and Palmer (1970) pp.93ff.
22. Ibid.
23. Interview with the late Siauw Giok Tjhan, former leader of the Indonesian Chinese in Baperki, closely associated with the PKI, in Amsterdam on 2 October and 1 November 1980.
24. Regional contradictions and regional rebellions are treated in a qualified manner by i.a. Lev (1964) pp.39-53, Feith (1962) pp.378ff., 487-99, 520-37 and Utrecht (1979b) pp.51-68.
25. For analyses of the economic crisis in Indonesia during the late fifties, see, e.g., Sutter (1959), Mackie (1959), (1967), (1971), Paauw (1955), (1967), Higgins (1956), Glassburner (1962), Castles (1965), (1967) and Palmer and Castles (1971).
26. Mortimer (1974a) pp.56ff., 63ff. and 156ff. hinted that this would have been "correct".
27. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.316-23.
28. Cf. Tichelman (1980) Chaps. 13 and 14, who partly, I would maintain, encounters that conflict and tries to save himself by pointing out the weakness of the opposition to Sukarno. This and similar criticism of the work of Tichelman does not prevent there being much of value in this book. My analysis below has been inspired in several respects by his fruitful analyses.
29. Without agreeing completely with those who argue for a particular colonial and neo-colonial mode of production, I would like to note that at least their empirical criticism is often correct, and their demands for better theoretical tools may be fruitful. Cf., e.g., Alavi (1975) and (1980).
30. As usual, I am primarily discussing Java.

# 10. The New Lords of Anti-Imperialism

## A State-Guided Economy

The campaign for nationalizations and a state-led economy was intensified during the mid-fifties.<sup>1</sup> First, the PKI's gamble on the national bourgeoisie had not paid off. Second, a rising proportion of the bourgeoisie as a whole tended to turn against the nationalists and the centralized ventures, instead drawing closer to the rebels on the outer islands, participating in smuggling and accepting help from the imperialists.

When the party evaluated the attempts of the nationalists to create a national economy, they also emphasized that, while economic policies had been severely criticized and sternly opposed, it had been simpler to pursue demands for a progressive foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> For example, to have opposed government demands that the Dutch should leave *Irian Jaya* would have been to commit political suicide.

Consequently, the communists (and the nationalists) strove to make the idea of nationalization an inseparable part of the struggle for *Irian Jaya*. One argument, for instance, was that the Dutch could continue occupying *Irian Jaya* with the help of profits from their companies in Indonesia, which ought, therefore, to be nationalized.<sup>3</sup>

It was intended that nationalization would not only give the state access to imperialism's treasure troves, but also sufficient power to plan and start building a national economy. The state would control all exports and imports. Indonesia ought to be able to reduce its dependency on the capitalist world market, instead seeking connections with the socialist countries. The export of raw materials would be used to buy machines and so on, making it possible rapidly to build up an import substitution industry. Foreign investment ought not to be welcomed, but, on the other hand, international aid and credits should be accepted. Here the socialist countries should be able to play a decisive role. Profits from state companies should be used for investment in basic industry, which could first supply the needs of agriculture for machinery, etc. Both agriculture and handicrafts would be responsible for supplying the basic needs of the population.

The state should be generous and supply credits for productive

investments. Domestic trade must be supervised so that merchants did not enrich themselves through speculation and shortages. Both consumption and producer co-operatives, truly democratically managed, should be encouraged. The national bourgeoisie should have a good chance of doing private business within the framework of state planning and on the basis of state-owned basic industries. Obviously extensive anti-feudal measures were needed to stimulate demand in the rural areas and increase access to capital. But an extensive venture of the kind outlined nevertheless required a negatively balanced budget. What was most important was that production should rise.<sup>4</sup>

But what kind of a state would actually be able to nationalize foreign companies and lead the economy? The PKI's analysis of the state was vague, but generally positive when compared to its views on private capital interests generally and the so-called compradors, especially Masjumi and the PSI. In the event, the Indonesian state was not regarded as the exclusive tool of the capitalists, but rather as an instrument through which nationalists of indistinct class base would be able to extend themselves. In the terminology of today, they were expected to run companies relatively autonomously, and control the economy of the country pointedly directing it away from imperialism and feudalism. In 1956 and 1957 the president, the government and the central command of the army agreed to take tough action against Dutch companies and regional rebel movements. Different classes, fractions, groups and individuals were able to fight about how the state should be changed and about the direction state policies should take. Those who were politically strong had the same opportunities as the weaker domestic capitalists, for instance, irrespective of whether their focus was national or whether they co-operated with foreign capital.<sup>5</sup>

It was as unrealistic for the workers to dream of a workers' state as it was to talk of a capitalist state. The workers would certainly be able to force through nationalization, especially of Dutch companies, but they were not able to run them, but would have to turn them over to the nationalists at the head of the state.<sup>6</sup> The central command of the army was not isolated as a treacherous part of the state, but was analysed in positive terms, particularly in comparison to the PSI and Masjumi, imperialism in general and the regional rebels in particular.<sup>7</sup>

The theoretical perspective as well as the analysis of the strategic conclusions were, in other words, similar to the international discussion on non-capitalist development which had started towards the end of the 1950s. In some respects, the PKI anticipated the theoretical work of Moscow.

## **The Army's Role**

Did the strategy of nationalization and state control lead to the creation of the much-desired national economy? How did the analyses compare with what actually happened?



## Progress

Despite the intensified campaign against Dutch neo-colonialism with the demand that the Dutch should relinquish *Irian Jaya*, and despite all the talk about nationalization, there were no concrete plans for the state, let alone the trade-union movement, to take over the running of the Dutch companies. The objectives were rather to deprive the Dutch of as large a portion of their profits as possible and to induce them to relinquish *Irian Jaya*, among other things, by threatening them only with nationalization.

We believed it possible to deprive a Dutchman of almost everything, even to seduce his wife, so long as he still retained the companies which gave him all his money. Surely he would give up *Irian Jaya* if only he were allowed to keep his plantations, his trading houses... But we were wrong. Sukarno made more and more threats and heated up the atmosphere. The Dutch refused to budge. Suddenly, on 3 December 1957, the KBKI [the nationalist trade-union movement] took over the KPM [the Dutch shipping line that was responsible for almost all transport between the islands]. A few days later SOBSI joined in and took over a number of other companies. And then the army continued the process.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the actions which the PKI demanded against Dutch capital occurred sooner than anticipated. Just over a month before the first confiscation, *Harian Rakjat*, the PKI's daily paper, had declared that Indonesia did not have the capacity to take over all the Dutch companies in one fell swoop. Furthermore, it was probable that there were fears that communist-inspired occupations would provoke the nationalists and the military command to join with Masjumi. There is nothing to indicate a change of opinion within the PKI, prior to the nationalists themselves throwing down the gauntlet.<sup>9</sup>

On 26 November the Indonesians failed to get the support of the United Nations for concrete negotiations about *Irian Jaya*. On 1 December the government decided to prohibit Dutch planes from landing in Indonesia, which stopped the distribution of Dutch publications. At the same time the government encouraged workers to conduct a 24-hour strike in those companies which were wholly Dutch-owned. The strike was held on 2 December. The following day the KBKI took over one of the largest Dutch trading houses and the KPM, the all-powerful shipping line. On 4 December a further four major companies were taken over by KBKI and SOBSI. By now the government was becoming hesitant, but the confiscations continued. On 6 December in North Sumatra, Commander Gintings declared that all Dutch companies there had been placed under the control of the military. During the next few days other regional commanders followed his example. On 13 December the head of the army, Nasution, ordered the remaining commanders to confiscate the Dutch companies in their regions.<sup>10</sup> The state of emergency, declared earlier in 1957 in response to the regional uprisings, was a precondition for these rapid takeovers.

In this way, all fully Dutch-owned capital assets were confiscated: banks, trading houses, transport companies, about 540 plantations (two-thirds of all the plantations in the country) and so on.<sup>11</sup> Hundreds of industrialists

and other business leaders were replaced.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, as early as December 1956, it was clear that significant military leaders stood behind the nationalists and the government in Jakarta against the Muslim, often bourgeois-based, rebels on the outer islands. In Northern Sumatra, Commander Gintings armed communist veterans and trade-union activists, for instance, and with them attacked the rebels.<sup>13</sup> And when the separatist state of PRRI was proclaimed in 1958, army chief Nasution and President Sukarno united in struggle against those whom the PKI called compradors. Even Washington and the CIA, who sympathized with and supported the rebels, became enemies of the anti-communist military command.

Instead Moscow opened its purse-strings. Economic support for both civil and military use soon rose to about \$1.5 billion, or more than the value of Soviet credits to China during the years 1949-57.<sup>14</sup> Indonesia became the largest non-communist recipient of military assistance and the third largest recipient of economic assistance from the Eastern bloc, after India and Egypt.<sup>15</sup> Indisputably, the PKI had contributed to shifting Indonesia some way from the capitalist world market, and from both Dutch and American imperialism. Instead, links with the socialist countries were now being forged.

After intensive discussions and manipulations about how to manage the confiscated Dutch companies, the PKI won another victory in 1958. All ideas of privatizing the companies were rejected. They were nationalized and declared to be state property.<sup>16</sup>

In the same year, 1958, the army also took over companies owned by Chinese Indonesians who were close to Taiwan, which was supporting the rebels in Indonesia. But when, in 1959, a further step was taken and all Chinese trade in the rural areas was prohibited in favour of rhetoric about co-operatives, the PKI protested, and talked about racism.<sup>17</sup>

If we add the considerable number of state-owned enterprises<sup>18</sup> which already existed to those unparalleled far-reaching interventions in the economy, we can comprehend that, by the end of the fifties, a basis for decisions on a so-called "guided economy" was to be found in Indonesia. There was scope for dreams that the Indonesians themselves, via the state, would at last be able to partake of all that they had been deprived of by imperialism. Furthermore, with support from the Eastern bloc, the country was no longer totally dependent on the capitalist world market. Compradors had been isolated. The PKI had some cause for pride.<sup>19</sup>

### **Problems: The Army Nationalizes**

The workers took over the imperialist enterprises not in their own personal interest but to hand them over to the Republic of Indonesia, whose government was not yet a government of the working class. (Aidit)<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately the workers did not get the chance of taking over more than a handful of companies. When they tried to do so, they were expelled from

the boardrooms before they had managed to gain control of the situation and hand over their gift to the government.<sup>21</sup> Not even militant plantation workers in North Sumatra succeeded in the face of the army under Commander Gintings. "Right from the start we lost the initiative," said one of the communists who was in charge in Sumatra.<sup>22</sup>

According to the theoretical perspective of the party, the indistinct class base of the state implied that political groups which were strong could acquire decisive influence for themselves over the character and policies of the state. The PKI maintained that the nationalists and the communists were politically the strongest, and indeed they were instrumental in initiating the nationalization. But only a few weeks later the party's analyses were contradicted by the hitherto relatively politically weak military, which rapidly and efficiently was able to move ahead in the wake of the trade-union movement, the parties, the government and the president.

For several years politicians in general and Sukarno in particular had retained control of the army by playing off the officers one against the other, thereby sowing dissension. As the regional rebellions threatened the nationalists, the government and Sukarno, the latter were, however, forced to accept both the necessity of a loyal but powerful officer corps and a state of emergency.<sup>23</sup>

"For me [the army's confiscation of companies] was a question not only of stopping the PKI, but also that the government worked too slowly," said army boss Nasution.<sup>24</sup>

It was not only the government which was functioning poorly. The parties were deeply split. Masjumi and the PSI dropped hints that the companies should be returned if the Dutch were prepared to negotiate.<sup>25</sup> Others held that Indonesian businessmen should be given the chance to run the companies if they could buy themselves in. For a time the government sponsored such a solution.<sup>26</sup>

The army, however, was not made up of the kind of people who could be or wanted to be private capitalists.<sup>27</sup> On the contrary, indirect threats of a coup d'état were made if the state could not meet the army's need for advanced materiel and higher pay, etc. The Dutch companies made a good substitute, as did the anti-imperialist policies which enabled the PKI to attract military aid from the socialist countries.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the PKI declared that companies should be state-run and that the workers were those best equipped to run them.<sup>29</sup>

At last, at the turn of the year 1958-59, the government and parliament decided to nationalize the companies. It was easy to reject proposals from Masjumi and the PSI because of their contacts with regional rebellions. The idea of national private solutions collapsed partly because the Indonesian capitalists in question were closely linked to politicians who had bad reputations after years of scandals about corruption.<sup>30</sup> And on the question of whether the companies should be privatized, the army and the PKI were at one.

In the meantime, the decision came more than a year after the army had



taken over the companies. Nasution had had adequate time to place officers in the economy, among other things as representatives of the autocratic managers of the state of emergency.<sup>31</sup>

Officers who took the lead in business enterprises were subsequently given inactive status and lost their right to command troops. But their contacts with the army command nevertheless remained intact. Co-operation with the civil administration in the rural areas, particularly with the state's "bailiffs" (*pamong praja*), improved and was intensified.<sup>32</sup>

There are grounds for asking whether Dutch companies became the army's or whether they were controlled by parliament, the government and the president. Nasution gives an intricate answer:

In 1958-59 we turned over the companies to the civil authorities . . . Yes, yes, the army retained a certain influence in the companies. Partly there was a lack of proper business leaders, and partly not only I, but also Prime Minister Djuanda, wanted discipline among the workers. Djuanda thought that business leaders should be trained by the Americans. I wanted to ensure that the government retained control. In the words of Tito, I say: "A conscious general is better than a skilled expert. One can always educate someone to become an expert, but it is not so easy to grasp consciousness."<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, the consciousness amongst army officers to which Nasution referred had less to do with how Indonesia should create a national economy under state leadership than how the officers might enrich themselves and find money for the army.<sup>34</sup>

### **Corruption and Class Differentiation**

The companies were mismanaged and profits misappropriated. Those Indonesians who worked in subordinate clerical posts in the Dutch companies often had to take responsibility for running operations. Young administrators who were educated, or at least being educated, had to play complementary roles. The officers took the responsibility for senior contacts, authority and crucial decision-making, as there was a state of emergency in the country. No workers were allowed over the threshold. There was a low level of competence among company leaders, and there were considerable risks of paralysing conflicts arising between them.<sup>35</sup>

Things were not improved by several of the military heads of companies being of such poor quality that field officers of the modern school were only too happy to allow them to become company directors, so that they would be rid of them within the command structure of the army.<sup>36</sup>

Military business leaders often regarded their task as keeping "their" companies free from the "control of politicians and bureaucrats". This was part of the philosophy, for instance, of that most dynamic of military business leaders, colonel and medical doctor, Ibnu Sutowo.<sup>37</sup> In 1957 General Nasution made him head of a new national oil company, Pertamina. This soon became a state within the state and the most lucrative treasure trove of the generals. Only in the 1970s did the banks, not least through the International Monetary Fund, manage to unseat Sutowo.<sup>38</sup>

The regular army command expected the military business leaders to make all efforts to collect money for the support of the country's defence. In reality, the officers in business ventures saw to it that the army became "self-supporting". At the same time, army commanders were given generous sums for their own use, as thanks from military business leaders for being allowed to retain their positions. These sums were meant to be sufficient for the army officer's own life-style and for that of his men.

Within his preserve, each military business leader had substantial authority and every chance of enriching himself. Although he could act entirely alone, he was able to see to it that his men were given whatever assistance they required to keep them working loyally.

Officers in business companies and particularly regular army officers were not able openly to engage in private business. Thus they often acquired a business partner — for instance, a competent Chinese capitalist.<sup>39</sup> The latter was often fighting for his own survival as a businessman against the racists and competitors who walked all over him with political and administrative measures.

During the early fifties, politicians had used their influence to procure licences (for a fee) from the Chinese, among others. The system was known as the *Ali-Baba* scheme. Now people talked about the opposite, the *Baba-Ali*. The military had, by direct or indirect means, gained profits from the nationalized companies and needed help with laundering the money and investing it.<sup>40</sup>

The most profitable activities for both company leaders and regular army commanders were in the trading houses and in the possibility of controlling the allocation of licences and concessions.<sup>41</sup>

Aside from the military, it was, of course possible for civil servants and experts in companies and public administration to supplement their low wages. Influential politicians, including some of Sukarno's ministers, continued to offer licences and other benefits to their business contacts, in exchange for substantial contributions to numerous funds. There arose a circle of businessmen around the Minister for Central Banking Questions, Jusuf Muda Dalam, and others, who were known as the "palace millionaires".<sup>42</sup>

In addition, the prohibition against Chinese traders, especially in the rural areas, though meant to be advantageous for state buying and co-operatives, not only threw a spanner in the works for the Chinese, but also led to a deterioration in distribution. The low prices caused the farmers suffering, and they produced less. When the military and civil administrators had taken 'their' share, only very little at very high prices remained for the townsfolk.<sup>43</sup>

The noble eight-year plan, which had been worked out in 1960 as the framework of Sukarno's guided economy, thus became unrealistic.<sup>44</sup>

It ought to be added, however, that the poor results were caused not only by incompetence, mismanagement and corruption. The Dutch had often refrained from carrying out maintenance work and reinvestment because of

the unstable business climate and the uncertain political situation of the previous years. On several plantations, for instance, replantation had been neglected.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore several of KPM's ships managed to escape to foreign ports when workers occupied the head office. In addition, the regional rebellions meant that production was affected and exports sank. Nor was the international state of the market propitious. Finally, it was difficult to handle international sales and marketing, for which the Dutch had complete responsibility.<sup>46</sup>

Establishment economists actually compliment the country's new masters on certain points: no one else succeeded so well in recreating the colonial state's authority and firm hand.<sup>47</sup> Ever since independence the plantations had, for instance, been eroded by so-called squatters, peasants and plantation workers who occupied a piece of land for their own use. Many sugar companies had been forced to close down because there was no one any longer to force the peasants to cultivate sugar on their rice paddies. Now, however, the army marched in if the military business leaders required it. They could rely on the state of emergency and the argument that every occupation or other action no longer affected the imperialists, but the republic and the state-owned companies.<sup>48</sup> The same was true also of workers' wages, their right to organize, strike and criticize.<sup>49</sup>

In 1959 the government in addition decided to devalue substantially, and to reduce the amount of money in circulation, which badly affected the mass of the people.<sup>50</sup> There was also default in the payment of bonuses in connection with *Lebaran*, the big feast at the close of the month of fasting, and other privileges that workers employed at Dutch companies had enjoyed.<sup>51</sup>

When the communists raised objections and talked about bureaucratic capitalists, parliament was dissolved, members of the party leadership were detained and interrogated, party papers were banned, workers' leaders arrested, strikes stopped and all political activity prohibited for several months.<sup>52</sup>

The party withdrew and decided to let their demands, for example, for the creation of heavy industry give way to immediate demands for light industry, which could at least produce things like cloth for the people.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, in December 1960 the party's central committee had already declared that the class struggle must be subordinated to the national struggle.<sup>54</sup>

In 1962, however, the question was raised whether the state companies were not more of an obstacle to promotion of a national economy than an asset.<sup>55</sup>

## **The Boomerang**

We have already seen how the army empowered itself to take over the former Dutch companies, procured a decisive influence over the state's



running of the economy and also corrupted the attempt to launch a national economy. This stands, of course, in glaring contrast to the ideas of the PKI on the nationalization of companies by politically strong nationalists and communists, thereby creating an economic base for efforts to create a national economy through help from the state.

As if that were not enough, one or two new capitalist fractions had grown up within the framework of the PKI's indistinctly class-based state. These were the military business leaders and the regular army officers and other administrators who controlled the economy from central positions and appropriated a considerable portion of company profits. Both fractions, moreover, acquired certain private business interests.

The state still did not have a distinct class base in a private economy. But that same state had acquired its own economic base, which the officers in particular had seized and in different ways made their own economic class base.

Anti-imperialist nationalism boomeranged. Instead of fighting imperialism as had been predicted, the state turned against the PKI and in favour of "guided" capitalism.

## **Weak and Strong Nationalists**

Could the PKI have made better analyses? The party did indeed take as its point of departure the thesis that the class base of the state was indistinct, and that politically strong groups could thus acquire determining influence over the way in which the state was changed and the political direction it took. This was not a capitalist state which had to be overthrown and replaced by a state of the working people. But different groups were expected to continue wrestling for state power, and the outcome was still unsure. The party was not tied to a deterministic perspective. Theoretically it was possible that reactionary army officers could win the tussle for control of the state, and it was not entirely unthinkable that certain groups might use the state to build up a stronger bourgeoisie. It is also clear that the PKI was surprised by the rapidity of nationalization, at the initiative of the nationalists, and without opposition from the army.

In addition, the theory did not prevent analyses which clarified the inability of the nationalists to manage a large number of companies which had been won at one fell swoop. The leaders of the PKI themselves pointed out the risks. These were not in-depth observations. It could certainly have been pointed out that the nationalists had already revealed their economic incompetence, or at least their weakness for non-productive measures of self-enrichment, during the attempts to create a so-called national bourgeoisie.

Such analysis would have had even greater value if the party had not been burdened with the theoretical weakness of regarding the nationalists as if they had bourgeois interests simply because they turned against feudalism and imperialism.

And it would have been possible to analyse more effectively how the army had been politically weak and split for several years, and how nevertheless the struggle against the Dutch and the rebels had strengthened it. It would have been possible to predict that the army's organization and ability to manage the confiscated Dutch property far surpassed that of all other state institutions.

But, even if the PKI had, in this way, arrived at the conclusions that a rapid nationalization of all Dutch property would become a nightmare due to lack of experience, capacity and strength, in the same way as the socialists argued,<sup>56</sup> its strategy would nevertheless have remained unaltered. Its theoretical perspective clearly showed that the chief enemy was imperialism. And surely one does not refrain from nationalization and state ownership, or in other ways avoid working against imperialism, simply because there are a number of disagreements among those, including the army, who want to conduct such a struggle?

### **The Theoretically Inconceivable Capitalists**

Perhaps one refrains from working for nationalization and state ownership if the theoretical framework treats the state as a capitalist state.

Assume that the PKI had shared the perspective of the Chinese communists, for instance, on the bourgeoisie and the state. Then the big bourgeoisie would have been analysed in terms of monopoly capitalists who built most of their strength on feudal and imperialist forces, which was why they could also be called comprador. They had state power. The state had, in other words, its class base in the compradors, and thus also among the imperialists and feudal lords.

Such a perspective would have differed drastically from the implicit assumption made by the PKI that the state had an indistinct class base and that the classes were weak, the consequences of which were that the nationalists in the leadership had considerable autonomy. The consequences of the Chinese perspective would have been a total conflict with the state and a massive investment in wholly independent worker and peasant organizations. Obviously one would neither have avoided the struggle against imperialism nor have refused to co-operate with a relatively progressive government. But a pre-condition would have been that the party first became independent of the state, the state of the comprador bourgeoisie and of the feudal lords.

But up till 1962-63 the PKI did not bother with Chinese thinking in this area. And I myself do not believe the PKI was wrong when it maintained that the Indonesian state had an indistinct class base around 1957. Events show clearly that neither the compradors, the so-called feudal lords nor the national bourgeoisie, which had its inception in the early fifties, were able to acquire a dominant position either separately or together, despite the workers and peasants being relatively weak.

There was, instead, room for a substantially autonomous petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals and others at the head of the state and administration. These could even pose a threat to imperialism and to the fundamental interests of the compradors by embarking on nationalization and by suppressing the rebellions. They could also place obstacles in the way of the national bourgeoisie, for instance by transferring all nationalized companies into state ownership, even the small ones, and by allowing the state to take over a good deal of the domestic trade as well.

Thus the theoretical problem does not concern the lack of a Chinese perspective.<sup>57</sup> The question is not whether a capitalist state is dangerously allied to imperialism, but whether an indistinctly class-based state with substantially autonomous leaders, who indisputably pursue progressive policies, is dangerous.

I do not maintain that that is the way it was, nor that it must always be so. But I do maintain that the theoretical perspective of the PKI prevented the question from ever being placed on the agenda.

Theoretically it was possible for leaders of the state who had an indistinct class base to ally themselves with the compradors, for instance, instead of with the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. In a situation of this nature, the state could be used to reinforce the interests of the compradors, for instance by returning nationalized companies to their former owners or by privatizing them.

By comparison, it was theoretically impossible for indistinctly class-based leaders who fought against imperialism and the compradors, as well as fighting for nationalization of companies, nevertheless to ensure that they created an unusual form of capitalism to meet their own interests.

Yet it was precisely the theoretically unthinkable which actually occurred. The military in particular acquired their own control over state production, distribution and economic policies. They were able to become business leaders, administrators, to implement the state of emergency and so on. They transformed the economic basis of the state to their own advantage without privatizing it to any significant extent. When privatization did occur, it was a matter of investing some of the gains of corruption. They did not put pressure on the compradors, the imperialists, or the small national bourgeoisie which had grown up, during the first half of the fifties, with political support. On the contrary, the military was threatened by them and forced to counteract them. Ironically, it was the workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie, directed by the PKI, Sukarno and sections of the PNI, who lent passive support to the army.

## **What Is Wrong with the Theory?**

In Chapter 9 I indicated that the problems of the PKI were partly rooted in the thesis that every consistent opposition to feudalism and imperialism, with the sole exception of that of the workers, was assumed to be bourgeois.



Thus the nationalists were dubbed bourgeois. But they did not have, nor did they wish to have, objective interests in becoming traditional capitalists.

Now, I see similarities in the case of the new lords of anti-imperialism. As long as the indistinctly class-based state and the relatively autonomous leaders struggle against compradors and imperialists, and transfer nationalized companies to state ownership, according to the PKI's theory the state cannot be regarded as a dangerous giant which favours a general and unlicensed capitalist development. But, despite state ownership and the struggle against imperialism, dangerous capitalists did arise. The problem was that this was not traditional capitalist development with common private capitalists.

In Chapter 9 I also established that most of the nationalists could not make any worthwhile profits by investing in private trade and production. Imperialism was too strong. It was instead natural for the nationalists to make use of their strengths, their political and administrative positions and their military efficiency. In other words, it was much simpler to take over the state and to enrich oneself in that way than to try to compete against imperialism on its own terms.

When it comes to the new lords of anti-imperialism, a bunch of officers who take over the former Dutch companies, perhaps without even having planned to do so, sit there wondering how to make as much money as possible from all the banks, industries, plantations, tradinghouses, ships... Even an officer of average intelligence, who is a fanatic devotee of free enterprise and hates communism, is aware that if the companies were to be privatized both the army and he himself would lose their chance of enriching themselves. Then the companies would disappear to their clients, i.e. the capitalists with their own capital and experience of running businesses. As a result, the companies must become state-owned, even though this is precisely what the communists advocate. It would have been too much to demand that the army itself take over the companies. But the officers could utilize their political and especially their military strength to become company heads or control the state companies and economic policies.

Any officer wishing to profit from production and trade thus had to take great care not to become a traditional private capitalist. He ought, however, to have invested a part of his profits from corruption in private enterprises so as to acquire a small private and independent capital on which to live in later years, or when he falls from grace or loses his job as company head.

The inability of the PKI to imagine such a strange presentation of new and somewhat odd capitalists meant that the party also lacked theoretical tools for discussing in more detail the size of the presumed surplus from the nationalized companies and whether it could be used to create a national economy or not.

According to the party's theory, nationalization was a stage in the struggle for an independent economy. The nationalists and the national bourgeoisie

were expected to be interested in building a balanced domestic economy in which production and demand stimulated one another and economic development was not wholly dependent on either imports or exports. Only through such an independent economy would they acquire the freedom of action to withstand imperialism.

But the nationalists in general, and the new "unthinkable" capitalists in particular, were able to stand against imperialism without building a classical independent economy. Their way of safeguarding their profit-making opportunities was through reinforcing their political and military positions. Thanks to these, they have become business leaders and central directors who could milk the old colonial economy dry.

Consequently the inadequate contributions from nationalized companies to the building up of heavy industries were not solely the result of mismanagement and corruption, though this was, of course, believed to be the case by all of those who expressed a desire for traditional capitalism, with or without state leadership. For military capitalists, however, it was at least partly a question of rationally reinforcing their positions of military and political power, so as to be able to build their own form of capitalism in their own way.

## Notes

1. See, e.g., documents from the central committee meeting of 1957, Aidit (1957) in Aiklit (1961b) pp.123-159.
2. Aidit (1955) in Aidit (1961a) p.309.
3. Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1961b) pp.24ff.
4. For a reasonably complete document on the view of the PKI on a state-led national economy, see the report from the PKI's economic seminar in 1959 in *Review of Indonesia* (supplement) Nos. 4-5 (1959). Earlier outlines can be found, *inter alia*, in Aidit (1956) pp.19-62 and (1957) pp.153-159, as well as (1958) pp.257-306 in Aidit (1961b). All are political reports to the central committee.
5. See above p.81ff.
6. See Chapter 6 p.82 and fn. 45. Cf. Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) p.293.
7. See, e.g., Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1961b) pp.95ff. The chief of the army, the executive head of the state of emergency and soon even the Minister of Defence, General Nasution, declared that, as far as he was concerned, the serious contradictions between the officers in the army and the PKI first started in 1960. "Prior to that, the PKI raised no objections when we took over Dutch companies." Interview, 22 October 1980, Jakarta.
8. Ernst Utrecht. Interview 2 October 1980, Amsterdam.
9. Hindley (1964a) p.267.
10. See, e.g., Thomas and Glassburner (1965) pp.166-9.
11. Mackie (1961-62) p.338.
12. Hawkins (1971) p.225.
13. See, e.g., Kroef (1965a) pp.88ff.
14. Pauker (1962a) p.613.
15. Utrecht (1979b) p.133. See also Muhajani (1967).
16. See, e.g., Thomas and Glassburner (1965) pp.173-7.
17. See, e.g., Hawkins (1971) p.231, Paauw (1967) pp.210ff. and Feith (1967) pp.326ff. *Review of Indonesia* 11-12 (1959) pp.3ff and 19ff. The late Sinaru Giok Tjhan, former leader of the

- Indonesian Chinese in Baerki, and close to the PKI, nevertheless maintained that the PKI gave in and compromised with the army. Interview, 2 October 1980, Amsterdam.
18. At independence the Indonesians took over some Dutch state-owned companies (such as railway companies and printing firms), German plantations which had been confiscated by the Dutch, as well as shares in the mining and oil industries. After independence new businesses were established — for instance, banks, transport companies, trading houses, cement factories. Some foreign companies were also nationalized and the owners recompensed. See, e.g., Castles (1965) p.21 or, for basic material, Sutter (1959) Vol I.
19. See, e.g., documents from the central committee meeting of March-April 1958, Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) pp.257-306 and Aidit's speech on the occasion of the 39th anniversary of the PKI in the *Review of Indonesia*, 6-7, (1959) (supplement).
20. Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) p.293.
21. During the 1960s the workers nevertheless occupied a few plantations on Central Java and ran them collectively. But they were very few, primitive and not particularly successful. Stoler (1979b) pp.13ff.
22. Interview No. 29, Jakarta. Cf. Ananta (1971).
23. McVey (1972) pp.156ff.
24. Interview 22nd November, 1980, Jakarta.
25. Thomas and Glassburner (1965) p.174.
26. Ibid, pp.174ff.
27. Lev (1964) pp.85ff.
28. McVey (1972) pp.157ff.
29. See, e.g., Aidit (1958) pp.246ff. and Aidit (1958) pp.296ff. in Aidit (1961b).
30. Mackie (1971) pp.50ff. Thomas and Glassburner (1965) pp.174ff.
31. Lev (1964) pp.85ff. Oey (1971) pp.58ff.
32. See, e.g., McVey (1972) pp.159, Feith (1967) p.332ff. Interview with J.D. Legge, 9 October 1980, Melbourne.
33. Nasution in an interview 22 November 1980, Jakarta.
34. Nasution seems to be a remarkable exception, with personal integrity and a lack at least of private corruption.
35. Panglaykim (1964). Interview 24 April 1980.
36. McVey (1972) p.161.
37. Arndt (1973) pp.114ff. Concerning the appointment, see *ibid*. For Sukarno's later decision see Utrecht (1976a) p.62. According to Utrecht, Sukarno knew that Sutowo was very corrupt, but the president said that Sutowo was very efficient, and might as well steal a million if at the same time he made ten million for the state.
38. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was unable to control the Indonesian economy since Pertamina sidestepped the national budget. This the IMF wished to halt. Interview No. 54 with a well-informed specialist, Jakarta, 1980. Cf. also OECD (1977).
39. For the latter see above (after fn.37) see Utrecht (1979b) pp.103ff. and in particular Crouch (1975) and (1979) as well as Robison (1978) and McVey (1972) pp.154-162. Utrecht maintained that "a new class of military business leaders" was growing up in work done in 1959.)
40. Castles (1967) p.81.
41. See especially Crouch (1975) and Robison (1978).
42. Ibid.
43. See, e.g., Paauw (1967) pp.210ff.
44. Cf. *ibid*, pp.221-31, as well as Pauker (1961).
45. Machie (1961-62) *inter alia*, p.349.
46. See, e.g., Thomas and Glassburner (1965) pp.169ff., Paauw (1967) pp.192-6, and Panglaykim (1964).
47. E.g. interview with Panglaykim 24 November 1980 and Róden (IMF) 15 October 1980, Jakarta. Cf. Gordon (1979a) p.259.
48. On the new hard line concerning squatters, see, e.g., McVey (1972) pp.161ff., Hindley (1962a) p.32 and (1962b) p.923.
49. For a good summary, see Hindley (1962b) and Kroef (1962a).



50. Concerning the measures, see Paauw (1967) pp.238ff.
51. Mortimer (1974a) p.254.
52. See fn. 49 above.
53. Mortimer (1974a) p.270.
54. See PKI (1961).
55. Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) p.473.
56. A typical flashback: "Privatization would have been the same as giving the companies to the politicians. The only alternative was the military. It was a nightmare. We were so inexperienced. There were so unprecedentedly few with the strength and capacity to lead a business venture." Interview with Panglaykim, 24 November 1980. Jakarta.
57. Despite the PKI's self-criticism, see, e.g., PKI (1971).

# 11. Democratic Cul-de-Sac

## Nationalists, Communists and Democracy

The leaders of the PKI had determined to use peaceful and democratic methods within the framework of a long-term strategy. To strengthen their own position, the party needed protection against the anti-communist forces which, according to the PKI, were primarily organized in the PSI and Masjumi. They also had widespread support in the army.

The PKI could find protection if the party offered the PNI, and soon also Sukarno, critical support. The nationalists were feuding with the orthodox Muslims and the technocratic socialists.

A "front from above" with the nationalists would thus secure the democratic freedoms which the PKI needed to be able to become a so-called Leninist mass party, build its own fronts from below, such as trade-union organizations, peasant movements and women's fronts, and successfully take part in parliamentary elections. Fronts from below would attract the large number of workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie who had joined forces with parties like Masjumi and the PSI.

A strong party and a strong front from below were in turn preconditions for the PKI to be able to take the initiative in their co-operation with the nationalists. The front from above was necessary so that a popular democratic government could be formed.

The leaders of the PKI maintained that the objectives of the day were to create the preconditions for the struggle to complete the revolution of 1945 and nominate a popular democratic government. In 1955 this objective was formalized as a definite stage. Support from a united front from above, as well as successes during elections, ought to lead to a national coalition government with all who supported democratic rights and privileges, and national unity and were against imperialism and feudalism.

The first stage was the starting point of the next, when the front from below would create a new popular democracy and launch a popular democratic government. It was not out of the question that even these objectives could be attained by peaceful means, as the strength of the forces of the international socialist camp, for instance, might cause the enemy to refrain from violence.<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the 1950s Indonesia suffered under weak coalition governments and corrupt party politicians. Nor did the election of 1955 lay the ground for a stable cabinet. The military opposed the politicians. Regional rebel movements grew powerful. The struggle against the Dutch intensified and demanded an effective leadership, while the politicians were paralysed. The president was subject to assassination attempts. The PKI came to agree with the opinion of Sukarno and the central command of the army that liberal democracy had outlived its usefulness and ought to be replaced by a so-called "guided democracy".

The PKI did, indeed, insist that new elections ought to be held, and refused to agree to the idea that all political parties should be banned. But the communists had no weapon to use against more powerful presidential powers. It was said that the alternative would be a coup d'état. And the PKI did not make any significant protest when the PSI and Masjumi, among others, were banned in 1960-61. In a characteristic statement in 1958, when the rebellions on the outer islands were being crushed, the PKI said it supported guided democracy, since the bourgeoisie had itself given up its liberal democracy and tried to take power by extra-parliamentary methods.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1957, the party leadership had praised the state of emergency and urged the people to back the army against the Dutch and the rebels.<sup>3</sup>

When the army central command joined the side of the president and the government against the rebels, took over the Dutch companies, and in other ways distanced themselves from the PSI, Masjumi and imperialism generally, the PKI maintained in 1958 that a revolutionary situation was approaching.<sup>4</sup>

According to the communists the preconditions now existed for a broad patriotic front, virtually an historic compromise, a coalition government of all revolutionaries who would be able to face the imperialist and feudal forces.<sup>5</sup>

This was not to be. The PKI criticized the army in 1959 and 1960 for meddling in politics, sabotaging democracy, the national economy, etc.

At the same time as the PKI hurled its most devastating criticism at Sukarno's government, bringing down upon itself heavy repression from the army, the party leadership nevertheless still talked about non-antagonistic contradictions "within the people".<sup>6</sup>

For the PKI, democracy meant two things: the struggle against feudalism including extra-economic forces,<sup>7</sup> and liberty for the communists to organize, mobilize and criticize. If it were primarily the PSI and Masjumi that were affected by authoritarian democracy, while Sukarno at the same time protected the PKI, there was thus, from the PKI's viewpoint, no reason to defend liberal parliamentary democracy. The objective was a so-called people's democracy, inspired by Eastern European models. Democracy was for the "people", not for the "enemies of the people".

What, then, were the arguments of the PKI? I have outlined them earlier<sup>8</sup> and will try to present them here in greater detail.



According to the PKI, the nationalists were progressive, since they were rooted in the national bourgeoisie. In its own interests, a national bourgeoisie must create an independent economy. In order to do this, it was forced to move against feudalism and imperialism.

A national bourgeoisie turned against feudalism since the feudal landlords prevented the free formation of capital through political extra-economic forces. Traditionally the economic strength of the bourgeoisie was thus counterposed to the extra-economic powers of the feudal landlords. Furthermore, the imperialists collaborated with the feudal landlords.

When the capitalists fought against political oppression, even the masses got the chance of acquiring certain rights and freedoms, at the same time as the capitalists' chances of success increased if the oppressed fought at their side against the feudal oppressors.

Economically powerful capitalists soon replaced the political oppression of the feudal landlords with economic force. The masses could thus use their political freedom only to support the bourgeoisie.

In Indonesia, however, the national bourgeoisie was weak, the class base of the state was indistinct, and politically liberated workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals, etc. could act relatively autonomously. The national bourgeoisie did not have the economic power to reduce the masses to relatively dependent support troops. Instead they were forced, in their own interests, to accept real political freedoms, even for the communists since the national bourgeoisie needed them.

In an international perspective the same argument held good. The national bourgeoisie needed support from the socialist countries. At the same time this was a guarantee for conducting a peaceful and democratic competition in countries like Indonesia.

The weakness of the national bourgeoisie, of course, made it shaky and able, from time to time, to abandon its own interests and collaborate with the comprador bourgeoisie. These risks could, however, be overcome if other forces, among them the communists, gave the national bourgeoisie the support it needed.

## **Guided Democracy Guides the PKI**

### **Progress**

Only some months after the anti-communist raids by the Sukiman government in August 1951, and not long after the PKI in May 1952 had proclaimed its new strategy, the PKI leadership had succeeded in making the PKI so acceptable that there were communists among the leading organizers of the nationwide celebrations of the anniversary of Independence Day on 17 August.<sup>9</sup>

The critical support of the PKI for the PNI and Sukarno led, among other things, to nationalist-led governments. The PKI was not formally

represented until 1962, and even then this was mainly a matter of form. But the party's indirect influence was significant. It would not be inappropriate to compare its role with that of the communists in Italy today.<sup>10</sup>

Even more important was the fact that by supporting the nationalists, the communists received both physical and ideological protection. The PSI and Masjumi tried propagating themes of the Cold War, thereby hoping to unite all anti-communists, and, of course, all the religious forces. But the PKI slipped out of reach, due to Sukarno's popularity, acted as convinced nationalists who were prepared to co-operate with all patriots, irrespective of whether or not they were religious, and succeeded in getting many to listen to what they themselves, rather than others, had to say about the PKI.<sup>11</sup> A more concrete example of what that protection meant was that Sukarno prevented the NU and the PNI from openly turning against the PKI when the communists won votes at the expense of the other two parties.<sup>12</sup> Another example is that Sukarno saw to it that the PKI was able to hold its sixth congress in 1959, despite opposition from the military.<sup>13</sup>

Thus it was quite obvious that at least some nationalists needed the support of the PKI. That meant they needed a democracy in which it was possible for the PKI to exist and offer that support.

The PKI did not rest with its finger on the trigger. The party and the mass organizations were mobilized and organized as never before. At the beginning of 1952 there were scarcely 8,000 members or applicants for membership of the party.<sup>14</sup> A few months later, in May, the party claimed the figure had risen to 100,000. After that recruitment proceeded a little more slowly, rising to 165,000 in March 1954.<sup>15</sup> Parallel efforts were made to build up the mass organizations and to educate all members.<sup>16</sup>

A second recruitment campaign was started in 1954, and it led to claims by the party that it had half a million members and applicants towards the end of the year. In February 1956 the party talked about a million.<sup>17</sup> Three years later the figure was one and a half million, of whom more than half were fully-fledged members. Now it was said that most of the members were peasants. Efforts had also been made to organize the women. In 1959 it was announced that 258,000 of the membership of 1.5 million were women.<sup>18</sup>

During the second half of 1962 the number of members passed the two million mark.<sup>19</sup> Indisputably, the PKI was the largest communist party outside the Eastern bloc, measured according to the party's own figures.

At the same time the different mass organizations grew in strength and scope. It was not simply a question of the trade-union movement, where the PKI controlled by far the largest labour confederation in the country, SOBSI, and the peasants' organizations, the largest of which was controlled by the PKI. I shall return to these in the next two chapters. There was also notable growth of the women's movements, the students' organizations, the associations of cultural workers, etc. Even taking into account the usual exaggerations which occur when organizations themselves release membership figures, and the dual membership which often occurred, the number of party members and organized sympathizers at the beginning of the sixties was probably around eight million.<sup>20</sup>

Needless to say, many questions can be raised about this rapid expansion. But the PKI was not the first communist party in the world which rapidly increased its membership. The Japanese invasion, for instance, led to the Chinese Communist Party increasing its membership tenfold. In 1940 the Yugoslav Communist Party had about 6,000 members; by 1945 the figure had risen to 500,000. The party in Czechoslovakia had 50,000 members in 1938 and just over 1.5 million in 1946.<sup>21</sup>

The Indonesian election results in 1955 were also exceptional. The party became the fourth largest in the country with 16.4 per cent of the vote and more than 6.1 million voters. The gap between the PKI and the next biggest party was very large — the PSII collected only 2.9 per cent. The differences between the four largest parties was, on the other hand, relatively small. The PNI got 22.3 per cent, Masjumi 20.9 and the NU 18.4 per cent. From having 17 seats in parliament, the PKI now had 39.<sup>22</sup>

Like the PNI and the NU, the PKI was strongest in Central and East Java. Even in West Java, Jakarta and parts of Sumatra, the PKI was among the largest parties. In the outer islands in general, however, it did not have so much support.<sup>23</sup>

The major losers in the election were Masjumi, which was hard hit by the competing NU,<sup>24</sup> the PSI which lost nine of its 14 seats, and a number of conservative national groups.

The PKI made additional gains in the local elections in 1957 and 1958,<sup>25</sup> and became the largest party on Java, and probably in the whole country. Compared to 1957, the PKI increased its share of the vote by more than 37 percent, and received 7.5 million votes, or 27.4 percent of all votes cast. This can be compared to a total of over 6.1 million votes in the whole country in 1955. Now it was primarily the PNI and also the NU which suffered losses. The PKI got more than 50 per cent of the votes in Semarang, in Solo, in the area between Yogyakarta and Semarang and eastwards towards Solo, in the areas around Madiun and Blitar, as well as in the south-western sections of Central Java. After a by-election the PKI also took over in Surabaya. On West Java and South Sumatra the PKI became the second largest party. In Kalimantan, too, considerable gains were made.<sup>26</sup>

During the local elections many monopolies on the outposts of the state apparatus were broken. The PKI itself chose to emphasize Masjumi's losses. But the PNI was also badly hit, since so much of its strength came from the state bureaucracy.<sup>27</sup>

The PKI was thus able to strengthen its position by peaceful means. At the same time the communists succeeded in splitting and isolating their enemies. As early as April 1952, the NU broke away from Masjumi.<sup>28</sup> The NU stood for an orthodox, but in several ways pragmatic, Islam, while Masjumi can best be described as modernistic but somewhat dogmatic or fanatical. The NU, primarily based in East and central Java, soon drew closer to the PNI and Sukarno. During the parliamentary elections the NU was perhaps the major victor. The Muslim front against communism (among other things) was partly broken.



In addition the army split in October 1952. Commander-in-Chief Nasution and some socialists in the army command wanted to demobilize the large number of self-taught soldiers who remained from the liberation struggle, to make more room for their own people. These plans threatened the military followers of the nationalists in particular. The nationalist victory in parliament created a situation in which Nasution and his socialist brothers-in-arms tried in vain to force President Sukarno to set aside parliamentary democracy.<sup>29</sup>

Now Nasution and other instigators of coup d'états were forced to resign.<sup>30</sup> The army was split and for the next few years posed no serious danger. The socialists, who had been most voluble in advocating parliamentary democracy and had tried to stamp the communists as anti-democratic, were demonstrably a threat to democracy.

In the same way, the PKI and the nationalists succeeded in branding Masjumi as democratically unreliable through its contacts with *Darul Islam* in West Java. *Darul Islam* terrorized the local population and fought openly against the republic in order to build a Muslim state. Later both Masjumi and the PSI could be associated with the rebels on the outer islands. In 1960-61 several parties were banned, amongst them Masjumi and the PSI.

In Sukarno's speech on Independence Day, 17 August 1959, the PKI got more grist to its mill. Here the basis was laid for a political manifesto called *manipol*, which outlined the Indonesian revolution in radical terms. The objective was said to be Indonesian socialism. In the meantime a national democracy must be attained through a struggle against imperialism and feudalism. In this process the workers and peasants were the most important social forces. To achieve these aims the party system had to be "simplified", and those that did not support *manipol* had to be purged from the state apparatus. The ideology of the state was summarized in the acronym *usdek*: the constitution of 1945, with strong presidential powers, Indonesian socialism, guided democracy and Indonesian identity.

Furthermore, Sukarno did not simply talk about a *gotang-royong* cabinet, a coalition government, but said that *Nasakom* co-operation should be a hallmark of the government and the state apparatus, and that the entire country would benefit from unity between the nationalists, the religious and the communists.<sup>31</sup>

Doubtless Sukarno dominated. But sheltered by him and the nationalists, the PKI had succeeded in mobilizing and organizing at least eight million people. While the leaders of the PNI and NU became increasingly dependent on Sukarno's goodwill, the PKI had organized its own mass base. The populist Sukarno needed that mass base, particularly when the rebels and later the army rattled their sabres.

Another measure of the success of the PKI's investment in peaceful struggle and democracy was the role of Nasution, Commander-in-Chief of the army. During the second half of the fifties he drew closer to the nationalists in general and to Sukarno in particular. He refrained from again inciting a coup d'état, popular at the time (as in Pakistan in 1958, for

instance). He fought against the Dutch over *Irian Jaya*, nationalized their companies and defeated many of his former allies, who, with the support of the Western powers, were leading rebellions in the outer islands.

In the West hopes had been high that parliamentary democracy would promote capitalism and counteract socialist tendencies. It looked as though the reverse was happening in Indonesia. One of the leading scientific advisers to Washington and the CIA, Guy J. Pauker, said that it was clear to most people that the PKI would have won new parliamentary elections at that time, becoming "the first Communist party anywhere in the world to gain control of a national government by legal, peaceful means".<sup>32</sup>

It is to Pauker's credit that he persuaded Washington in 1959-60 to invest in the army, despite its "betrayal", and not only to rely on the authentic if relatively powerless anti-communist politicians in the socialist party, Masjumi, et al.<sup>33</sup> If the views of the CIA and other hawks had prevailed, the army command would presumably have been left to their own fate and, more or less like Nasser's generals, been left to the mercies of Moscow.<sup>34</sup>

### **Problems: The Nationalists Abandon Democracy**

The most crucial problems started in the second half of 1957. The economic policies of the nationalists had failed. Bourgeois-inspired regional rebellions were threatening. The PKI had won overwhelming local election victories, primarily at the expense of the PNI. In the countryside, the front from above with the nationalists shrivelled up.

The PKI, through the advances it had made, was depriving the nationalists of the support of the people. In addition, the PKI was breaking into the local state administration, the power base of the PNI and its tool for mobilizing the masses. The NU, too, was threatened by the PKI's gains.

Regionally and locally the nationalists reacted by breaking the party truce with the PKI. The NU broke off its contacts with the PKI.<sup>35</sup>

The leaders of both the PNI and the NU in Jakarta also felt threatened by the gains of the PKI. To remain in power they would have either to force through reforms which favoured the peasants, and in that way compete with the PKI for the peasants' votes, or to accommodate to the conservative local leaders who were traditionally able to mobilize the masses, though this ability was now under threat.

The first was out of the question. There was no successful national economy which could be used by the central leadership to give local compatriots the chance of building up capital stocks and increasing the buying power of the masses, without the compatriots themselves losing out on the deal.

The other alternative, of breaking with the PKI, was also difficult. Sukarno would be wrathful. The government led by the PNI and the NU would be weakened. There were threats of economic crisis and rebellions

inspired by the bourgeoisie. Sukarno made it clear that his government needed all the support it could muster — even that of the PKI.<sup>36</sup>

Sukarno and the nationalists, as well as the “democratic Muslims” in Jakarta, solved their dilemma by abandoning democracy. The central leadership stood up for collaboration with the PKI. Thus, in times of national collapse and economic crises, the PKI had its backers organized. But the threat from both the PKI and the local leaders also had to be met. This was done by declaring a state of emergency, postponing the elections, replacing locally-elected leaders with ones centrally-appointed and other measures which strengthened the power of the central state.

### **The Army Enforces ‘Guided Democracy’**

The state of emergency led to the army becoming the real rulers of the country, alongside Sukarno and his popular supporters. With the former Dutch companies in their hands, the military were even stronger. When the army, with exceptional swiftness, crushed the regional rebellions, which it had virtually done by the end of 1958, the military leadership was in a position to refuse to relinquish any of its gains. Jakarta abounded with rumours of an impending military coup d'état if the army did not get the political and economic power it desired and the resources it demanded.

In the previous chapter I showed how the military made the nationalized companies into a form of individually-controlled state property. At the political level the army command forced through “guided democracy”.

The communists did, indeed, defend parliament and the party system. But when the government in February 1959 proposed a bill which would mean the reinstatement of the constitution of 1945, which sanctioned stronger presidential powers, the PKI sided with Sukarno and the army. At the same time, the PKI acceded to the proposal to reduce the number of political parties, to open parliament to so-called functional groups of workers, peasants, youth and the military, and to build a national front parallel with and partly bypassing the parties.<sup>37</sup>

On 22 April Sukarno asked the constituent assembly to reinstate the constitution of 1945. Then he went abroad for two months. At the end of May, Masjumi succeeded in uniting the Muslims in the constituent assembly against the constitution of 1945, at which point it was not possible to obtain the requisite two-thirds majority. A few days later, on 4 June, the army command banned all political activities. Once again the PKI rallied round behind the army, this time together with the PNI and NU.

Sukarno returned towards the end of June. Nasution urged him to make a unilateral proclamation of the 1945 constitution. Sukarno hesitated. Even the PNI urged him to introduce guided democracy.<sup>38</sup>

Thus on 5 July 1959 Sukarno proclaimed the constitution of 1945. The following day the government resigned. Sukarno could now appoint a cabinet of his own, responsible to him and not to parliament. Twelve



ministers were military men. The PKI was not represented in any way other than indirectly through people who may have had some communist sympathies.<sup>39</sup>

## **The Guided Democracy of Sukarno and Nasution**

Guided democracy did include some political radicalism (such as the concepts of *manipol* and *Nasakom*) and the representation of the PKI in the country's Supreme Advisory Council (*Dewan Pertimbangan Asung*) established by Sukarno, and in his National Planning Council.

But the PKI was excluded from the government. The state of emergency was prolonged. Elections were again postponed.

Parallel with these developments, the president declared that the local leaders (e.g. the mayors) who had been elected in 1957, would be replaced by centrally-appointed leaders. This posed a serious threat to the election victories of the PKI. The central government did, indeed, appoint a few communists, but the PKI most certainly lost through these controls.<sup>40</sup> Instead good co-operation between the regional and local corps of *pamong praja*, local and regional administrators of the central government, was cemented with the military administrators of the state of emergency. Together they held virtually all the power in their areas.<sup>41</sup>

The old parliament remained until March 1960. Then the president dissolved it after the assembly, including the PKI, had been impudent enough to demand control over state finances. In June, Sukarno appointed a new parliament in which both parties and functional groups were represented. Among these functional groups was, of course, the army.<sup>42</sup>

Not all the parties were given seats in the new parliament. Masjumi and the PSI were amongst those left out. In June new rules for the parties were introduced. They should accept the constitution of 1945, endorse the *pancasila* and work peacefully and democratically. Whenever he so desired, the president could order an investigation of a party's administration, finances, etc., and could disband all who worked against or undermined state policies.<sup>43</sup>

Later in 1960 the state also demanded complete copies of membership registers from all political parties. The respective party branch, as well as a list of members and their names, addresses, position in the organization and date of joining should all be included. According to Hindley, the PKI handed in their lists on 4 February 1961.<sup>44</sup>

Among the more important demands of the army was the depoliticization of the state apparatus, which would enable the army to gain more room for itself at the expense of the politicians. The introduction of guided democracy meant that senior civil servants could not belong to political parties. This applied to both the central and local administration, and concerned state company managers, police, the military and so on. This affected about 50,000 members of the political and administrative élites. It

was, of course, possible to circumvent this decision. Hardest hit was thus the PKI, which had limited opportunities to work among already established civil servants, and demanded renewed civil and political control of, for example, state companies, state administration and military units.<sup>45</sup>

One of the PKI's mass organizations was *Perbepsi*, an organization of communist-sympathizing veterans from the struggle for independence and the largest organization of veterans in the country. The 300,000 *Perbepsi* members, presumably all knowledgeable about weapons, were, naturally, of considerable significance. During the years of 1957-59 the army succeeded in uniting *Perbepsi* with other veterans' organizations, and then to make it subservient to the army's own command. The PKI initially approved this amalgamation.<sup>46</sup>

The military was trying to break out of its isolation. The most important project thus became the army's voluntary front for the liberation of *Irian Jaya*. A number of civilian organizations co-operated, many of which were influenced by the communists. Later Sukarno converted this creation to his National Front. The army command, the nationalists, Sukarno and others cultivated ideas about making the National Front the only political organization permitted in the country.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently the attempt was abandoned. The PKI succeeded in defending its rights to organize.

When it came to the organization of the workers, the army and the nationalists also made strenuous efforts to work against the PKI and SOBSI. The Minister of Labour, Ahem Erningpradja and Nasution tried to create a confederation of trade unions, OPPI, with a country-wide monopoly.<sup>48</sup> The PKI and SOBSI were damaged, but did not disappear. Needless to say, strikes were prohibited.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, there was a series of direct attacks on the PKI and its mass organizations. In 1959, for instance, the army tried to stop the Sixth Congress of the PKI. When the party criticized the government towards the end of 1959 and during 1960, the top leaders were detained and subjected to intensive interrogation. The periodicals and newspapers of the Central Committee were stopped. Only publication of the daily *Harian Rakjat* was permitted. Censorship however, was severe. During the period January to September 1960, 65 daily issues of *Harian Rakjat* were withdrawn. The communist news agency was closed for several months. Even SOBSI's publications were prohibited. In 1961 all private printing presses and duplicating machines were placed under the control of the state.

All political activity in the country was prohibited during the second half of 1960. The army accepted the outlawing of Masjumi and the PSI, and probably hoped that the PKI would be banned as a service in return. But despite everything, the PKI survived, primarily because Sukarno needed the support of the mobilized masses to back him up.<sup>50</sup>

## Democratic Patrons

The analysis of developments showed the PKI was correct in assuming that the nationalists needed broad popular support in their struggle against imperialism and feudal oppression.

But the same analysis also indicated the PKI was incorrect in assuming that the nationalists needed democratic rights and freedoms to secure this mass support. Instead of breaking down the traditional, administrative and patriarchal forms of political control of the masses, the nationalists re-erected them within the framework of guided democracy, and used them to mobilize the people behind them.

This not only hit the PKI's enemies, but badly affected the communists themselves. The latter, more than anyone, needed democratic rights and freedoms in order to be able to mobilize, organize and win elections.

One of the most common theses is that the problems were caused by the party reverting to the theory that peaceful and democratic struggle was possible. Such a theory obscures the opponents' tendency to disregard beautiful principles when faced with a threat.<sup>51</sup>

In this case, however, that general thesis puts almost everything upside down. During the "bourgeois democracy", the PKI enjoyed huge gains. At that point there was nothing wrong with peaceful and democratic forms of struggle. When things started going wrong for the party, when the democratic rights and freedoms were curtailed, the PKI had already given up the theory of struggling within the framework of a "bourgeois" democracy. The PKI actually went so far as to acclaim the guided democracy which would give "the people", but not "the enemies of the people", democratic rights.

If the PKI had succumbed to some sinful theory about how the struggle should be conducted, it was thus not their belief in the "bourgeois" democracy, but rather the belief in the nationalists' guided democracy.

Therefore, the first question must be: could the communists have carried out better analyses, while retaining their theoretical perspective, which would have predicted the aversion of the nationalists to democratic rights and freedoms? The answer must be yes.

From 1946 parliamentary democracy was not genuine liberal democracy. This was common knowledge. The masses were not able freely to elect representatives according to their own interests and desires.

During the liberation struggle, one could, for instance, see the nationalists mobilizing the masses by collecting people behind *bapak*, a fatherly protective figure, and not by primarily breaking down similar traditional patriarchal ways of acquiring popular support.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, the nationalists were not only anti-colonial, but even to some extent anti-feudal, when they forced out the old "bailiffs", large landowners and others, particularly those who had done the work of the colonial powers.<sup>53</sup> Not many years passed, however, before the nationalists once again started working with, appointing and using the old "bailiffs" (*pamong*



*praja*) for their own purposes.<sup>54</sup>

In 1954-55 this happened during the parliamentary elections. The nationalists made use of significant personages within the regional and local administration, village leaders and others, who could mobilize votes by reason of their authority, traditional loyalties, patron-client relations, etc.<sup>55</sup>

But the PKI was, instead, making major gains. There were many who had dared to take the step of voting democratically. And, as Aidit said, the gains of the PNI and the NU were victories for the "democratic forces".<sup>56</sup>

True, the elections were not simply a formality. More than 16 per cent of those eligible to vote defied the traditional leaders and voted for the communists. Many rejected Masjumi and the PSI, etc., which sold themselves to regional rebels and instigators of coup d'états, and which really wanted to have the PKI banned.

But the way the nationalists and others mobilized popular support for their own ends did not become more democratic simply because the PKI made gains, while Masjumi and the PSI suffered setbacks. (In the next chapter I will return to the question of the mobilization of the peasants.)

## Nationalists Against Democratic Rights and Privileges

There were, however, theoretical obstacles to such clarity of vision. As we have seen, the PKI counted on the nationalists, alias the national bourgeoisie, trying to build an independent and national economy, subsequently with an increasingly controlled direction. This meant they had their own bourgeois interests in capital formation, a liberal economy, expanded domestic markets, etc. To reach this position, they not only needed to struggle against imperialism and, for instance, nationalize foreign companies, but they would also be forced to break with the old feudal lords' political and extra-economic force, which was backed by imperialism. In this way even the oppressed masses would be given the opportunity of gaining certain democratic rights and freedoms. In addition, the nationalists would not be able to counteract the liberation of the masses, since they were dependent on their support. Finally, the national bourgeoisie was so weak that, in contrast to the classical bourgeoisie, it would not be in a position to replace feudal oppression with all-encompassing economic coercion.

Even if the leadership of the PKI had realized that the nationalists were, in reality, democratic patrons, they were able to face the future with confidence, and dared to support a guided democracy under the leadership of the nationalists. Sooner or later, the theory predicted, the nationalists would, in their own interests, work for the masses' democratic rights, but not for those of the imperialists or the feudal landlords.

Expressed in a simple fashion, it was thus theoretically unlikely that democracy would degenerate. And yet we know that was precisely what

happened. Where, then, did the theory go wrong?

In the first place, as we have already seen in Chapter 9, the communists were not able to predict the inability or, more accurately the lack of interest, of the nationalists in starting to build a national economy, as good classical capitalists should.

I showed that this rigidity of the leadership of the PKI depended primarily on the theory that every consistent opposition to imperialism and feudalism must be bourgeois, except that of the workers. This was, however, inconsistent with the fact that the nationalists were not especially interested in private trading or production. The imperialists were too strong. What the nationalists were concerned about was to utilize their political and administrative positions to take over the state and thus to enrich themselves.

Secondly, we have seen in Chapter 10 that even when the state intervened, nationalized and began to guide the economy, no national economy developed. Despite state ownership and the struggle against imperialism, dangerous, if unusual, capitalists began to emerge. This was in direct conflict with the predictions derived from the PKI's theory. These capitalists, like the nationalists, did not have an economic basis which they must build an independent economy to safe-guard. Instead they utilized, and sought to reinforce, their administrative political and military positions.

Now I shall return to the question of democratic rights and freedoms. Since the theory could not predict that the nationalists would lack interest in building a national economy in the classic bourgeois manner, neither could it reveal that the nationalists also lacked the equally classic bourgeois interests in breaking down the political monopoly and building a genuine political democracy with the support of the masses. What the nationalists needed, in reality, were their traditional instruments of power — administrative, political and ideological — in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism. They were not a bourgeoisie with significant economic strength.

The nationalists certainly needed broad mass support. Thus far they were interested in democracy. As long as the PKI made a loyal contribution to assembling the masses behind the nationalists, there was plenty of space for the party and it was given the blessing of the nationalists. But when the promises of the nationalists about a booming Indonesian economy, which would be advantageous to all but the feudal landlords and the imperialists, fell flat, it was no longer self-evident that in a free and democratic system the masses would support the nationalists. And when the communists at the same time tried to use their freedom of action to create and make use of democratic rights and freedoms such as winning local elections and trying to take over the administration of certain villages or the seat of the mayor in larger towns, then the power base of the nationalists was threatened and they raged against the PKI.

In other words, democratic rights and freedoms were a threat to the

traditional administrative and patriarchal instruments the nationalists needed to mobilize "democratic mass support" and to enrich themselves in the struggle against the feudal landlords and the imperialists. Subsequently the latter tried to reinforce their position, and revolted when the nationalists' economic policies did not succeed.

That the communists were not able to foresee that the nationalists would be able to acquire mass support without democratic rights and freedoms, and had interests in working against such rights instead of, as the theory presupposed, extending them, was serious enough.

It was, furthermore, tragic that the communists, who were so dependent on genuine democracy, contributed to the abolition of such democratic freedoms as actually existed, and instead participated in the introduction of "guided democracy". It was bad enough that the theory had incorrectly identified the nationalists as being interested in genuine democracy. It appears to me that the PKI leadership was so blinded by its instrumental view of power and by its superficial ideas of a so-called bourgeois democracy, that it never realized it was the communists themselves who had most to win by an uncompromising defence of "bourgeois democracy", which, I would maintain, is not merely an instrument for the use of the bourgeoisie, but, does, indeed, have its own intrinsic value.

But worst of all was that the democratic cul-de-sac interfered with, and severely limited, the value of the party's "front from above", at the level of parties and leaders. Democracy and calm were the most basic necessities for the PKI to be able successfully to build a strong movement of workers and peasants, a "front from below" with individual membership, which might have given the PKI an independent base.

It is high time now to look at the way in which the PKI mobilized the peasants and workers.

## Notes

1. For the strategy and analysis, see Chapters 6 and 7.
2. Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) pp.357ff.
3. Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1961b) pp.95ff.
4. Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) pp.257ff. and 299.
5. Ibid. pp.257-306. (e.g. pp.279ff. and 283ff.)
6. See Mortimer (1974a) p.105 and *Review of Indonesia* 6 (1960) p.18, statement by Njoto (SOBSI) and the Politburo.
7. See, e.g., Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) p.287.
8. See above, pp.73ff and 81ff.
9. See Aidit (1952) in Aidit (1961a) pp.48ff.
10. I am not taking into account the persons who were regarded as being close to the PKI and who had certain ministerial posts. In 1953-54 the BTI's Sadjarwo was in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture. Later Sadjarwo joined the PNI's Petani, and wishes to be regarded today as an extremely moderate ex-minister. (Interview with Sadjarwo, 26 November 1980, Jakarta.)
11. Cf., e.g., Hindley (1964a) pp.236-97.



12. Hindley (1962b) p.917.
13. Ibid. p.911.
14. Hindley (1964a) p.70.
15. Ibid. pp.74 and 79. 49,000 full members and 116,000 candidates. The figures are, of course, tentative, and very difficult to verify. Above all, I have relied on Hindley's examination of the sources.
16. Ibid. Chapter IX.
17. Ibid. p.80.
18. Ibid. pp.85ff.
19. Ibid. p.99.
20. Ibid. Chapter IX, esp. pp.136, 169 and 191. This careful calculation is based on all members in the party as well as front organizations also being members of SOBSI, BTI or *Pemuda Rakjat* (respectively, the trade-union, peasant and youth organizations). Of course it sometimes happened that a member of SOBSI also belonged to the other two organizations. But, on the other hand, not all members of the party or one of the smaller front organizations were at the same time members of SOBSI, the BTI or *Pemuda Rakjat*. All in all, SOBSI had over two million members at most, BTI over five million and *Pemuda Rakjat* just over one million, i.e. at least 8 million all together.
21. Debray, 1974, Swedish edition, pp.85ff. 287.
22. I am only talking about parliamentary elections. Soon afterwards elections to a constituent assembly were held. The results of the second elections were more or less the same as the former. For results and analysis of the elections of 1955, see first Feith (1971), as well as Krøef (1957a) and (1957b).
23. About 65 percent of the population lived on Java. There the PNI gathered 86 percent of its votes, the PKI 88.5 and the NU 85.5. In East and Central Java the PNI gathered 65.5 percent of its votes, the PKI 75 per cent, and the NU 74 per cent. Masjumi, on the other hand, obtained only 50 per cent of its votes in Java, and half of these were cast in West Java. Lev (1964) p.9.
24. The NU went from eight seats in the provisional parliament to 45, and thereby became the main victor of the elections.
25. Besides Java, local elections were held only in South Sumatra, Riau and Kalimantan, primarily because of the intensive local rebellions.
26. For results and analysis of the elections of 1957 and 1958, which no one has looked at in depth, see Lev (1964) pp.109-125 and Hindley (1964a) pp.223-9.
27. See Aidit (1957) pp.131ff., 214ff. and (1958) pp.270ff in Aidit (1961b).
28. See Feith (1962) p.233.
29. For the attempted *coup d'état* on 17 October 1952, see Feith (1962) pp.246-73. McVey (1971) and Utrecht (1979b) pp.36-57.
30. Nasution absolutely refused to agree that it was an attempted *coup d'état*. He said, "I just wanted to promote the kind of guided democracy which we later succeeded in securing in 1959." (Interview, 22 November 1980, Jakarta) Prominent socialists who were involved, such as the Budiarjo family, nonetheless describe it as an unsuccessful coup. (Interview, 01. Jakarta 1979) Nasution was subsequently reinstated as commander-in-chief of the army in 1955 by the cabinet of Masjumi and the PSI, which was in power between August 1955 and March 1956. See also Feith (1962) pp.440-4 and Utrecht (1979b) pp.51-7.
31. For this and the previous paragraph, see, e.g., Feith (1967), *inter alia*, pp.366ff. Easily accessible source material can be found in *Indonesian Political Thinking* (1970).
32. Pauker (1969) p.5.
33. See Pauker (1958) esp. pp.140ff. Cf. Pauker (1962b), Ransom (1970) pp.42ff. as well as Feith and Lev (1963) p.41.
34. Cf. Bunnell (1976).
35. Lev (1964) pp.131-8.
36. Sukarno prevented the PNI and the NU from openly turning against the PKI. See, e.g., ibid. and Hindley (1962b) p.917.
37. See e.g., Hindley (1964a) pp.272ff.
38. J.H. Hardi, one of the most prominent right-wing leaders of the PNI, and first Deputy Prime Minister between 1957-59, says that senior PNI officials gathered in his residence in Jakarta and

decided to prevail upon Sukarno to proclaim the constitution of 1945. (Interview 25 October 1980, Jakarta).

39. For the above, and for how guided democracy was implemented, see, e.g., Lev (1964) pp.317 and 359. Concerning Sukarno's reluctance, see also May (1978) p.84.
40. See Mortimer (1974a) pp.129ff., Hindley (1964a) pp.288ff. and Hindley (1962b) pp.924ff. The mayors in Surabaya, Solo, Magelang, Salatiga *et al.* were still communists, as were the deputy governors in Central Java, West Java and Jakarta. See *Review of Indonesia* 3 (1960) pp.9 and 31.
41. See Legge (1959) and (1960). I am also using an interview with Legge (9 October 1980, Melbourne). Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) pp.126-32 and McVey (1963) p.166.  
When I asked the former deputy Secretary-General of the PNI, Isnaeni, on the right wing of the party, to characterize the work of the party at that time, he made the startling comparison with *Golkar*: this is the present-day governing party, a corporation of functional groups based in the state civil and military bureaucracy. Isnaeni is one of the Speakers in the Indonesian parliament today and represents the new conservative nationalist party. (Interview, 21 October 1980, Jakarta.)
42. The new parliament had 283 seats. The PKI had been allotted 30 seats, the PNI 44, the NU 36, the Protestants 6, the PSI 5, the Catholics 5, Perti 2, Murba (conservative Titoists) 1. The functional groups were allocated: the army 15, the navy 7, the air force 7, the police 5, workers 26, peasants 25, Islamic authorities 24, the youth 9, women 8, cultural workers and teachers 5, others 23. Feith (1967) pp.345 and 363ff. See also, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) pp.120ff.
43. See, e.g., Hindley (1962b) pp.920ff. and Mortimer (1974a) pp.118ff.
44. Hindley (1962b) p.921.
45. See Feith (1962) p.242, (1967) p.362, Mortimer (1974a) p.128 and Kroef (1960c) p.225.
46. For *Perbepsi's* significance, see McVey (1972) p.149, and cf. p.10:6. above. See also Hindley (1964a) pp.216ff. Regarding the PKI's favourable attitude to the unification of the veteran organizations, with the army's approval, see Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1961b) p.152.
47. See, e.g., Lev (1964) pp.57ff., 80ff., and 257. Lev (1963-64) pp.352ff. McVey (1963) pp.169ff.
48. Both Ahem Erningpradja and Nasution confirmed that Minister of Labour Ahem and the army co-operated in order to break the strong position of SOBSI and the PKI and create a single confederation of trade unions. (Interviews 25 October 1980 with Ahem and 22 November 1980 with Nasution, both in Jakarta.)
49. See Chapter 13.
50. The best summary of the attacks on the PKI can be found in Hindley (1962b) p.920ff.
51. In this category belong not only attempts to make evaluations within the extreme left in the West, e.g. Grieswold (1979), but also the self-critical more or less Maoist documents which were produced within the PKI, e.g. PKI (1971).
52. See above, pp.59-60.
53. Pluvier and Onghokham maintain that this "anti-feudalism" was primarily a struggle against the colonial state powers. (Interview 2 October 1980, Amsterdam, and 18 October 1980, Jakarta.) Cf. Reid, (1974b).
54. See, e.g., Feith (1962) pp.343 and 369, and Jay (1956).
55. See, e.g., Feith (1971), first published 1957, and Kroef (1957a) and (1957b).
56. Aidit (1955) in Aidit (1961a) pp.319-23.

# 12. The Mobilized Peasant Society

## The PKI, the Nationalists and the Peasants

The PKI characterized the processes of production in agriculture in the villages as semi-feudal. The major feudal lords had the right to monopolize the land used by the peasants, who were thus not able to own their land but were forced to lease it. The rent was often paid in kind and the peasants were heavily in debt.<sup>1</sup>

The interests of the feudal landlords were thus in contradiction to those of the peasants. The peasants were stratified by Aidit in the mid-fifties in the same way as Mao had done. First came the rich peasants who functioned in a similar way to the landlords, but since they also worked themselves they could at times be neutral in the class struggle and counteract imperialism. After them came the middle peasants who were independent of both superiors and hired labour. They could fend for themselves and thus join the revolutionary forces. Finally came the poor peasants and agricultural workers in the villages. They had insufficient land to survive, or hardly any land at all. These so-called semi-proletarian peasants were the most revolutionary forces in the villages.<sup>2</sup>

The PKI estimated that the peasants made up between 60 and 70 percent of the population. Even the peasants who squatted on occupied plantations were presumably included in these figures. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, about 220,000 hectares of plantation land was occupied in 1957, representing just over 31 per cent of the total plantation area in Java and Sumatra.<sup>3</sup> The squatters principally cultivated edible crops for their own subsistence.

In 1953 Aidit noted that there were still members of the PKI who believed that villagers were on the whole equals. In contrast to that equality he painted a general picture of land concentration and exploitation of the poor peasants. The party undertook an investigation of its own before the Peasants' Conference of 1959, and the results were published in 1960. The party maintained that it now had evidence that a concentration of land had taken place. The major landowners usually owned considerably more than half the land. The poor owned a very small portion, though they often made up two-thirds of the population in the villages. The communists could also



rely on the figures of the Ministry of Agriculture, which had been compiled under the leadership of the former leader of the BTI, now a member of the PNI's peasant organization Petani and the Minister of Agriculture, Sadjarwo.<sup>4</sup>

In 1953 Aidit declared that "the agrarian revolution is the essence of the people's democratic revolution in Indonesia."<sup>5</sup> The spirit of this statement was that all revolutionary activity must take the peasants' interests as its point of departure, and not the more advanced demands of the working class.<sup>6</sup>

Aidit referred to Stalin's and Mao's theories on the peasants and declared that the Indonesian peasants were bourgeois, since they wanted their own private land. Private ownership of land was not, of course, the ultimate goal of the PKI. But the peasants had to discover the disadvantages of owning many small pieces of land before one could start talking about collectivization.<sup>7</sup>

In the early fifties Aidit said that only about seven percent of the peasants were organized. One of the most important reasons for this, he stated, was that the communists did not start from a recognition of the peasants' bourgeois interests. And in addition many cadres were reluctant to work in "primitive" villages. And even within the communist-inspired organizations, there were some relatively large landowners.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the organizations needed to join forces.<sup>9</sup>

Seasonal labourers in the plantations, the poor peasants and a considerable number of squatters were relatively well organized and militant.

The PKI thus advocated a bourgeois land reform. Land should be taken from the large landowners and divided amongst those who were using it. It would hardly be possible for the weak bourgeoisie to succeed in implementing such a reform, which therefore would necessitate the communists taking over. Through controlling the leadership in China, the communists there had already implemented a bourgeois land reform. The first steps had also been taken in Vietnam.

But the PKI was not in charge in Indonesia. The communists did not have control over the peasants' struggle nor did they lead the national struggle against colonialism and imperialism. It was thus forced to start from the ground up; it was forced to co-exist with religious anti-communists and to seek co-operation on the terms offered by the so-called progressive nationalists. And, above all, the PKI was forced to start with peasants whose political consciousness and schooling were not highly developed.

To be able to build a broad and strong peasants' organization, the PKI advocated that the party concentrate on current short-term demands which were being made by the peasants themselves. Included were lower land rents, lower interest rates on extortionate loans, the right to make their own decisions as to what foreign plantation owners should pay when hiring land from the peasants, democratization of village leadership and so on.<sup>10</sup>

As soon as a peasant organization was formed it ought, according to PKI

instructions, take concrete action to defend the peasants, by distributing cheap fertilizers, arranging for the repair of irrigation canals, building co-operatives, organizing funeral associations, teaching and training agricultural leaders, defending people who were brought to trial, eliminating illiteracy, organizing sport and cultural associations, etc.<sup>11</sup>

The PKI emphasized that it was unimportant whether the demands were particularly advanced or not. It was more important for the organization to achieve results, so that the peasants saw that it was worthwhile to act.<sup>12</sup> In addition, splits between the inhabitants of the villages should be avoided. The communists must ensure that 90 per cent of the inhabitants could participate and must base their work among the middle, poor and landless peasants.<sup>13</sup> It was important for the communists not to alienate the religious peasants nor criticize their cultural patterns.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, the PKI dug deep into Indonesian history. Particularly in the pre-colonial and anti-colonial past, a great deal of communal solidarity was found, as well as cultural magnificence and political pride on which it was possible to build, while trying to add a progressive content or angle.<sup>15</sup>

The programme of action was thus moderate. The propaganda slogan — "land to the tiller" — was to be seen and heard everywhere. It was important for the peasants to be continuously aware that all the injustices to which they were subject were essentially caused by the feudal landlords and the imperialists. But to try to realize the goals of a redivision of land was, according to the PKI, premature and "adventurous", since the organization did not yet have sufficient strength.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this moderation, it was easier said than done for the PKI to go out into the villages at a time when a wave of anti-communism had just swept the land. As we have seen in previous chapters, a precondition for work amongst the peasantry was that the PKI should succeed in acquiring protection and become acceptable through the "front from above" with the nationalists. The front was primarily supposed to guarantee, and if possible extend, democracy.

Moreover, the PKI counted on the nationalists, with their base in the national bourgeoisie, having their own interest in acting against the feudal remnants. Otherwise they would not acquire an increased formation of capital, or enlarged domestic markets, or sufficient support from the people.

Exactly how the PKI regarded the nationalists' supporters in the rural areas and the villages, I have not succeeded in grasping. My conclusion, however, is that the PKI regarded rural nationalists as belonging primarily to the petty bourgeoisie, i.e. middle peasants and to some extent rich peasants.

There is every indication that the PKI counted on the nationalists in the towns pursuing a national-bourgeois economy which demanded an explicit anti-feudal stand from rural nationalists. Such a national economy would enable rural nationalists to feel their slumbering bourgeois interests becoming aroused. They would leave extra-economic repression behind

them, produce more and become more efficient, since there would be money to be made and profitable projects in which to invest.

As the PKI put it, the national-bourgeois politicians did from time to time abandon their anti-feudal declarations. But on these occasions the party leadership would comfort itself by saying that the national bourgeoisie must in the long run continue the struggle against feudalism so as not to betray its own interests.<sup>17</sup>

As late as 1959 Aidit maintained that "if the progressive forces are great and the Party programme is one which benefits the middle-of-the-road forces . . . there is a possibility that the middle-of-the-road forces will, for a long period of time, remain loyal to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle."<sup>18</sup>

In sum, there was no contradiction between, on the one hand, the front from above with the nationalists against imperialism and for democracy, and, on the other, the attempt by the communists to build an anti-feudal workers' and peasants' front from below. The front from above was a precondition which created a working climate. The front from below strengthened the nationalists in so far as they had objective interests in a bourgeois struggle against feudalism. In the long run, the peasants and workers in a broad front from below would become so strong that they would be able to push the nationalists ahead of them in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, for a coalition government and later for a people's democratic government. This would be able, among other things, to carry out a consistent anti-feudal land reform, transferring the land to those that till it.

Aidit himself stressed that:

The anti-feudal front of the workers and the peasants is the basis of the anti-imperialist united national front. . . . The idea of "*finishing the national democratic revolution first*" and then only "*after the national revolution has been completed*" of carrying out the "*anti-feudal democratic revolution*" is a dangerous and incorrect idea. This is because the idea of "*completing the national revolution*" without struggling for the emancipation of the peasants from the exploitation by the survivals of feudalism means not drawing the peasants over to the side of the revolution.<sup>19</sup>

## The PKI among Patrons and Clients

### Progress

Between 1940 and 1941 the poor peasants started occupying plantation land to cultivate edible crops, at first for their own consumption and later on for their new Japanese masters too. During the struggle against the Dutch, the occupations continued, now not only to produce food but also to paralyse the colonizers at the same time. After independence the squatters naturally felt no inclination to move. There was a dearth of good arable land in the villages. Even if it would have been possible to get the plantation economy working again, which was hardly likely, it would have been a step



backwards for the squatters to try to become plantation workers rather than remain as independent farmers.<sup>20</sup>

The Wilopo cabinet fell because it attempted to drive the poor squatters from plantations in North Sumatra and to resurrect part of the colonial economy.<sup>21</sup>

The first PNI government without Masjumi decided to meet some of the demands of the squatters.<sup>22</sup> In North Sumatra alone in 1957 about half a million squatters with women and children were given some chance of remaining on about 115,000 hectares of plantation land and of negotiating with the authorities.<sup>23</sup>

With the nationalization of the Dutch plantations, the PKI asserted that the government had finally acquired the necessary resources to guarantee that the squatters could retain the land they had started tilling long ago.<sup>24</sup> In areas where the PKI had a majority, the squatters very often were given those rights.<sup>25</sup> The PKI, the BTI and to some degree SOBSI had strong representation among the squatters. But a considerable degree of progress for the squatters doubtless depended on the fact that they were numerically strong and that several parties had supporters among them so that none could afford to disregard them entirely.<sup>26</sup>

During the struggle for liberation the co-operation between the old aristocracy and the colonial state was broken down. Some so-called feudal privileges were done away with.<sup>27</sup> The new state did not have the option, whether or not it wanted to, to tax the peasants effectively.<sup>28</sup> Inflation reduced some of the burdens of those who were in debt. Many peasants recovered the land which had been forcibly leased by the Dutch sugar companies, for instance. The purchasing power, especially of the richer peasants, increased.<sup>29</sup> The nationalists were among the leaders of this anti-feudal and anti-colonial movement.

By supporting the nationalists the PKI encouraged a certain resistance to *Darul Islam* as well as to the PSI and Masjumi. The PKI maintained that these were rooted in the feudal landlords. When the NU broke away from Masjumi and moved towards the PNI and Sukarno, it was not only the Muslim front against the PKI that was shaken. It became increasingly clear that the PNI and the NU were opposed to commercialization in the villages, presumably a commercialization based on "feudal" modes of production. The nationalists in particular advocated the alternative of a traditional peasant economy of independent smallholders who worked collectively.

Thanks to the nationalists and perhaps even the NU, the PKI was able to reach the rural areas and the villages despite the anti-communism of the early fifties.

Once this became possible, the PKI was able to mobilize and organize on what amounted to virgin political territory. Most of the other political movements relied on traditional loyalties and relations of dependency which could be administered from the centres. The nationalists were no exception. They often relied on their supporters in the local state administration. (The lowest *pamong praja* was to be found at the sub-

district, or *kecamatan*, level, which included a number of small villages. He would gather the village headmen together and supervise them.) In addition, there was a loss of respect for the authority of the state, since the old aristocracy's position had been undermined during and after the liberation struggle. Sometimes the PKI could circumvent the traditional authorities and go directly to the peasants.<sup>30</sup> The emphasis on collective self-help was an important means of reducing the dependence of the poor and landless peasantry on the traditional authorities.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, it appears that the PKI in the first place won the support of local leaders among the intellectuals, such as the teachers, and the middle peasants, as well as, in some cases, rich peasants.<sup>32</sup> But this in no way deviated from the Chinese communist experiences, for example, and did not necessarily lead to setbacks.

During the elections of 1957 it appeared that the PKI received almost as large a proportion of votes in the rural areas as it did in the towns.<sup>33</sup> The party was no longer simply an urban phenomenon. In 1959 Aidit declared that more than half the members of the party were peasants. According to the PKI, in 1956 there were branches of the party in 34 per cent of Java's rather more than 21,000 villages, and by 1959 there were party branches in more than 84 per cent of the villages. At the next level the PKI was in 1956 represented in nearly 70 per cent, and in 1959 in nearly 99 per cent, of the *kecamatans*.<sup>34</sup>

After an intensive recruitment campaign, the BTI could claim a total membership of 3.3 million by the end of 1955. In 1957 there were said to be local branches in 13,787 villages, of which 2,528 were outside Java; the BTI was strongest in northern Sumatra.<sup>35</sup>

Presumably these figures are, as usual, exaggerated. In 1958, for instance, Sudisman, a Politburo member, said that the BTI had only 1.6 million members but could mobilize more than 3 million peasants.<sup>36</sup> But the figures indicate that remarkable progress had been made. In 1962 the BTI claimed a membership of more than 5.5 million in 43 per cent of the villages of Indonesia. 84 per cent of all *kecamatans* were included. In other words, the BTI claimed that it organized 25 per cent of the adult population.<sup>37</sup>

While the PKI contented itself with working, in the long run, for a radical bourgeois land reform, the nationalists led by Sukarno took up the question of at least a cautious land reform as a slogan for their agenda.<sup>38</sup> At the same time as Sukarno declared his political manifesto (*manifesto*) and opened the session of the Supreme Advisory Council (*Dewan Pertimbangan Agung*) in 1959, he also declared that the land reform was an inseparable part of the Indonesian revolution.

Thus in 1960 a law was passed on sharecropping. The tiller should receive at least half of the net crop. Shortly afterwards the Basic Agrarian Law was passed, as well as several other laws which have no particular significance in this context.

In Part III of this book I shall return to the land reform law, and in particular to the way in which it was implemented. Without a doubt these

laws were a great success for the PKI, even if they could have been considerably more radical. The nationalists had shown that they did at least have an anti-feudal stance, and when the bill was being discussed in parliament they even tried to appear to be more radical than the communists.

## Problems

To some extent the PKI's analyses thus corresponded with actual developments. But there were also problems, which far surpassed the advances made.

The communists welcomed the nationalization of Dutch plantations, since the government now had a better chance of meeting the demands of the squatters. But the result was the opposite: the new state businessmen, supported by the army, saw their chance to resurrect the colonial economy, an opportunity which had been denied previous governments. The communists protested but in vain. With every militant action it was possible to accuse the militants of sabotaging the nation's own companies and its attempt to build a national economy at the same time as the state had acquired the old colonial powers of the Dutch.<sup>39</sup>

What was considerably more serious was that the front from above with the nationalists imposed a more restrictive framework on the work of the communists in the villages than the party had counted on.

Thanks to the nationalists, the communists did succeed in reaching the villages but not in reducing any spontaneously anti-feudal class formations, which was what the party had been hoping for. Instead the party reached the Javanese of Sukarno and the PNI, the Syncretist nationalists, *prija ji* and their peasants, *abangan* as well as the nationalist patrons and their clients. The party did not do so well among peasants who were not Javanese, peasants who were close to the Muslim authorities, or those clients whose patrons were not nationalists.

The history of Central and East Java, as well as of Bali, is primarily concerned with agrarian, more or less Asiatic, modes of production, while the north-western part of the island and the coast of Sumatra, among other places, were dominated by commerce and, since the 12th century, by Muslim trade and culture. As Islam spread in the archipelago, with the exception of Bali, the same division occurred as within Javanese agrarian society.<sup>40</sup>

The Javanese nobility employed regional and local "bailiffs" (*prija jīs*). Most of these were taken over by the Dutch with their indirect rule. At the village level the leaders of the original inhabitants dominated. They were allied to the *prija jis*. With the spread of Islam, an alternative leadership grew up, that of the religious leaders and the orthodox Muslims, with solid, often commercially-based, economic positions. In this way a distinctly Muslim culture took root, which was often called *santri*. The old peasant culture,



subordinate to the nobility and the *prijajis*, absorbed some Islamic characteristics, but retained several distinctive features, and was often called *abangan*.<sup>41</sup>

Not much was said about this at the beginning of the fifties. But in connection with the election campaign in 1955, it became obvious that the parties, most of which had no support in the villages and little acquaintance with the problems of the peasants, made use of cultural differences to mobilize votes. In this way cultural divisions were institutionalized.

Religious leaders utilized *santri* traditions to gain votes. The advantages made by the NU in Central and East Java were considerable. The PNI, for its part, liked to allude to threats from Muslim extremists, used the terminology of the *abangans* and exploited its strong support among the so-called new *prijajis* (regional and local public servants who had replaced those who had co-operated with the Dutch). Sometimes whole villages voted in the same way; of ten people from the same neighbourhood voted for the same party.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps the most important reason for the importance of the *santri* and *abangan* cultures was (and is) that no distinct classes developed in the Javanese villages, and that as a result class contradictions were less important than cultural differences. Starting from field studies in the early fifties, Clifford Geertz ascertained that village inhabitants coped with colonialism mainly by refining that part of production they were allowed to retain for themselves. For this Geertz coined the term "involution". Ever larger numbers of people found work on the same pieces of land. According to Geertz, the villagers also shared the small surplus through a series of traditional forms and rules. He talked about shared poverty.<sup>43</sup>

There is every reason to be sceptical of Geertz's term "involution", and especially of his thesis of shared poverty. William Collier, for instance, has pointed out that Geertz undertook his field studies at a time when the Javan economy was economically depressed. Supported by earlier research and his own studies, Collier says that Geertz's "involution" and "shared poverty" were hardly to be found in 1922, nor in the seventies when Java was not marked by a depression. Perhaps it was so, however, in 1936 and 1952.<sup>44</sup>

Collier (among others) also pointed out that Geertz only discussed the relations between landowning peasants, while abandoning the many landless peasants to their fate, and that he disregarded regional and local differences, and failed to take into account their need to engage in other economic activity in addition to agricultural production.<sup>45</sup>

These remarks, and many more for which there is no space here,<sup>46</sup> undermine at least some of the remarkable emphasis which a whole generation of researchers has placed on the *santri-abangan* controversy.

In no way do I deny that the *santri-abangan* conflict took place and was important, not least because the parties exploited the issue, when times were hard for Indonesian agriculturalists. But if involution and shared poverty vary with the passing of time and do not necessarily embrace the ever-increasing number of landless peasants, then the significance of the *santri-*

*abangan* paradigm must be given more modest proportions. What then becomes more interesting to discuss is whether the so-called patron-client relationships did not have, and do not continue to have, a considerable importance when it comes to uniting the population of the rural areas vertically, and not horizontally, according to class lines.

The thesis on patron-client relations, which in all essentials is an empirical generalization and thus suffers from theoretical weaknesses, does not deny the occurrence of classes in the way that Geertz did. On the contrary, the thesis is based on the development of a kind of mutual dependence between superior and subordinate under certain circumstances, a dependence which is seriously weakened when the patron is able to develop a more commercial, and perhaps, in the end, a capitalist mode of agricultural production.<sup>47</sup>

Ernst Utrecht has shown, with great passion, that patrons often acquired support amongst peasants irrespective of whether the patron and the peasants belonged to the same cultural stream, e.g. whether *santri* or not. Many within the *abangan* sphere were members of the NU (*santri*) and some Islamic religious teachers called *kyais* were even members of the PKI.<sup>48</sup>

Utrecht thus does not deny that religious leaders often had tremendous significance when it came to mobilizing people in the villages. But their position as patrons was perhaps as important as their religion. It is necessary to distinguish between the church and religion.

Under all circumstances, it is clear that the communists arrived among vertically rather than horizontally stratified villagers. Protected by the nationalists, the PKI followed them to the old Javanese culture and *abangan* as well as the nationalist patrons and their clients. It was considerably more difficult to reach *santris* or to gain a foothold amongst the clients of the orthodox Muslim patrons.

This ought not, however, to have been an insurmountable obstacle for the PKI. What could be more natural than to start mobilizing and educating those peasants that could be reached? Especially as this occurred through the support of the nationalists, who were regarded as a fraternal party which had its own anti-feudal interests to safeguard. Perhaps the PKI would be able to liberate the peasants from vertical loyalties, through patient daily work building up a system of collective self-help as an alternative to protection from the patrons.<sup>49</sup> And as both communists and nationalists developed an anti-feudal policy, the peasants who belonged to other cultural streams and/or patrons ought to join in the anti-feudal struggle.

That is not simply a favourable interpretation of the theoretical and strategic perspective of the PKI. In 1957 it was also, to some extent, a reflection of what was happening.<sup>50</sup> During the local elections it was seen that the PKI had won votes at the expense of both the PNI and the NU. The communists were clearly in the process of winning a considerable number of clients, especially from the PNI patrons.

The problem was that such an advance by the communists was not acceptable to the nationalists nor to the orthodox Muslims, irrespective of

whether they, like the NU, co-operated with the PNI or not. In the villages the nationalists' administrative power base and its grass-roots support was threatened. The local leaders replied by taking an open stand against the PKI.

The front from above with the nationalists was, however, as indispensable as ever for the communists. The PKI had certainly strengthened its positions in the rural areas, but the organization of the peasants was far from being so strong and independent that the party could go it alone, as the Vietnamese and Chinese had done when their nationalist allies withdrew. The communists realized they were forced to support the nationalists against bourgeois-inspired regional rebels, on conditions dictated by the nationalists both in Jakarta and in the villages.

The result was that the communists paid for the right to mobilize the nationalists' clients within the *abangan* tradition, and the price was that they must not break the *santia* and *abangan* traditions nor threaten the position of the patrons. The PKI could mobilize and organize but could not build on class differences or create class consciousness.

Thus it came about that the PKI even used its own patrons, when the party could not reach out and dominate via youth who had been radicalized in the struggle for liberation. With the help of influential and propertied villagers whom the communists in the towns, for instance, might be related to or know, the PKI was able to mobilize peasants without seriously disturbing the PNI and the NU by resorting to class struggle. In the villages where the PKI was the largest movement in opposition it also came about that some village leaders who were not in power joined the PKI in order to overthrow their rivals.<sup>51</sup>

Already during the elections in 1955, Aidit emphasized the importance of showing the NU goodwill, since it supported the nationalists. As a result, the communists could not take action against so-called patriotic feudal landlords, but only against those who for instance, co-operated with regional rebels. Demands for lower land rents should, of course, be made, but nothing should be done to threaten the position of the patriots.<sup>52</sup>

This line was reconfirmed at the peasant conference of 1959.<sup>53</sup> It was only when Sukarno and some radical nationalists the following year took the initiative on land reform that the communists put the struggle against the largest landowners on its list of bread-and-butter issues.<sup>54</sup>

At the second party congress in 1959, Aidit simply said that it was not possible to overthrow imperialism and feudalism at the same time, although both enemies were connected. First to be overthrown should be imperialism and those who collaborated with the imperialists, some of whom might, of course, be feudal landlords, and only later would feudalism come under attack. Naturally the communists would defend the interests of the peasants, but the party could not go onto the attack.<sup>55</sup>

That need not have been remarkable. Many socialist and communist parties have pursued policies of class collaboration in order to get at the worst of their enemies. But then the parties have departed from an



independent class-based organization, and have had the opportunity of holding their positions and of defending their members despite collaborating with class enemies. But the PKI did not have such a class organization. The communists co-operated with the nationalists, and even the Muslim feudal lords in the NU, on conditions laid down by their masters.

In 1959 the PKI itself confessed to some of these errors. There were, for instance, feudal landowners within the BTI. In addition, party cadres generally did not understand social relations in the villages.<sup>56</sup>

In 1959, when the party at least decided to work hard for lower land rents and demand that share-croppers should get 60 per cent of the harvest (compared to at best 50 per cent previously), the BTI's organization said a few months later:

The 6:4 action and other actions against the landlords' exploitation are entirely new for the peasants and even for BTI cadres. The existence of examples of successful action will facilitate our work to convince the peasants of the justice of the 6:4 demand and of the power of the peasants' duty.

The land-reform law of 1960 was certainly a surprising success for the PKI, which had been prepared drastically to clamp down on hopes based on the anti-feudalism of the nationalists.<sup>58</sup> But, as I will show in the next section of this book, the law in all essentials was a paper product from above, from among Sukarno's circle of radical nationalists, who did not want the PKI to monopolize the demand for land reforms.

### **Captive of its own Policy**

Quite contrary to the PKI's own point of departure, there were contradictions between the front from above with the nationalists and the attempts by the communists to build an independent anti-feudal workers' and peasants' front from below. The front from above was indeed a precondition for the PKI to reach the rural areas. But when the PKI tried to build up its front from below, the nationalists did not feel in the least fortified by the bourgeois anti-feudal interests ascribed to them, rather the reverse.

The PKI leaders found it necessary to distinguish between the struggle against imperialism and the struggle against feudalism, though they knew this meant that the peasants would not be liberated from so-called semi-feudal exploitation. The peasants were mobilized on the terms of the nationalists and their friends, the "patriotic feudal landlords". It was the nationalists' traditional peasant society which was mobilized, not the so-called anti-feudal classes.<sup>59</sup>

The usual way to explain the problems the PKI experienced in mobilizing the peasants is to refer either to the lack of any distinct class

of peasants, or to the lack of class consciousness in the villages. Rex Mortimer's viewpoint is that all these factors forced the PKI to organize their followers in religious and cultural groups which cut right across the vague lines of class.<sup>60</sup>

Surely there were faults in the PKI's class analysis. Presumably misjudgements were made concerning class contradictions and class consciousness. But that does *not* explain the problems of peasant mobilization which arose in the fifties. We do not even know whether it was actually possible to pursue class-struggle politics in the villages.

As far as I know, the PKI was never able to initiate any proper attempt at class organization and activities related to the class struggle.<sup>61</sup> First, the organizations had to be created from the ground up. And then, when the PKI and BTI were beginning to find their feet, they still could not go further to simple class struggle actions or build an independent class organization.

So as not to face a united anti-communist front, the PKI leadership was forced to postpone any attempt to organize classes or class actions which might disturb the nationalists, their allies in the NU and, before long, the army command.

Thus we should hesitate before blaming all the problems of the PKI, when it came to mobilizing the peasants, on poor class analysis. We should wait at least until the party did make serious attempts to organize the classes in the class struggle, and failed. This is what happened to the PKI at the beginning of 1963, and I shall return to this in the next section of this book.

But our present task is to explain why the PKI made the mistake of believing that the front from above would help, or at least not hinder, the PKI in trying to gather the peasants together for an anti-feudal class struggle.

We must first go back to the theoretical problems which I spoke of earlier which prevented the communists from correctly analysing the lack of interest of the nationalists in building a bourgeois-national economy and in promoting a genuine democracy.

In contradiction to the PKI's theoretical assumption about the nationalists and the so-called national bourgeoisie, they were in no way classical bourgeois with an economic base: the imperialists were far superior. For the nationalists it was more interesting to exploit the political and administrative positions they controlled in order primarily to take over the state apparatus so as to enrich themselves from it.

With such interests, it is obvious that the bourgeoisie does not create a bourgeois national economy which demands a bourgeois anti-feudalism. It does not, for instance, act strongly against the nationalist landlords in the rural areas who suppress private capital formation and commerce, among other things. The nationalists were instead forced to put a stop to an anti-feudalism which primarily threatened their political and administrative production base in the rural areas, especially in the villages. They needed a guided economy in the same way as they needed a guided democracy.

As long as the position of the nationalists in production in the villages was threatened by private commercial interests of a more or less feudal type, there were solid grounds for an anti-feudal unity between nationalist lords and peasants mobilized by the communists.

But if the communists hinted that the struggle of the peasants against feudalism ought also to include a considerable part of the traditional, slightly communalistic forms of extra-economic force, for instance the patron-client relations, then the nationalists' position in production would be threatened.

Thus it can be seen that the PKI was correct in assuming that the nationalists in the rural areas had anti-feudal interests, but incorrect in assuming it was a classical bourgeois anti-feudalism. This theoretical perspective only encompassed anti-feudalism based on the bourgeoisie, if we discount the position of the workers. The theory lacked the means to analyse class interests in an agricultural society dominated by imperialism but stamped by extra-economic forces.

The result of the PKI's faulty analysis and theory was thus that the communists were forced to refrain from trying independently to organize the classes and, as a matter of course, from initiating a policy of class struggle. Consequently the peasants could not be liberated, their consciousness could not be raised and the party could not "draw the peasants over to the side of the revolution", a risk Aidit had foreseen in 1957.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, there was never any genuine alliance between the workers and the peasants: this was to have been built on joint anti-feudal interests, and these did not exist. The agrarian revolution, which was to have been the "core of the people's democratic revolution", could not even begin.

What happened, then, to the workers? Did they achieve anything, despite the weak struggle of the peasants?

## Notes

1. See further quotation, pp.70-1 above.
2. Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) pp.53ff.
3. Feith (1962) p.570.
4. Slamet (1968) gives a good account and commentary.
5. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.120.
6. Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1963) p.254.
7. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) pp.113-120.
8. Ibid.
9. Besides the BTI, the organizations were the PKI-dominated RTI (*Rukun Tani Indonesia*) and SAKTI (*Sarekat Tani Indonesia*), in which the PKI had some influence. Hindley (1964a) p.165.
10. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) *inter alia* p.119.
11. Hindley (1964a) p.174. Cf. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.119.
12. See *ibid.* pp.119ff.
13. See, e.g., Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) p.54. Presumably the statistic of 90 percent refers to all except the feudal landlords and those close to them. Cf. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) p.311. Cf. also the



often-quoted investigation by H. ten Dam, first published in 1956, in Dam (1961): in a village on West Java, 90 per cent of the villagers had to work at least part time, for instance as sharecroppers, in order to survive.

14. Huizer (1974), p.107, mentions that the PKI and BTI punished cadres openly for propagating anti-religious propaganda.
15. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974b) and Huizer (1974) pp.109ff. Also an interview with one of PKI's agricultural experts as well as a former leading member of the BTI: interviews No.27 and 67, Jakarta, 1980. For the overall questions, see Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) and McVey's analysis of this text, McVey (1979).
16. See, e.g., Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) p.120.
17. See, e.g., Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.316ff.
18. Ibid. The so-called middle-of-the-road forces more or less corresponded to the national-hourgeois forces: the nationalists or, in the first place, the PNI and Sukarno. As early as the mid-1950s, the PKI also began to include the "friends" of the nationalists. In 1956 the middle-of-the-road forces thus included the feudal landlords! See Aidit (1956) in Aidit (1961a) p.27. How the feudal landlords could be expected to be loyal to an anti-feudal struggle is one of the mysteries I shall return to shortly. The essence of it was that these patriotic landlords would support the nationalists in the final analysis, and that they, in turn, were at root anti-feudal.
19. From the 1957 edition of the handbook for the party school. Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) p.48.
20. Pelzer (1957).
21. Feith (1962) pp.293ff.
22. See, e.g., Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1961a) p.127.
23. Pelzer (1957) pp.152ff.
24. Aidit (1958) in Aidit (1961b) p.296.
25. Huizer (1974) p.105, which quotes a speech by Njoto of the Politburo in 1959.
26. Pelzer (1957).
27. See, e.g., Lyon (1976) p.40.
28. Concerning taxes, see Paauw (1955) p.91 and Schmitt (1962) p.286.
29. Regarding increased purchasing power, see Paauw (1955) p.91.
30. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974b) pp.108, 133ff., Feith (1962) p.360. Jay (1956) and Huizer (1974) pp.97ff.
31. Huizer (1974) p.108-110.
32. Utrecht (1976b) pp.275ff. Cf. also McVey (1970).
33. Hindley (1962a) p.31. See also above, p.116.
34. Hindley (1964a) p.163.
35. Ibid. pp.165ff.
36. Ibid. p.167.
37. Ibid. p.169.
38. Regarding the land reform, see Chapter 17 below.
39. Hindley (1962a) p.32. McVey (1972) pp.161ff., Mackie (1961-62) p.349. Fessen (1966) p.110. One example: on East Java, round Jember and Kediri, the conflicts became violent in 1961. 38 peasants were killed when they refused to leave the land they had occupied, Lyon (1976) p.52.
40. For a particularly stimulating historical discussion see Tichelman (1980). In addition, see Geertz (1960) and (1963) as well as Jay (1964). In Koentjaraningrat (1967a), as well as in the anthology in which his article is included, *Villages in Indonesia*, a reasonable review is presented of the structures at village level during the fifties and sixties. See also Tripathi's (1957) interesting study and Dam's (1961).
41. Ibid.
42. See, e.g., Feith (1971); Wertheim (1959) pp.215ff.; Geertz (1960) pp.171ff.; Jay (1963) pp.55 and 89; Hindley (1964a) pp.218-29; and Koentjaraningrat (1967b).
43. See Geertz (1963).
44. Collier (1978d) pp.5ff.
45. Ibid. pp.3ff. and 7ff. Most of the peasants had and have a number of different jobs to be able to make ends meet. See, e.g., Kroef (1958a) p.203 and (1960b) p.423, and White (1976), (1977) and (1978) pp.15ff.

46. See, in addition, *ibid* (passim); Collier (1975b), (1980a); White (1976); Utrecht (1974) and (1976b); and Bachtiar (1973).
47. See, e.g., Scott (1972).
48. See Utrecht (1972), (1974) and (1976b).
49. Cf. Huizer (1974) p.110.
50. Herb Feith drew my attention to this with the striking remark, "1957 was rather like *aksi sepihak*", the communist-inspired unilateral actions during the peasant offensive of 1963-64, to which I shall return in the next part of this book. (Discussion 10 October 1980, Melbourne.)
51. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974b) pp.13ff. Cf. also Sartono (1977a) and (1977b) and Wertheim (1969).
52. See, e.g., Aidit (1955) p.313 and pp.319-25 in Aidit (1961a) pp.27, 38ff., 44ff.
53. See Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.423ff. or documents from the conference in *Review of Indonesia* 6-7 (1959).
54. See, e.g., Asum's article in *Review of Indonesia* 7 (1960) pp.30ff. In Indonesian in *Suara Tani*, March-April 1960: BTI's publication.
55. See fn. 53 above.
56. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.421ff. Cf. also Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp.526ff.
57. From BTI's leading publication, *Suara Tani*, in January 1960. Quoted from Hindley (1962a) p.34.
58. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) p.311.
59. Cf. Aidit's statement above. pp.131-2.
60. See, e.g., Mortimer (1969a) pp.9ff. and (1974b).
61. Perhaps some would argue that an attempt was made in 1948, in connection with the Madiun uprising which was crushed and where, according to many, *santris* fought against *abangan*. See, e.g., Tichelman (1980) p.187. Nevertheless, I think a large question mark must be placed over the mobilization activities of the PKI in the villages in 1948. Work amongst the peasants was poorly developed and the policies quite different from under Aidit. In the event, the PKI was not able to initiate any genuine attempts to mobilize along class lines while following Aidit's policies.
62. See above. pp.131-2.

# 13. Workers' Struggle in the Face of Obstacles

## The Basis of Class Collaboration<sup>1</sup>

During the years immediately after independence, the communists pursued a militant workers' struggle with many long strikes. But when the PNI-led Wilopo cabinet took over in April 1952, the communists in SOBSI pressurized the strikers to return to work, or to withdraw their threats of strike action.<sup>2</sup>

Why did they make this about-turn?

Aidit made efforts to assess the size of the Indonesian proletariat. He said it consisted of 500,000 workers in modern industry, about two million workers in small-scale industry and handicrafts and 3.5 million in forestry and agriculture. If their families were included, the proletariat consisted of 20 million people, or about 25 per cent of the population.<sup>3</sup> The figure of 500,000 industrial workers was consistent with official statistics, but Aidit surely exaggerated the other figures.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, as Aidit was inclined to point out, the proletariat was small in comparison to the peasantry. Indonesia was a so-called semi-colonial, semi-feudal country. When the working class fought against capitalism, it was certainly interested in socialism. Thus the proletariat was the most revolutionary class. But a tiny proletariat would not be capable of implementing socialism in a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country.

Instead the struggle should be a national and democratic revolution which, under the leadership of the working class, would in the long run be capable of transformation into a socialist revolution.

In the struggle for a national and democratic revolution the workers would be able to forge an alliance with the peasants based on the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist interests of the peasants. All previous communist offensives in Indonesia, said Aidit, had collapsed because the workers had isolated themselves instead of forging an alliance with the peasants. The workers should, among other things, be helped by the peasants to topple the feudal landlords who blocked a national economy with more industrial production, more jobs and better wages.

The workers could also make common cause with the so-called national bourgeoisie, the class enemy of many workers. These two classes had a



mutual interest in the struggle for a national and independent economy. The nationalists would also be able to allow the trade unions democratic rights and freedoms.

These were the reasons why the communists in 1952 suddenly postponed large parts of the militant workers' struggle to support a PNI-led government, which, according to the PKI, would primarily represent the national bourgeoisie.

At this time, the trade unions should not make any demands for nationalization or for higher wages within Indonesian industry, the communists declared. On the contrary, they should help the national bourgeoisie. Concepts such as "class struggle" and "socialism" ought to be avoided by trade-union leaders. Non-communist workers ought not to be repelled.

SOBSI should demonstrate that it was not slavishly bound to one party, as nearly all the other trade unions were. Normal trade-union and social work should be at the top of the agenda.<sup>5</sup>

In foreign-owned companies matters were somewhat different. These companies could afford to raise wages,<sup>6</sup> they were controlled by imperialists, and in the long run they should be nationalized.

In state companies the trade unions ought, of course, to safeguard the interests of the workers, but included in their tasks was to help raise production, since the state was regarded as an ally.<sup>7</sup>

## **The Working Class as a Punch Bag**

### **Progress**

During the preceding 10-year period SOBSI had, at most, doubled its membership. This was not much when compared to the other communist mass organizations and to the party itself. But at the beginning of the fifties the workers were already the best organized. The resources of the organizations had been substantially improved and they had more employees, more branch offices, better education, etc. There were also attempts to make inroads among the many difficult-to-organize urban service workers, who usually worked singly, such as the drivers of the *becak*, the cycle taxis.<sup>8</sup>

In 1959 the PKI admitted that it had not devoted sufficient attention to all of those who in the forties and fifties had been forced from the rural areas to the urban slums without finding proper jobs.<sup>9</sup>

But to the PKI's credit must be mentioned the neighbourhood associations in the slums of Surabaya. These had originally been organized by the Japanese to control the people. But the communists took over, armed the people, and assisted with food and work, etc.<sup>10</sup> This type of organization in the residential areas is, to my knowledge the only effective method of reaching the many proletarians who are not working, judging by the experiences of Latin America.<sup>11</sup>

As with all the other organizations, the validity of SOBSI's membership statistics is difficult to judge. Most researchers seem to believe that it controlled just over half the organized workers. The rest belonged to numerous smaller trade-union organizations, of which the vast majority were closely tied to one political party or another. It appears to me a reasonable estimate that at the beginning of the fifties SOBSI had about one million members, and 10 years later about two million.<sup>12</sup> Among the largest and most militant trade-union associations were those of the plantation, sugar and forestry workers, where the number of seasonal and day labourers from the villages was difficult to estimate.<sup>13</sup>

The major part of the work of SOBSI trade unions during the fifties was to save jobs during an ever-worsening economic crisis. Of course, attempts were also made to prevent the standard of living from falling. Despite only limited success, SOBSI was by far the most successful confederation of trade unions. In 1956, for instance, SOBSI succeeded in preventing mass resignations from the state apparatus. And the many dockworkers and sailors who lost their jobs when the Dutch companies tried to avoid nationalization had state wages fixed for them by SOBSI till 1959. Some wage increases were also won through negotiations, petitions, demonstrations, open letters, etc.<sup>14</sup>

Since 1951 strikes had been banned, except for unimportant places of work and, ironically enough, for non-communist trade-union organizations.<sup>15</sup> The PKI and SOBSI did succeed in having the anti-strike law somewhat softened, and, among other things, trade unions were represented in arbitration courts.<sup>16</sup>

Militancy and strikes were to be found in the foreign-owned companies and plantations. The nationalizations of 1957 were regarded as a tremendous victory for the communist and nationalist workers who had taken the initiative.<sup>17</sup>

When the companies were then taken over by the state, the PKI and SOBSI with some success demanded that the workers should have some influence over the worker-management councils and campaigned against corrupt company executives and officers.<sup>18</sup>

SOBSI refrained from supporting the political activities of the communists and nationalists on every conceivable issue, thus distinguishing themselves from most of the other trade-union organizations. Of course, this did not prevent many so-called non-sectarian political activities from occurring. During the Masjumi-led government of 1955-56 the number of labour disputes, for example, rose dramatically. In 1956-57 armed plantation workers participated when Commander Gintings crushed the regional rebellion in Sumatra. And in connection with the government crisis in March 1957, SOBSI was in a position to threaten the holding of a nation-wide general strike if the new government included ministers from Masjumi but not from the PKI. At the same time SOBSI workers in South Sumatra held a 24-hour strike to support Sukarno's struggle against the rebels.<sup>19</sup>

## Problems

On the whole, however, the communist workers' struggle was a failure.

First, the nationalists' interest in democracy was not sufficient for them to accept the communists' demands for the waiving of the serious restrictions on the right to strike. On the other hand, the PNI government was not as inclined as the Masjumi-led cabinet had been to resort to repressive measures. But when, at last, modest reforms of the anti-strike laws occurred in 1957-58, they made no significant difference. Sukarno and the army had already introduced a state of emergency, and the strike could not be used as a weapon.<sup>20</sup>

If it can be said that the workers had some success in their struggle against imperialism on the plantations, for instance, and thereby contributed a good deal to the breaking up of the colonial economy, it is also true that the workers did not acquire an expanding national economy with more jobs and increased purchasing power. On the contrary, foreign capitalists dared not expand, partly because of political instability. And the national bourgeoisie's attempts to build up a domestic industry failed.

This the PKI and SOBSI could do very little about. On the one hand, trade-union organization in small companies was poor,<sup>21</sup> i.e. in the companies of the national bourgeoisie. That was where labour disputes had to be avoided, and where different kinds of family labour, relationships between relatives and general patronage flourished. On the other hand, a workers' offensive against corruption and inefficiency, and demands for influence over investments, etc. within domestic industry, would have jeopardized the front with the nationalists.

The workers could certainly have been proud of old victories like the law on a seven-hour working day. But how did that help when no worker could earn enough in seven hours to live on?<sup>22</sup> And the PKI said that workers could not demand higher wages from domestic companies before feudalism and imperialism had been crushed.<sup>23</sup> But the farmers could not destroy feudalism, and the so-called national bourgeoisie's attempts to build a national economy bore no fruit.

## Economic Crisis

The PKI and SOBSI were naturally hoping that conditions in the nationalized companies would improve and become better than in the private sector, particularly in comparison to the period when the Dutch had owned them.

As I showed in Chapter 10, however, the management of the state companies and the planners made these companies their own (mismanaged) fiefs. In addition, they lacked the immediate interest to invest the surplus in a diversified, independent national economy, but addressed themselves to the task of reinforcing their own political, administrative and military positions.



The consequences for the workers were almost unbelievable. Wages fell. In several cases the country's wages dropped to below pre-war levels. The bonus associated with *Lebaran* (the feast at the end of the period of fasting) and certain other benefits were cut or removed. Many companies did so badly that people were dismissed. The state currency and price policies produced rapid inflation. Prices rose many times faster than wages. The PKI used official statistics to show that wage rises during the period 1954-58 were on average 50 per cent, while the price index for the 19 most important goods rose from 106 in 1954 to 258 in 1958 (1953 = 100). The situation deteriorated dramatically in 1959, when the government devalued and reduced the amount of money in circulation. On 1 May 1960 the SOBSI leadership declared that, after 15 years of independence the situation of the workers had still not improved. It demonstrated that, while prices in Jakarta had risen by 75 per cent, wages had increased only by 25 per cent.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, every attempt at militant opposition was thwarted. The military company managers had both the economic power in the companies and the military, political and administrative power in the state, reinforced by the state of emergency. Even cautious opposition meant that the PKI and SOBSI laid themselves open to charges of betraying the nation, at a time when rebels were threatening the state and *Irian Jaya* must be wrested from the Dutch. To object to what was happening in a nationalized company was the equivalent of splitting the nation and even of direct opposition to Sukarno.

Thus it comes as no surprise that the number of strikes and disputes fell drastically after the nationalizations. While 505 strikes were registered in 1956, for instance, with more than 340,000 striking workers and nearly seven million man-hours lost, comparative figures for 1958 were 55 strikes, with 13,000 workers involved and a loss of less than 100,000 man-hours.<sup>26</sup> Poor reports from the nationalized companies accounted for part of the reduction in the number of strikes.<sup>27</sup> No longer were all disputes reported to the central administration.<sup>28</sup> But such faults do not obscure the manifest direction of the trend.<sup>29</sup>

By 1960, when most of the rebels had been conquered, the struggle against the Dutch was less important, and dissatisfaction led to spontaneous action flaring up among the workers, the PKI and SOBSI dared to voice severe criticism of the government and the army, as has been mentioned in previous chapters.<sup>30</sup> Neither the government nor the military were slow to respond. Parliament was dissolved. Several party leaders were arrested and interrogated. Hundreds of workers' leaders were detained. Newspapers were banned or censored. SOBSI's newspaper was among those banned. Print shops and duplicating machines were put under state control. The communists were forced to hand over copies of their membership records to the state. On 1 May demonstrators were not even allowed to sing the *Internationale*, and some of the speeches were censored.<sup>31</sup>

The Minister of Labour and the leader of the PNI's trade-union confederation, Ahem Erningpradja, together with the army command

under General Nasution, took their cue from the restrictions imposed by Sukarno in the party system and the introduction of so-called functional groups. Together they tried to bring about a corporate state-controlled umbrella trade-union organization, OPPI. Sukarno was said to have been interested in the idea.<sup>32</sup> Towards the end of 1961, the military company managers made another attempt to create a corporate trade-union organization, SOKSI, for the employees of state companies. To induce the workers to accept it, payment in kind from state supplies was distributed. There was initially some success.<sup>33</sup>

But the PKI and Sukarno also tried working in a positive spirit, among other things in the worker-management councils set up on Sukarno's orders with the express purpose of increasing production.<sup>34</sup>

These councils did not, however, give the workers any direct influence over the management of the companies, and considerable time was spent in dealing with local labour disputes, which were not formally part of the work of the councils. For the communists, the results were often disheartening. In addition to everything else, the PKI and SOBSI risked being held jointly responsible for the poor state of the economy.<sup>35</sup>

The communist offensive of 1960 was thus a failure. The party retired and soon began to talk about the need for the national struggle to precede the class struggle.<sup>36</sup> But SOBSI and other front organizations under the communist umbrella had some opportunity to continue acting and criticizing. In 1961 the workers occupied a number of Belgian companies, mainly plantations, to show their solidarity with the anti-colonial struggle in the Congo. Behind them the workers had Sukarno's anti-imperialism, as long as they refrained from trying to run the companies themselves.<sup>37</sup>

When the workers at state companies shook their fists and revolted, however, this was the last straw. As I have noted previously, in East Java the directors of state-owned plantations wanted to get rid of squatters and to mechanize the operation of the plantations. Dozens of squatters and workers were killed in clashes.<sup>38</sup>

In North Sumatra the workers on state-owned plantations and on the state-run railways went on strike for higher wages and bonuses. The PKI and even SOBSI remained in the background so as not to draw fire from the army or from Sukarno.<sup>39</sup> Some of the demands of the workers were actually met. But afterwards company management managed to dismiss almost 1,000 workers who had been active in leading the strikes.<sup>40</sup>

"We were powerless. It was a bitter lesson," said one of the trade-union chiefs who had travelled from head office to help the workers and who did not try to prevent them from striking, as seems to have been the case in some other provinces. "It was the last major strike," he added brusquely.<sup>41</sup>

In the following year, 1962, a minor strike took place, for instance, at a privately-owned plantation in North Sumatra. The slogan was, "No rice, no work". The strike was soon crushed.<sup>42</sup>

## **The Vanguard Which Was Left Behind**

The working class was thus forced to endure considerable privations. Exploitation and oppression came not only from the imperialists and feudal landlords, but also from the state and the nationalists, despite the fact that the latter, according to the PKI's analyses ought primarily to have been friends, not enemies. No one could accuse the communist workers of being provocative; on the contrary, attempts were made to support the state and the nationalists.

Particularly among communists one of the most common explanations of the problems of working-class struggles is the thesis that the bourgeoisie obviously attack communists since they are class enemies. In other words, the PKI pursued a treacherous policy of class collaboration. And, it is maintained, there was nothing curious about the state moving against the communist workers, since it was a bourgeois state.<sup>43</sup>

If only it had been so simple. If only SOBSI workers had collaborated with economically enterprising capitalists. But this opportunity did not exist, and this was the major problem.

The communist leaders did not ally themselves with a national bourgeoisie which was doing its utmost to develop a national economy. Matters were not improved when the state took over a large part of the economy. Democratic rights and freedoms were curtailed rather than extended. In addition, it was difficult to change course and go into opposition. For then the workers would have been overwhelmed by the state and the nationalists. In the meantime, wages fell and the number of unemployed rose.

According to the PKI's theory and analysis, the vanguard working class should wait for and back the progressive bourgeoisie's demands and actions. But no such demands were made, even when the state took over part of the economy. Accordingly, there was simply nothing for the vanguard class to do.

The strategic problems of the communist workers were thus intimately connected with three questions. Why were the leaders of the PKI (a) unable to predict the nationalists' lack of interest in building a bourgeois national economy; (b) unable to predict that when the state nationalized and began to "guide" the economy, it still did not become a national economy, but instead new capitalists evolved from within the state; and (c) unable to predict that the nationalists would not show any interest in extending democracy? I have already tried to answer these questions in Chapters 9, 10 and 11.

But what about the peasants? If the workers waited for and supported bourgeois anti-feudal demands, the peasants would be drawn into the struggle and, together with the workers, create an unbeatable alliance. What became of the peasants, when the progressive state and an enterprising national bourgeoisie failed to materialize? Would it not have been possible for the workers to climb out of the trap with the help of the alliance with the peasants?



As I have shown in Chapter 12, the communists were not able to initiate an anti-feudal struggle in the rural areas. The peasants were not liberated and were not drawn into the struggle. Hence there was in reality no steadfast alliance between the workers and the peasants. The Indonesian workers were as isolated from the peasants as they were when, before 1952, the trade unions had struggled uncompromisingly for socialism. But now they were not even in a position to struggle.

## Notes

1. For this section, when no other reference is specified, see Chapter 6 and Hindley (1964a) Chapter 13.
2. Feith (1962) p.238.
3. Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) p.54.
4. Mortimer (1974a) p.149.
5. Aidit (1953) in Aidit (1961a) pp.90-99 and Hindley (1964a) pp.143ff. Nor does it appear to have been usual to have spontaneous conflicts, at least not in companies owned by Chinese. (Interview with the late Siauw Giok Tjhan, Amsterdam, 2 October 1980. He was the former leader of the Indo-Chinese Chinese in *Baperki*, and close to the PKI.) Aidit, however, indicated later, in 1959, that the workers had begun to carry out spontaneous actions. See Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.426ff.
6. See, e.g., Feith (1962) pp.238ff.
7. See, e.g., PKI (1959) p.9.
8. See, e.g., Hindley (1964a) pp.135-42, 146-49. Cf. also Hawkins (1971) p.207.
9. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.312ff.
10. Kroef (1957b) p.416 and (1959) p.177, and Hindley (1964a) pp.158ff. The PKI tried to work in similar ways in other towns, but enjoyed the greatest success in Surabaya.
11. Lecture by and discussion with Bosco Parra, Uppsala, 8 May 1981. See Parra (1981).
12. See, in the first instance, Hindley (1964a) pp.135ff. and Tedjasukmana (1958), and Richardson (1958) quoted therein. Cf. also Hawkins (1967) and (1971), and Tedjasukmana (1961). I am also basing myself on interviews with Tedjasukmana (25 October 1980, Jakarta); two other former Ministers of Labour, including Ahem Erningpradja (25 October 1980, Jakarta) and interview No.55 (Jakarta, 1980): as well as with a number of leaders and activists within SOBSI. Regarding other trade-union organizations, see, e.g., the survey listed in Hawkins (1967) p.260.
13. See, e.g., Hindley (1964a) p.141. Interview No.8 with a former leading trade unionist (Amsterdam, 1980).
14. See, e.g., Hindley (1964a) pp.147ff., Hawkins (1967) p.249. Interview No.55 with a former Minister of Labour (Jakarta, 1980). Interview No.8 with a former leading trade unionist (Amsterdam, 1980), and interviews with former central and prominent PKI leaders, e.g., No.29 (Jakarta, 1980).
15. Interview with Tedjasukmana, then Minister of Labour (25 October 1980, Jakarta). Cf. Chapter 5, p.65, above, and Note 28 above, where I present Tedjasukmana's version. See also Tedjasukmana (1961) pp.286-346.
16. Tedjasukmana (1961) pp.376-83 and Hindley (1964a) p.147.
17. See, e.g., *ibid.* p.148, Ananta (1971) and Kroef (1965a) pp.89, 202-12. Sometimes sympathy strikes broke out, to show solidarity as, e.g., actions against British and French companies during the Suez crisis in 1956; see Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1961b) p.127. See also Chapter 10 above.
18. See, e.g., PKI (1959) p.9. Interviews with Ahem Erningpradja (25 October 1980), another former Minister of Labour (No.55, Jakarta, 1980) and General Nasution (Jakarta, 22 November 1980).

19. See Aidit (1957) pp.137, 147, in Aidit (1961b). Kroef (1965a) pp.89 and 207. Regarding several strikes between 1955-56, see, e.g., Tedjasukmana (1961) p.230, and the statistics in Hawkins (1967) p.266.
20. See note 16 above.
21. See, e.g., Tedjasukmana (1961) pp.210ff.
22. Lukman (Politburo) in the *Review of Indonesia* 6 (1960) p.30.
23. Aidit (1954) in Aidit (1961a) p.210.
24. Tedjasukmana (1961) p.246.
25. Regarding the cost-of-living index, see Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) pp.307ff. Pnauw (1967), pp.238ff., explains the devaluation and monetary reform of 1957. For SOBSI's statement in 1960, see *Review of Indonesia* 5 (1960) pp.27ff. Additional information about the deterioration is to be found, e.g., in the same publication, No.2 (1960) pp.10-15, 23ff.; No.3 (1960) pp.3ff.; and No.8 (1960) pp.20ff. Cf. also Chapters 9 and 10 above.
26. See, e.g., Hawkins (1967) p.266.
27. Interview No.55 with a former Minister of Labour (Jakarta, 1980).
28. Panglaykim (1965), p.249.
29. All the interviews referred to in this chapter. Cf. also, e.g., Hawkins (1967) p.265 and (1971) p.244, as well as Lev (1964) p.78.
30. See, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 2 (1960) pp.10-15; No.3 (1960) pp.3ff.; No.5 (1960) pp.27ff, No.6 (1961) p.28; and No.9 (1960) pp.22ff. Hindley (1962b) pp.920ff. and the notes on spontaneous action in fn.5 above.
31. Kroef (1965) p.247. *Review of Indonesia* No.6 (1960) p.26.
32. See fn. 48, Chapter II. Ahen maintained that Sukarno regarded the idea favourably, but needed others to implement it. (Interview 25 October 1980, Jakarta.)
33. Hawkins (1967) pp.269ff.; Lev (1963-64) p.361.
34. See, e.g., the PKI (1959) p.9 and *Review of Indonesia* Nos. 9-10 (1960) (the last issue before even this publication was temporarily banned), p.22 and the following pages, devoted to reports from SOBSI's third congress. See also fn. 18, above.
35. The only scientific discussion I know of on the worker-management councils can be found in Panglaykim (1965). To this I have added an interview with the author 24 November 1980, Jakarta. Cf. also Panglaykim (1964).
36. See PKI (1961) from the meeting of the central committee in December 1960.
37. Kroef (1965a) pp.222ff. 243ff.
38. Ibid., p.211, and Lyon (1976) p.52.
39. Kroef (1965a) p.244.
40. Interview No.8 with the senior trade-union leader who was sent to North Sumatra to assist the workers (Amsterdam, 1980).
41. Ibid.
42. Hawkins (1967) p.270.
43. See, e.g., PKI (1971) and Griswold (1979).





## **Part 3**

# **Communist Offensive: 1960-63 to 1965**



# 14. For An Offensive Strategy

## Locked Positions

The long-term strategy of the fifties, with its struggle for democracy, anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism to set up a coalition government and, in the longer perspective, a people's democratic government which would be able to carry the national and democratic revolution to its conclusion, had, as I have shown, become deadlocked, despite numerous successes.

The leaders of the PKI were of course, not completely unaware of these problems. At the peasants' conference in 1959 it was, for instance, resolved to a greater extent than in the past to try to make the BTI a class organization and encourage class consciousness particularly among the poor and landless peasants.<sup>1</sup>

The intense criticism levelled at the government and army in 1960 was another sign of the party's attempts to stand upright. This criticism coincided with Moscow's new scepticism towards the so-called national bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup> But the PKI did not as whole-heartedly as Moscow replace it by promoting non-capitalist development led by the state and by indistinct class-based nationalists. By sharply criticizing the so-called bureaucratic capitalists and their corruption of the state apparatus, the PKI expressed its doubts.<sup>3</sup> As yet there was no non-capitalist development in Indonesia. The Central Committee declared in December 1960 that non-capitalist development remained to be realized.<sup>4</sup> And when the Moscow leadership counted Indonesia among the so-called national democracies, the PKI protested. The Moscow leaders said that in Indonesia there was not even a coalition government in which the communists had any real influence.<sup>5</sup> During the years that followed, it became clear that the PKI leaders meant that Moscow did not care whether the Indonesian communists were included in the government or not. The important thing was for the government in Indonesia to have good relations with Moscow so that it could be influenced from there.<sup>6</sup> But, as I have shown, the communists' open and forthright criticism of the state and government did not succeed. Instead the army command was able to maintain that the PKI had *de facto* turned against Sukarno himself.<sup>7</sup>



## Class Struggle within the Framework of Sukarno's Nationalism

The PKI's reaction to the setbacks of 1960 was to seek shelter behind Sukarno. At the Central Committee meeting in December 1960 the party leadership emphasized that they completely backed Sukarno's policies, the 1945 constitution, *Pancasila* (even the principle of belief in one God), the decision to "simplify" the party system, etc.

It was a clear indication that no one would be able to isolate the communists by maintaining that they were working against the president. On the contrary, the party's main principle would be to expose and isolate others, particularly the "bureaucratic capitalists", who did not stick to *Manipol*, *Nasakom* and other of Sukarno's guidelines.

For safety's sake, the PKI issued the clear declaration that the party intended to subordinate the class struggle to the national struggle.<sup>8</sup>

This has been used by both politicians and scientists to show the unbelievable class collaboration of the communists.<sup>9</sup> I have difficulty in conforming to these interpretations. During the struggle against the rebels on the outer islands, and perhaps above all during the 1958-59 period, the communists did indeed devote nearly all their energies to avoiding class conflicts, and instead brought out the differences between patriots and rebels. But the decision in December had another meaning: the PKI emphasized the need to implement Sukarno's policies.<sup>10</sup> And to implement his revolutionary nationalism, a certain degree of class struggle was required.

This was no more peculiar than that the Vietnamese, for instance, directed an important blow against feudalism in the rural areas in the north, at a time when the French were gathering large numbers of troops from the villages for the battle at Dien Bien Phu.

General Giap himself argued that,

Since the moment when our party paid more attention to the anti-feudal task, especially since the mobilization of the masses for rent reduction and land reform, not only were the broad peasant masses in the rear ideologically roused, but our army — the great majority being peasants and very eager for land — also realized more fully its fighting objective, that it not only fought for national independence, but also to bring land to the peasants and consequently its class consciousness and fighting spirit were raised markedly.<sup>11</sup>

The class struggle and nationalism were thus seen to pollinate one another. But, as imperialism was the major enemy, nationalism was the more important.

Several years passed before the class struggle was to become really important in Indonesia. But it did come after a while. First, however, the dominant communist tendency was to refer to Sukarno every time they did something. Mass actions were good, because Sukarno said so. The communists should be part of the government because Sukarno talked about a *gotong-royong* and a *Nasakom* cabinet. The imperialists were enemies

because Sukarno had said so. And so on *ad infinitum*.<sup>12</sup> Sometimes it grew quite comical when Aidit indirectly motivated his own support of Leninism and the October revolution by saying that "Bung Karno" had also had some good things to say about the Russian revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Even during Sukarno's reintensified struggle against the Dutch for *Irian Jaya*, this was the dominating picture. But now the party's position was decisively reinforced, and the communists regained a lot of the ground lost during the late fifties.<sup>14</sup> As far as I can make out, both Sukarno and the army command badly needed the support of the communists. They needed help from the communists to get arms from Moscow. It was not a question of small arms and a few bazookas, like the arms donated to liberation movements, but of the best arms and ammunition. Soon Indonesia became the largest non-communist recipient of Soviet military aid.<sup>15</sup>

In his own interests, Sukarno also tried to prevent the arms from being used in any way other than as a deterrent, and also to avoid a victory which solely depended on the military alone gaining *Irian Jaya* for Indonesia. To that end, Sukarno used the mass actions of the communists, which, of course, allowed the PKI some room to manoeuvre.<sup>16</sup> The PKI was thus able to mobilize the masses by insisting that it was imperative to reinforce the home front and support the president.<sup>17</sup>

This meant an upswing for the PKI in the same way that the anti-imperialist solidarity movement in Western Europe revitalized certain kinds of communism in the 1960s.

These successes were not diminished by the fact that, in the end, it was Sukarno and not the army that won *Irian Jaya* for Indonesia. Sukarno was able to reduce somewhat the power of General Nasution, the Minister of Defence, the Army Chief of Staff and the real perpetrator of the state of emergency. By kicking him upstairs to a new post as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Sukarno deprived him of being able directly to command troops. Instead General Yani became the new commander of the army. By comparison to Nasution, Yani was corrupt and perhaps also somewhat more inclined to support Sukarno. In addition, Sukarno announced at the end of 1962 that the state of emergency would come to an end on 1 May 1963.<sup>18</sup>

During 1961-63, the PKI thus managed to regain its lost positions and once more acquire some room to manoeuvre.

The party held an extra seventh congress in April 1962. It was formally held to ratify new regulations in line with the demands made by Sukarno and the rules of the game of "guided democracy". In reality, the communists used the congress to try to instil a spirit of renewed struggle amongst members and sympathizers.<sup>19</sup>

## 26 May 1963

A cautious offensive was initiated in May 1963. At the meeting of the central committee in February, the leaders of the PKI emphasized the importance of consolidating the advances made during the struggle for *Irian Jaya*, at the

same time as considerable energy was invested in outlining a progressive economic programme for the country.<sup>20</sup>

This should be seen against the background of Washington, first under the Kennedy and then under the Johnson administrations, making tremendous efforts to persuade Sukarno and the Jakarta government, as well as the army, to implement an economic policy of tightening up and reconstructing the budget in the spirit of the IMF, in exchange for considerable foreign aid and credits. Washington could use the goodwill acquired in forcing Holland to relinquish *Irian Jaya*, which helped Sukarno to find a political solution and to some extent dethrone the army. In addition, Indonesia was in desperate need of economic aid, since the crises of the fifties deepened during the struggles against the rebels and the Dutch.

At virtually the same time as the proclamation of the government's economic policy in proud nationalistic terms, quite a different classical belt-tightening bourgeois economic policy was thus introduced, which was partly intended to rationalize and liberalize state controlled trade and production: the regulations of 26 May.

Parallel with this, the state of emergency was ended. The PKI met the regulations of 26 May by intensifying its campaign for Sukarno's officially declared economic policy, in which one of the cornerstones was state guidance towards a national independent economy, called *dekon*.

This was not so simple. Sukarno had acceded to the 26 May regulations, while himself declaring that he did not understand economics. And a political and perhaps even an economic potential alternative would have demanded considerable economic assistance from the socialist countries. But presumably Moscow was not prepared to supply more money. In the Soviet Union attempts were being made to try to "build communism" in only a few decades, and, in addition, a period of peaceful co-existence with the US had been introduced.<sup>21</sup>

The PKI did, however, stand fast. It replaced the lack of a financial alternative with demands for genuine national independence in the spirit of Sukarno. If we must sell our independence to get international aid, then nothing remains for us but to rely entirely on our own strength, the communists argued.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time the PKI maintained that the liberalization of the 26 May regulations concerning state production and trade would drastically reinforce the power of the "bureaucratic capitalists". They would be able to privatize the economy and forge strong links to foreign capital. In this way, the communists believed, the "bureaucratic capitalists" would be able to acquire a proper class base for themselves in the form of considerable private property and deep roots in international neo-colonialism.<sup>23</sup>

### Confrontation with Malaysia

While the struggle about the regulations of 26 May was raging most fiercely, one of the most prominent standard-bearers of the government, First



Minister Djuanda, died. He was succeeded by Foreign Minister Subandrio, who was considerably more nationalistic.

An even more significant threat to the 26 May regulations was the growing tension between Indonesia and the new state of Malaysia which the British were forming. At the new year Subandrio had already declared that Indonesia's attitude towards this "neo-colonial threat" was marked by total confrontation. Afterwards Washington made serious attempts to resolve the conflict through the mediation of Robert Kennedy.

By September it was clear that the US had not succeeded. Indonesian demonstrators attacked the British and Malaysian embassies. Kuala Lumpur replied with counter-demonstrations and broke off diplomatic ties. At this, demonstrators in Jakarta burnt the Malaysian embassy and destroyed residences of diplomats. Trade unions led by the PNI and the PKI occupied a number of British companies. On 21 September Indonesia broke all economic ties with Malaysia, including Singapore, one of Indonesia's key trading partners and indispensable to the stabilization programme of 26 May. One week later the IMF revoked its promises of credits.<sup>24</sup>

This meant the foundering of the bourgeois belt-tightening and stabilization programme. Now not only the PKI, but also Sukarno, Subandrio and others began to talk seriously about self-reliance.

There was, of course, consternation in the West, but also in Moscow. The confrontation with Malaysia was another military flare-up reminiscent of the Chinese policy of adventurism, as well as a threat to peaceful co-existence between the superpowers. The ideas of self-reliance, in which priority was implicitly given to agriculture and light industry, were partly pure Chinese voluntarism and, at best, poor man's communism. (The Soviet communists advocated, among other things, intensive heavy industrial undertakings, which implied receiving assistance from the developed socialist countries.)<sup>25</sup>

In the Kremlin, an Indonesian request for more arms was refused, the PKI was hauled over the coals and attempts to find other friends in Jakarta were made. Moscow looked, for example, to the army and the *Murba* party, where men like Nasution and Adam Malik, respectively, had key roles.<sup>26</sup>

For the Indonesian communists, however, extreme nationalism had been of considerable help in drawing them out of their dilemmas. And the confrontation with Malaysia had already neutralized the 26 May regulations. From the point of view of the PKI, the comrades in the Soviet Union let them down. Self-reliance and drawing closer to China was almost unavoidable.

The emphasis on the class struggle within the framework of Sukarno's nationalism became a distinctly offensive move when the political guidelines were laid down at the meeting of the central committee in December 1963.<sup>27</sup>

A cornerstone of the modified strategy was to make use of militant mass actions to support and accentuate anti-imperialism under Sukarno's wing.

so as to be able to expose and isolate the "bureaucratic capitalists" as traitors. In principle this was the same model as the one used to neutralize Masjumi and the PSI. But now the demands and the actions were more radical.

The method was simple but ingenious. First, the PKI activated the masses to lend their support to Sukarno to sharpen his criticism of Malaysia, Britain, the US and others, as well as to proclaim guidelines such as self-reliance. According to "guided democracy", all were obliged to counteract imperialism and work for self-reliance. The communists were thereby able to outshine everyone else, including Sukarno, when it came to anti-imperialism and working for self-reliance. No one would be able to say that the PKI broke with Sukarno. Nor would anyone be able to stop the PKI without thereby breaking with Sukarno.<sup>28</sup>

The general immediate goal of the PKI was, as usual, to press for a coalition government, a *gotong-royong* government with a *Nasakom* composition. The PKI liked to talk about a "Nasakomization" of the entire state apparatus, to get the communists in behind locked doors. In the end the party even used the principle of *Nasukom* to demand influence within the armed forces as well.<sup>29</sup>

The general perspective was that the state had both "popular and anti-popular aspects". The "popular aspects" were the most important, but the "anti-popular aspects" dominated. In other words, Aidit meant that Sukarno and the PKI had acquired the political initiative, but that the "bureaucratic capitalists", above all, prevented the proper realization of the decisions of the direction of the state.<sup>30</sup>

### Confrontation in the Rural Areas

Steadfast action against the "bureaucratic capitalists" was, however, unthinkable, least of all strikes in state-owned companies. Such actions would have enabled the communists' opponents to accuse the PKI of counteracting Sukarno and the state. It would be a welcome excuse for the army to go on the offensive. The lot of the workers would improve once the imperialists had been vanquished. Till then, "our hearts are harder than hunger", Aidit declared encouragingly.<sup>31</sup>

In the rural areas, among the peasants, the communists, however, saw an opening. The organization of the peasants had been reinforced since the Peasant Conference of 1959. Sukarno and parliament had also adopted a land-reform policy and it would be possible to demand that this reform should be implemented. In addition, Sukarno and others talked of self-reliance, which made it possible to demand rapid and considerable changes in the structure of society in the rural areas so as to increase agricultural production, in order to make Indonesia self-sufficient at least in food. It was in the rural areas where nationalism and the class struggle should and could be combined.

Officially the communists never advocated militant peasant actions beyond the bounds of the law. Instead it decided to encourage and support

peasant actions which aimed at the implementation of the land reform.<sup>12</sup>

The PKI leaders counted on gathering a considerable majority of the peasants against the rural gentry, since, according to the PKI, they based their power on acquiring and concentrating peasants' land. Presumably, however, one counted on some friction occurring in the "front from above" for instance in collaboration with some of the nationalists. What was now most important, indicated the PKI's leaders, was to make the transition from class collaboration to class struggle in the rural areas. The PKI was to move from a period in which the party had made use of the "front from above" to build a strong peasant organization, to a more revolutionary period. In this new period the communists could use the mobilization of the peasantry to press the "front from above" further to the left and force through radical national solutions. Even Aidit, who did not belong to the left of the party, talked about using a current "revolutionary situation."<sup>13</sup>

## Notes

1. See documentation from the conference in *Review of Indonesia* 6-7 (1959).
2. See above, Chapter 3.
3. See above, Chapters 11 and 13.
4. PKI (1961), *inter alia* pp.40, 46.
5. Pauker (1962a) pp.623-4.
6. Cf. Mortimer (1974a) pp.137-8, 207-8, and his Chap. 8; also Rāanan (1966). I also base this on an interview with a former member of the leadership of the party. No.52 (Jakarta, 1980).
7. Cf. Mackie (1961) p.274.
8. For the central committee meeting in December 1960, see PKI (1961).
9. See, e.g. Mortimer (1974a) p.85.
10. See, e.g., PKI (1961) p.15.
11. Giap (1974) p.133.
12. See, e.g. PKI (1961) and (1962).
13. Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp.203-4.
14. Cf. Mortimer (1969b) p.203.
15. Cf. Utrecht (1979b) pp.119, 133; Mortimer (1974a) p.187.
16. Cf. Mortimer (1974a) Chap. 4.
17. *Ibid.*, *inter alia*, pp.197-8. For some illustrative examples from the source material, see PKI (1961) pp.11-12, (1962) pp.14, 50ff. Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp.443, 455, 464, 483, 521-2.
18. Mortimer (1974a) pp.188-96; McVey (1972) pp.151-2; Utrecht (1979b) pp.137ff.
19. See Aidit's report to the congress, in Aidit (1963).
20. See Aidit (1963) in Aidit (1963), *inter alia*, pp.546-80.
21. For this and the paragraphs immediately preceding, see, e.g. Mortimer (1974a) pp.188-93, 205-14, 235, 263-7, 350-1, and Mackie (1967) pp.37-41. I return to these questions in Chapter 16.
22. See Aidit's report to the central committee in February 1963, in Aidit (1963) pp.546-80, not least p.564. See also, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 1 (1963) pp.26-31.
23. *Ibid.*
24. For the immediately preceding paragraphs, see Mortimer (1974a) pp.204-222, 267.
25. Cf. *ibid.* pp.205-8, 235, 263-4, and pp.350-1 in Chap. 8 of Rāanan (1966), Arkipov (1970-71) p.70.
26. See preceding fn and McVey (1969b) pp.376-7 and Hauswedell (1973) pp.138-9. In addition, interview No.52 (Jakarta, 1980) with a former central leader within the PKI who, among other things, participated in negotiations and discussions with the Russians. (Adam Malik, on the other hand, did not wish to be officially cited on these matters. Interview, Jakarta, 27 November 1980.)



27. For the remainder of this chapter, see PKI (1964). Aidit's report to the central committee meeting in December 1963, where no other reference is specified. Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) pp.370ff.
28. Roeder (1964) gives a telling contemporary portrayal of that part of the strategy at work.
29. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) pp.380-9.
30. Aidit expounded his theory of the state in Aidit (1964) and in speeches from his visit to China during 1963.
31. The quotation comes from the PKI (1964) p.19. It was seldom that these questions were directly discussed, but the actual line was quite obvious: interview No.8 with a leading communist of the time from SOBSI (Amsterdam, 1980), a member of the party leadership of the time, Nos. 52 and 62 (Jakarta, 1980) and a former Minister of Labour, No. 55 (Jakarta, 1980).
32. Interview No. 52 with a former member of the party leadership (Jakarta, 1980) and a former member of the BTI leadership, No. 67 (Jakarta, 1980).
33. See PKI (1964).

# 15. Three Strategic Problems

In May 1965 Jakarta looked like a liberated city. In the capital and throughout the country millions of Indonesians celebrated the PKI's 45th anniversary. The largest party in Indonesia was also the world's third largest communist party, and claimed to have 15 million members and organized sympathizers.<sup>1</sup>

But the party's strategy was undermined. A year later it was banned, and hundreds of thousands were imprisoned or murdered.

In my preliminary studies I have identified three important problem areas by checking whether or not it was possible to follow the strategic lines laid down by the party, so as to achieve its objectives.

The first problem, *Anti-imperialism against the wrong kind of capitalism*, deals with the PKI's attempts to neutralize the "bureaucratic capitalists" by setting extreme nationalism against a "neo-colonial" capitalism. This strategy, however, neither threatened the fundamental positions and interests of the new capitalists nor helped to establish an independent national economy. The wage workers were the first to be hit, and the strategy did not allow them to initiate steadfast actions in order to defend themselves. The strategy also contributed to the establishment of a post-colonial capitalism dominated by the state.<sup>2</sup>

The second problem, *Peasants' struggle against the wrong monopoly of land*, is the story of how the peasants' attempts to wage a class struggle against the rural gentry who, according to the PKI, based their strength on land concentration,<sup>3</sup> led to divisions in the ranks and to defeat. The gentry did not base their power on land concentration, but on centralizing the surplus produced by the peasants.<sup>4</sup> After the defeat of the PKI, the overlords and a considerable number of landed peasants could develop their agriculture towards capitalism within the framework of the post-colonial economy dominated by the state.

The third problem, *Mass struggle bypassed, elite conflict and massacre*, focuses on the way in which a totalitarian leadership in a mass party presumably discovered that the "bureaucratic capitalists" blocked the peasant struggle while the party's broadly-based attempts to neutralize its opponents with anti-imperialism had not borne fruit. This led a few leaders to try to weaken the enemy by linking up with some of the dissidents within

the army. The result was that the conspiracies came to nothing but rather enabled the army to let loose an anti-communism purge and liquidate a party caught unawares, since the acting leaders had decided not to draw it openly into the conspiracies.

Three catastrophic problems with an almost magical power of attraction. Each will be treated in turn in the three chapters which follow.

## Notes

1. I am only counting the members of the Youth League, the peasants' organization and the trade union, to take account of the fact that many Indonesians were members of more than one of the PKI's organizations at the same time. The figures come from Mortimer (1974a) p.366, which quotes the latest figures of the PKI, dated August 1965. (As, according to Mortimer's figures, there were 20 million members and sympathizers, it is possible that my estimate is on the low side.)
2. Alavi (1975) p.1260 even mentions a post-colonial mode of production (in India). But I do not argue in the same way. Do not, therefore, confuse Alavi's term with mine. Our only point of agreement is, I think, that it is necessary to create conceptual space to describe that Third World capitalism which is neither classic national capitalism nor simply a form of colonialism in new and more modern dress.
3. By land concentration I refer to the process whereby landlords place under their control large properties by expropriating the land of others, and whereby their basic power is derived from ownership of land rent from these properties.
4. By centralization of the agricultural surplus, I refer to the process whereby the overlords acquire land rent from the land, not primarily from their own estates but from formally more or less independent peasants whose parcels of land are too small to be economically viable. Consequently they become dependent on the patron who, through mortgages, exorbitant rents, etc., acquires indirect control over the land of the peasants.



# 16. Anti-Imperialist Struggles Against the Wrong Form of Capitalism

## Disarm the Bureaucratic Capitalists! <sup>1</sup>

During the fifties the communists succeeded in isolating the compradors, primarily represented in the PKI's view, by Masjumi and the PSI. This was done by exposing their collaboration with imperialism, their offences against Sukarno, their support of domestic rebellions and so on. Thereafter the so-called bureaucratic capitalists became the PKI's domestic enemy No.1.

In Chapter 10 I analysed how the "bureaucratic capitalists" had grown up in the shelter of the state of emergency, the nationalizations and guided democracy. The PKI talked about parasites in the state apparatus, who were not only corrupt but also invested their corrupt earnings in the private sector. This made them capitalists. But their power base was political, administrative and military, not productive-economic, as was the case with the classical bourgeoisie, which is why they were called bureaucratic capitalists. Consequently, the PKI's "bureaucratic capitalists" were to a considerable extent members of a political rather than as in the traditional analyses, an economic category. The communists regarded civilian state company managers, administrators, officers, and others who used their positions to build up private capitalism as "bureaucratic capitalists".

This reasoning, which became ever more openly expressed in the early sixties, led the communists to conclude that the "bureaucratic capitalists" were interested in privatizing the state economy. But since the bureaucratic capitalists, according to the PKI, had hitherto not succeeded in privatizing a substantial portion of the public, state-owned economic sector, they were, in the meantime, reduced to relying on their own political power base. Thus, the PKI did not want to maintain that the bureaucratic capitalists had acquired a definite class base, nor that they had taken over state power. The PKI maintained that they should rather be regarded as individual rotten eggs, as people who should be politically opposed, since their base was primarily political, at the same time as the state economy should be defended. The workers should be prepared to work themselves to the bone to raise production and refrain from strikes and other actions which could weaken the state economy. But they should do all they could to rid the state

of the parasites who sabotaged the state economy by channelling the surplus produced there into private investments.

According to the PKI, the bureaucratic capitalists did not have a broad popular base of work on which to found their political power. Nor, like the national bourgeoisie, did they have a base in production. Thus they must have based their power on feudal and imperialist forces. When that conclusion was arrived at, the matter became simple: if the communists could isolate the bureaucratic capitalists from the feudal and imperialist forces, they would be relatively easy to combat in a straight political struggle, especially as they did not yet have any significant economic base.

During the years 1959-63 the communists combined an almost Chinese picture of bureaucrats who used the state to make private investments and gain capitalist profits, with a Soviet analysis of a progressive state economy. This was possible since, according to the PKI, the bureaucratic capitalists in Indonesia were not based on strong private monopoly capital, as they were in Chiang Kai-Shek's China, but were based virtually exclusively on political and administrative power. In other words, the state was not yet the possession of capital. State ownership was not the extended arm of monopoly capitalism, as it was in countries with a stronger bourgeoisie, where it also was a significant part of the so-called state monopoly capitalist system. On the contrary, there was still relatively autonomous freedom of action for the state, since the state did not have a distinct class base.

Towards the end of 1963, the PKI, however, began to express itself more sharply. The communists made no decisive alterations to the theses described above, but pointed out that the struggle for control of the state, with its indistinct class base, was intensifying. The PKI said the struggle depended on the bureaucratic capitalists receiving powerful support from the imperialists, especially from the Americans, to liberalize and privatize the economy, according to the 26 May Regulations. In other words, the imperialists were giving the bureaucratic capitalists a class base in private monopoly capital. This increased the similarities with the former bureaucratic capitalists of China.

Aidit talked about a popular and anti-popular aspect of the state. Although the popular forces, under Sukarno's leadership, had the initiative politically, and spelt out state policies, the anti-popular forces nevertheless succeeded in sabotaging many decisions, since they dominated that state apparatus.

At the same time, the bureaucratic capitalists tried to hide their connivance with the imperialists and the feudal landlords by formally applauding Sukarno. These conjuring tricks had to be exposed, said the PKI.

The strategic implications have already been hinted at. The bureaucratic capitalists should be exposed and purged from the state apparatus, which would allow the basic progressive aspects of the state economy to emerge

and the workers' situation would improve. Then not even the army would be a serious threat to the struggle to complete the national and democratic revolution of 1945.

The PKI's position was not so strong that it could dictate exactly when, where and how the bureaucratic capitalists should be exposed and isolated. As I pointed out previously, in Chapter 14, the communists instead directed themselves at backing Sukarno and accentuating his anti-imperialism as well as his decrees on a guided economy. According to the PKI's analysis, anti-imperialism threatened the fundamental power base of the bureaucratic capitalists — imperialism. And the demand for a guided economy was completely contrary to their interests in privatizing the state-owned companies. Presented with a greatly emphasized anti-imperialism and a guided economy, the bureaucratic capitalists would thus be forced to reveal themselves, break openly with Sukarno and could thus quite simply be exposed and isolated.<sup>2</sup>

The PKI itself, on the other hand, was under no circumstances to initiate any actions, such as workers' protests, which might, correctly or otherwise, be used by the bureaucratic capitalists to maintain that they were directed against the state and Sukarno. Militant actions were only tolerable against foreign companies, etc. Within the state sector, one should highlight mismanagement and corruption primarily by means of demonstrations, petitions, deputations, etc.<sup>3</sup>

## **Anti-Imperialism, a Blunted Weapon**

### **Progress**

A wave of anti-imperialist rhetoric, but also of military engagements, swept over Indonesia from late in 1963 and the years following. Doubtless the communists were successful in fomenting these feelings and in seizing the political initiative. If anything were to go wrong, it would hardly be due to a failure of the PKI's efforts to conjure up an accentuated anti-imperialism.

Attempts by the US and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) to collaborate with kindred souls in Indonesia and realize the capitalist stabilization programme from 23 May 1963 was blocked by means of a policy of confrontation towards Malaysia.

The army command could not reintroduce the state of emergency, which they lost on 26 May, unless they were prepared to engage in massive military manoeuvres against the British in Malaysia and against US interests in South-East Asia. The army was not prepared to go that far.<sup>4</sup>

The communists did indeed reinforce their weak position within the cabinet.<sup>5</sup> But it was primarily through extra-parliamentary activities "to support Sukarno" and "to strengthen the home front" that the PKI became the driving force in the struggle against imperialism.

British companies were occupied by nationalist and communist-led trade unions in late 1963. At the beginning of 1964 the communists



themselves took the initiative to initiate further occupations and in 1965 attacked US companies.<sup>6</sup>

In 1963 the communists had succeeded in checking the development of the state company managers' yellow trade union, SOKSI and in May 1964 it was finally closed down.<sup>7</sup>

Instead the PKI and SOBSI continuously subjected company management, administrators and army commanders to intensive supervision aimed at highlighting corruption and bureaucratic capitalism. This occurred both in local worker-management councils and in the mass media and central political organs. Demands for a 'retooling' of the bureaucratic capitalists and the purging of traitors within the state apparatus caused considerable problems, particularly for the army.<sup>8</sup>

Zealously cheered on by the PKI, Sukarno forced a substantial part of the political opposition underground. In December 1964 he prohibited the "Body for Promoting Sukarnoism" (BPS), which brought together a good many of the anti-communist nationalists and others behind the demand for a one-party state.<sup>9</sup> The *Murba* party's activities were banned in January 1965, officially because the party supported the campaigns of the BPS. *Murba* had been almost Titoist at the time of Indonesia's independence, and had become somewhat of a meeting point for prominent members of the government. One of these was Adam Malik, who had recently returned from Moscow, where he had been ambassador, and who, as newly-appointed Minister of Trade, helped the army to profit from the state-owned trading companies. Other persons close to *Murba* were Chariul Saleh, one of the deputy prime ministers, and Nasution, Defence Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the army, as well as Russian emissaries who were looking for new acquaintances as the PKI adopted policies which did not follow Moscow's recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

On the international level the anti-imperialist successes were even more marked. At an early stage Sukarno assumed the role of standard-bearer of what, with the PKI's approval, he called the *New Emerging Forces* (Nefo), as opposed to the *Old Established Forces* (Oldefo).

It was never really established whether the Soviet Union was counted amongst Nefo or Oldefo. But it was clear that both Sukarno and the PKI replaced the old international dichotomy between communism and imperialism (as well as the trichotomy which also included a neutral camp) with a new dichotomy in which the question of anti-imperialism was central. By these activities, both actors moved closer to the Maoist perspective of the time.<sup>11</sup>

Concretely this perspective led Indonesia to become the first nation in the world to leave the United Nations on 1 January 1965. Its reason for doing so was that Malaysia had joined. At the same time plans were leaked that Indonesia and China were to start a revolutionary alternative to the UN.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Sukarno asked the US to "go to hell with its aid", but Washington was sufficiently magnanimous not to withdraw the CIA-backed aid.<sup>13</sup> He also suggested the formation of an axis between Peking.

Pyongyang (North Korea), Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Jakarta.<sup>14</sup>

### **Problems: Workers Hard Hit, Capitalists Gain**

From 1964 Indonesia's economic crisis was aggravated. The colonial economy had long since been run down. Income from exports did not suffice for essential imports and a large number of the companies which were dependent on spare parts, etc. from abroad were unable to utilize their capacity. The nationalized companies were mismanaged. Even when a surplus was produced, only small sums reached the state coffers, after company managers, army officers and various administrators had helped themselves to their share.

A good deal of the local and regional trade had been paralysed because of the persecution of the Chinese minority. But what was worse was that the substantial foreign loans started drying up in 1964 because of the conflict with Washington. Nor was Moscow satisfied with Sukarno and the PKI, and China had no economic facilities to put in its place. At the same time stagnating domestic production enabled a purely speculative economy to gain ground. The government totally lost control over inflation, which rapidly rose to several hundred per cent annually. As if that were not enough, the crops failed and contradictions in the rural areas, to which I shall return in the next chapter, further aggravated the food shortage.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, those who were hardest hit were those who had only their labour to sell, while those who could sell goods, protection, decisions and so forth managed to get by comfortably. There were also degrees of deprivation for wage workers. Those who were worst off were those with only temporary jobs, while those in state employment were often happy to receive part of their pay in kind.<sup>16</sup>

In the rural areas, the poor peasants who had to buy rice and other necessities did not manage much better than the disadvantaged wage workers.<sup>17</sup>

The leadership of the PKI tried to the last to encourage the workers to sacrifice themselves for the sake of anti-imperialism. Even during 1964 the communists declared rhetorically that Indonesia would never be bankrupt as long as the people were united.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time contradictions within the party leadership were sharpened. SOBSI leader Njono was one of those said to have wanted to initiate worker actions, if necessary even strikes, in order to hit back at the "bureaucratic capitalists" and to some degree rescue the standard of living of the workers. Njono resigned, however, from the leadership of SOBSI.<sup>19</sup> Early in 1965 the party leadership declared that if the imperialists and the bureaucratic capitalists were to be combated, one first had to fill the stomach. But this was propaganda, and not a slogan for action accompanied by exhortations to the workers to engage in vigorous struggle.<sup>20</sup>

If the deteriorating economic crisis in the wake of anti-imperialism

affected the wage workers and poor peasants badly, the bureaucratic capitalists, politicians or palace millionaires round Sukarno were not economically threatened. The key to success was political, administrative and military contacts within the state apparatus and/or good liquidity which made speculative ventures possible. Private business flourished outside and inside the state sector. If anyone was stupid enough to try to profit only from production, things went badly wrong, but there do not seem to have been many who tried.<sup>21</sup>

Up to this point the conclusion is obvious: anti-imperialism was a blunted weapon against the bureaucratic capitalists and their chances of making a quick buck.

### **The Bureaucratic Capitalists Could Not Be Isolated**

Nor were the communists able to succeed in exposing and isolating the bureaucratic capitalists as pro-imperialist traitors who wanted to privatize the economy by relying on their alleged base in imperialism. The campaign for a so-called retooling of the state apparatus led to the exposure of individual rotten eggs, but not to any structural changes.<sup>22</sup>

In the first place, the army officers clearly did not need to challenge the ever more accentuated anti-imperialist state ideology expressed by Sukarno.

As late as May 1956, the regional commanders at their conference declared that "Being true to *Pancasila* and *Nasakom*, the army will forever be ready to sacrifice body and soul in the defence and implementation of *Bung Karno's* teachings." And Minister of Defence Nasution declared in July of the same year that, "The armed services have no political ideology other than the political ideology of the state. In this connection, the armed services know no compromise".<sup>23</sup>

Of course this does not mean that the army interpreted Sukarno's teachings in the same way as did the PKI. Instead, the army behaved exactly like the PKI; it tried to interpret the teachings of Sukarno to its own advantage. One example of this is the way Sukarno's declarations were used in the campaigns to establish *one* national trade-union organization and *one* national party.<sup>24</sup>

In the second place, a long-cherished myth has been that it was the communists alone, possibly with some help from Sukarno, who created the confrontation with Malaysia. On the contrary, there are many indications that it was the army officer corps which engineered the conflict. Army Commander Yani was particularly active, but the Minister of Defence Nasution was also involved.<sup>25</sup>

The most important reason appears to have been the army's fear of demobilization, a reduced budget (early in 1963 a 47 per cent cut in state military spending was discussed),<sup>26</sup> and threats to their strong position after the state of emergency had been revoked. In addition, by no means all the



officers in the army were enamoured of Nasution's idea that the army should concern itself with civilian projects, help to build roads and so forth. Finally, the army, exactly like the major established parties except for the PKI, had no interest in renewing the question of general elections, which were likely to be held if the country did not find itself in a political and military crisis.<sup>27</sup>

This meant that Yani, and even Nasution, fell out with Washington. But as the PKI and Sukarno pursued their policy of confrontation for their own purposes, the army officers' interest in the project cooled. Military operations remained decidedly limited. But the army was still unable to find a better way of retaining its fighting strength than by verbally endorsing the policy of confrontation.<sup>28</sup>

The third and most important factor was quite contrary to the assumptions of the communists. The PKI did not direct a knock-out blow at the bureaucratic capitalists by combating and contributing to the dissolution of the 26 May 1963 regulations, the programme of liberalization and stabilization of the economy.

The important thing about this package deal was that price controls were removed, as a result of which prices (of kerosene, for example) rose sharply, as did bus and train fares. At the same time the rate of exchange was modified and aid from the US (see below) was accepted to increase imports. In addition, state expenditure was to be heavily cut, the administration reduced and so on, to achieve a balanced national budget. Last but not least, the state-owned economic sector was to be made more efficient and every state-run company was in principle to function like a private company in a free-market economy. In exchange, the IMF, Washington and other Western powers promised sizeable loans to the value of \$400 million and other long-term credits.<sup>29</sup>

The political parties protested against the rising prices, so as not to lose popular support, and to prevent the smaller importers from being particularly hard hit by the tough credit policy.<sup>30</sup> In addition, no one disagrees with the PKI's thesis that the regulations were supported by the army officers and other bureaucratic capitalists, since they desired to privatize and liberalize the state economy through collaboration with foreign capitalists.<sup>31</sup>

Even independent researchers maintain that in 1963 the army officers were on the side of the university economists who favoured the programme of stabilization against the communists. According to this version, the programme was stopped simply because of the confrontation with Malaysia, which the army was forced to agree to.<sup>32</sup>

What does General Nasution think of this view of history? When I asked him, he said:

Certainly I agreed with Djuanda<sup>33</sup> that the economy needed rehabilitation . . . and regarding the university and the Department of Economics, I did protect them against *Nasakomization* . . . but it is important to remember that there was a hidden conflict

between myself and the technocrats, people like Sudli Widjojo.<sup>34</sup> indeed most of those from the PSI. They were and remain technocrats. I am a nationalist. In the army we wanted to have anti-colonialists in the companies, people we could rely upon, in the same way as Tito had done. They wanted to have experts. They always argue for intellectual solutions, but there is much more to be thought of. In 1963 the position of the US was much closer to theirs than to mine. The US gave them everything, even the houses they lived in.<sup>35</sup>

There are clear indications that Nasution's reply is in line with actual developments.

The programme of stabilization appears, contrary to what the PKI said, to have been a threat to the army officers and to their "bureaucratic capitalists", i.e. the untrained company managers and economic administrators who, nevertheless, were competent clients and guardians of good order.

The bureaucratic capitalists who did not have a political, administrative and military background but were, on the other hand, trained economists were the only ones who earnestly desired the IMF's programme; we can call them technocratic state capitalists.<sup>36</sup>

Why? If the programme of stabilization had been put into effect, both the army officers and their bureaucratic capitalists would have been hard hit by a heavily-reduced military budget, drastic savings plans within the rest of the state apparatus, and attempts to give effective and educated technocrats, who were willing to co-operate with foreign capitalists, power within the state-owned companies and the economic planning of the nation. This would not only have threatened certain individual business leaders, officers and others, but also the army's opportunities for building up their own funds with money from state enterprises in order to finance the machinery of violence independently of Sukarno.<sup>37</sup>

It should be added here that the army was forced to choose between confrontation with Malaysia and the policy of stabilization. As I have already shown, the army needed this confrontation in order to avoid demobilization, a reduced military budget and general elections.

The technocratic state capitalists, on the other hand, needed the support of Washington to drive out the "incompetent bureaucrats and parasites" from the state economy, to use their own words. If they succeeded, the technocrats expected an economic "take-off" in collaboration with foreign capitalists, the opportunity to put their own theories into practice and to get the most important jobs, and the chance to start their own ventures.<sup>38</sup>

Against my analysis it can be argued<sup>39</sup> that in 1966-67, when it had seized power, the army actually did implement a stabilization programme of the same type as that of 1963. And the foreign-aid consortium planned for 1963 was actually born in 1967 — IGGI, the *Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia*.

The answer to this is simple. Not until Sukarno and the PKI had been neutralized, in 1965-66, did the army officers and their bureaucratic capitalists have enough power to ensure that the policies of stabilization of

the state capitalists would not affect the army negatively. The conflict between the state capitalists and the bureaucratic capitalists, however, lives on.

By saying this I am also hinting at one answer to the question of why Sukarno first backed the 26 May Regulations, and was prepared to collaborate with the Americans, before the confrontation with Malaysia became more important to him.<sup>40</sup> The regulations might have weakened the army: the technocrats would have been relatively easy to control for both Sukarno and the PKI; and a political solution to the Malaysian question would, in exactly the same way as over the question of *Irian Jaya*, have dethroned the army. Sukarno would thus have been able to strengthen his position. But the army officers refused to be overruled, mobilized against Malaysia and ignored the stabilization programme. The communists did the same thing, if for different reasons. Sukarno could not long delay without being left behind. To regain the leadership he went a step further and tried, with the help of the PKI, to step up the policies of confrontation and find other solutions to economic problems; solutions which would pose problems for the military, such as self-reliance and the purging of the bureaucratic capitalists. Anti-imperialism, in the meantime, was, as I have shown, insufficient in the struggle for self-reliance and in the purging of the bureaucratic capitalists.

Once again the conclusion is thus that anti-imperialism was a blunted weapon against the bureaucratic capitalists. They could not be exposed and isolated as imperialist traitors who wanted to privatize the economy, since they themselves needed to act against imperialism, just as they needed to act against attempts to liberalize the economy in order to retain their administrative positions of power and not to lose the political initiative.

## A Post-Colonial Capitalism Takes Shape

### The Problems: A Summary

According to the theoretical perspective of the PKI, to summarize my previous analyses, the so-called bureaucratic capitalists had a political, administrative and military base, rather than, as capitalists usually had, an economic base. The economy from which they enriched themselves was public, not private. Hence the name *bureaucratic* capitalists. Lacking their own economic base, the PKI said, the bureaucratic capitalists needed the support of others. They accordingly fell back on the strength of the imperialists.

Since these bureaucrats did not have any economic roots of their own, they needed to acquire some. According to the communists, the bureaucrats tried using their positions to privatize the state economy in both major and minor ways. They used state capital in private ventures (simple corruption is excluded here) and thus became more than bureaucrats; they became "bureaucratic capitalists".



Although assistance from the imperialists grew throughout the early sixties, the PKI maintained that the bureaucratic capitalists nevertheless did not have state power, not even in the final analysis. They still did not have a substantial economic base of their own. Thus the PKI still maintained that the state continued to lack a distinct class base.

Thus the communists should refrain from a general attack on the state, state-owned companies, etc. and try to safeguard and improve the "progressive" aspects of the state. The workers should not for example, make demands for major wage increases or for power in the factories or the plantations, but strive to raise production and to eliminate treacherous bureaucratic capitalists.

This theoretical perspective must, as I have shown, be set beside actual events:

(1) The communists could, of course, demonstrate that the bureaucratic capitalists had contacts with imperialism. But when it came to the conflict over Malaysia with the British and Americans, the army command, rather than the communists, took the initiative. Not even when Sukarno and the PKI took over the confrontation against Malaysia and tried to use it for their own ends did the army abandon the issue, even though the officers were disgruntled. The army and the bureaucratic capitalists had more to lose than to win by allying themselves with the imperialists.

The technocratic 'state capitalists' did not have the same solid domestic base as the army officers and *their* bureaucratic capitalists, and were an exception. The technocrats relied in the first place on the imperialists.

(2) The relatively solidly based bureaucratic capitalists did not appear to be significantly interested in privatizing the state economy, at least not as long as this occurred on conditions dictated by others. They rejected the stabilization and liberalization programme offered by the Americans, since for the time being it posed a threat to their own political and economic power base.

Once again the state capitalist technocrats proved to be an exception. Their positions would have been reinforced if the stabilization programme had been implemented.

After the power shift of 1965-67, a similar stabilization and liberalization programme was implemented, but under the command of the army and its bureaucratic capitalists. The technocrats and their foreign cousins played an important role, but the army and its bureaucratic capitalists retained their grip on state power and the state apparatus and the surprisingly intact state sector of the economy. The difference between Suharto's Indonesia and Pinochet's Chile on the question of privatization cannot be sufficiently underlined. British and American companies which Indonesia had taken over between 1963 and 1965 were, indeed, returned, and Holland was compensated for the nationalized companies. But most of the former Dutch companies remained nationalized. Trade and production were to a great degree still directed via state regulations and the order books of cabinet ministers. Collaboration with foreign capitalists occurred with an

investment of state power, which gave many officers and administrators a lucrative position as "domestic counterparts".<sup>41</sup>

(3) The bureaucratic capitalists lost some of their political initiative during the early sixties, but nevertheless retained their power. This the PKI itself admitted at the beginning of 1965.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, they did not have any significant economic base and were not over-enthusiastic about acquiring one. Nor did they unite with the imperialists to a degree which would have explained their tenacious grip on positions of power. On the contrary, the army retained its power through following anti-imperialist policies. In addition, when the British and American companies were taken over, they joined the previous arsenal of nationalized companies.

The bureaucratic capitalists thus had to have another main source of power which differed from the one the PKI talked about and tried to combat. This source is the one identified in Chapter 10. Through nationalization and the state of emergency in the fifties, the state had acquired its own economic base which served to strengthen the officers and which they, in different ways, used as their personal power base. Many became company managers. Others directed and led the state economy from the central bureaux. The army acquired an independent economic base for itself with the help of profits from the state companies.

Hence the communists' analysis of the class basis of the state must be discussed. That the state had acquired an economic base of its own, and that the bureaucratic capitalists had usurped it *and* made it their own, is, of course, contradictory to the thesis of an indistinctly class-based state in which no single class was strong enough to take over state power, leaving considerable room for manoeuvre to nationalists and other so-called popular forces.

Indeed there was still considerable autonomy for Sukarno and his standard-bearers in the leadership of the state. But that autonomy was a good deal more relative and limited than, for instance, in the mid-fifties. The limited relative autonomy of the early sixties was not due to the fact that no single distinct class had state power, but depended rather on Sukarno, supported by the PKI, managing to use his power to some extent to prevent the army and the bureaucratic capitalists from making full use of their state power, particularly their political and ideological power.

The latter had acquired their state power by means of their newly-won but separate class base, while Sukarno and his friends were some kind of remnant from the time when the state genuinely was indistinctly class-based.

Thus I must conclude that the PKI, by defending the national economy and not least by postponing the workers' struggle in the state companies, did not present any significant threat to the state power of the bureaucratic capitalists.

The communists believed that they were defending a "popular" aspect of the state. In reality they were only defending Sukarno's power of the cabinet, but were unable to prevent it being undermined. Now state power was, in the

final analysis, in the hands of the bureaucratic capitalists with the army in the lead. Their state power was consolidated rather than weakened by the PKI's defence of state ownership.

### **Military Bureaucratic State?**

The contradictions between the PKI's analysis and actual developments are thus clear. A well-intentioned but not completely unreasonable answer to the question of whether the PKI could have analysed capitalism more accurately and retained its theoretical approach can be derived from seeing whether the Marxist-oriented studies of the seventies can dissolve the contradictions between the PKI's analysis and actual events.

These studies maintain that the Indonesian capitalism of today was already being developed before 1965. Thus, in principle, the PKI could have conducted similar studies, even if access to facts had been more limited.

The answer is disheartening. The best of the Marxist-oriented analyses of the seventies is Robison's.<sup>43</sup> He exposes the bureaucratic capitalists' economic power in a creditable way. Even the less formally Marxist analysis of Crouch is at least as exhaustive.<sup>44</sup> In a detailed analysis, which I do not need to dwell on here, he exposes in particular the economic base of the military.

Robison talks about the military bureaucratic state as being "neo-patrimonial" and mercantilist. He says this depends on the bureaucratic capitalists being clearly dominated by four or five fractions of the bourgeoisie. (Robison unfortunately uses changeable categories to describe the Muslim private, primarily trading, capitalists, the civilian technocratic state capitalists, the client capitalists, who actually do the work for the patrons, and the bureaucratic capitalists, who are primarily military men. In addition there are the Chinese capitalists, who resemble the client capitalists and the foreign bourgeoisie.)<sup>45</sup>

The bureaucratic capitalists, according to Robison and even liberal economists such as H.W. Arndt,<sup>46</sup> are not like the "ideal" capitalists, engaged in productive investments and the accumulation of profit from their own production. Instead they use their military and bureaucratic powers to monopolize capital, goods and even raw-material markets. Then they exchange shares in the markets and rights (concessions, orders, licences, etc.) for shares in the profits of production, which either the domestic or the foreign capitalists account for. This is also true of oil.<sup>47</sup>

These profits from production are used by the bureaucratic capitalists, as Marxist and liberal economists agree, not to make productive investments but to build up the armed forces, buy political support (patronage for the client) and live in luxury. To the extent that investment occurs, it is primarily concerned with speculation in land and property.<sup>48</sup>

Only when it comes to the former Dutch-owned plantations are the bureaucratic capitalists directly and to any significant degree involved in



production. But in comparison with the monopoly on markets the plantations are of limited account.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the economy is still not radically privatized, which is, of course, theoretically problematic for a class analysis. The companies owned by the military are private, but usually it is still a unit of the army, for instance, which owns the limited company. The capital does not move with the generals. An officer who is politically or bureaucratically out-manoeuvred loses a considerable number of his economic privileges.<sup>50</sup>

### 'Bureaucrats with no Class Base'

The first conclusion is thus that the bureaucratic capitalists still do not have a distinct class base. The only reasonable Marxist explanation of their indisputable power is thus, just as the PKI said, that they rely on some other class. Robison, Tichelman, Mortimer, Gordon and others have no doubt of it, when, like the PKI, they conclude that the bureaucratic capitalists in the final analysis establish their power on the class base of the imperialists. As long as the imperialists get their licences, concessions, etc. the bureaucrats in return get such a large section of production that they can live a life of luxury and retain their political stability.<sup>51</sup> Crouch, however, is more doubtful, or perhaps "less Marxist". He finds important differences between the bureaucratic capitalists and the imperialists, using, for instance, the Pertamina oil company as an example. But at the same time he agrees with the others that it is a question of parasites with no distinct class base of their own.<sup>52</sup>

### 'Blocked Capitalism'

Another conclusion drawn from these studies of Indonesian capitalism is also in line with the theories of the PKI. Both Marxists and liberals agree that the bureaucratic capitalists hamper capitalist development since they are speculative parasites who do not invest in productive work. Inspired by the ideas of Stalin and the dependency school, the Marxists add that the liaison between the bureaucratic capitalists and the imperialists guarantees that Indonesian capitalist development is blocked.<sup>53</sup>

This conclusion becomes increasingly difficult to defend. Several years ago it was already remarkable that the Indonesian regime, which according to current Marxist theory was a comprador regime with no significant domestic base and was incapable of promoting capitalism, nevertheless remained in power and the political situation was regarded as stable. Since 1966 we have still only seen one serious attempted *coup d'état*.<sup>54</sup>

In addition it may be worth remembering that while the communists were indeed crushed through force of arms, Sukarno and his non-communist followers were out-manoeuvred with the stick and carrot alone.<sup>55</sup>

But even more important is the fact that a dynamic, if brutal and certainly not crisis-free, capitalism is taking root in the midst of the "parasitic bureaucratic capitalists" who are so dependent on imperialism. Now it is not only the IMF but also uncomfortable Marxists like McFarlane who

point to this dynamic.<sup>57</sup> In 1981 even Robison admitted that the foreign capitalists who returned to Indonesia after 1965 did not invest in traditional colonial trade and production, but on local industry, for domestic as well as foreign markets. Robison said it was no longer a question of Dutch trading companies, but of American and Japanese transnational companies.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, says Robison, the old "patrimonial" and mercantile state must become more efficient. In addition, the bureaucratic capitalists find it necessary to invest directly in production. This sows dissension within the ranks of the bureaucratic capitalists; some only want a limited adaptation which will allow them to retain their monopolies and their patronage, while others prefer to try to become "proper" capitalists.<sup>59</sup>

Robison is forced to choose. Either he must discard the thesis of the "parasitic bureaucratic capitalists" who are totally dependent on imperialism, or he must break with the dependency school's thesis that imperialism blocks capitalist development. He chooses to retain his parasites and dispose of dependency theory. He maintains that the transnational companies have stimulated the Indonesian capitalist economy, forcing the bureaucrats to adapt, become more efficient and even to become more and more like "proper" capitalists.<sup>60</sup>

## Post-Colonial Capitalism and the State

Despite having the hindsight of history at their disposal now, the Marxist analysis of the seventies did not succeed in explaining the basis of the power of the bureaucratic capitalists in a way which differed from that of the PKI. At the same time we know that there must be a mistake somewhere. I have even shown that the struggle of the PKI against imperialism, the alleged base of the bureaucratic capitalists, did not weaken the new capitalists, but, on the contrary, from time to time even reinforced their strength.

Even if the Marxists of the seventies have disposed of the dependency school's conception of imperialism blocking capitalist development in the periphery, they retain the thesis of parasitic bureaucratic capitalists and maintain that post-1965 development is the work of transnational companies.

Indeed it is correct that imperialism has changed its nature and has several faces today; in addition Indonesia has become an oil power. But the class struggle is also important. We must not forget that it was a considerable number of Robison's bureaucratic capitalists who first, with non-productive and parasitic means, neutralized their class enemies, and thus were able to offer a good investment climate including monopolies and well-controlled labour power; and who, secondly put pressure on certain imperialists to adapt, develop new forces of production and change the mode of production from simple plunder and underdevelopment. This means that the "parasites" have contributed to the creation of a new form of imperialism which is somewhat less parasitic and less under-developing

than the previous form. *Then* came the opportunity for the "parasites" to make the transition to investment and direct participation in production without being seriously threatened.

I am therefore prepared to argue that current Marxism is not capable of analyzing or explaining the growth of capitalism in a country such as Indonesia. Without denying the military features of imperialism or the reality of "patrimonialism", I would instead like to suggest that we built a theory of post-colonial capitalism, rather than one of neo-colonial capitalism. The former is dominated by the state and implemented by a capitalist fraction which I will call "post-colonial". These are neither neo-colonial compradors, "bureaucratic capitalists" nor the national bourgeoisie.

Robison and others are indeed quite right when they say that the bureaucratic capitalists were not (and are not) "genuine" capitalists with their base in production. Instead, they are primarily engaged in the control of labour power and the monopolization of raw materials and markets through extra-economic means and in co-operation with foreign capitalists.

But, within current Marxism, capitalism and capitalists are in some way clean and indivisible. Private property must exist. Politics and economics should be separate spheres. The economy is productive whereas politics is non-productive. But was there any difference between a speculative and parasitic army officer who was a minor capitalist and an equally speculative and parasitic "ordinary capitalist" during the early sixties? *All* those who wanted to make a profit seem to have primarily engaged in speculation.<sup>61</sup> Incidentally, it does not seem to have occurred to anyone to deny outright that finance capitalists in the industrialized countries have a base in production: even though they seldom bother themselves with actual production, but leave it to their directors. Today, particularly in times of crisis, they make their largest profits by land and property speculation, currency deals, etc., as well as by monopolizing markets and marketing.

The problem is that the powerful fraction of the Indonesian bureaucratic capitalists has specialized in only a part of the economically essential sphere of activity of every monopoly capitalist: to acquire monopolies and control labour. The other part, actual production, was often left to those who were best at it, and totally dominated it, namely, foreign capitalists and the Chinese businessmen.

The problem with current Marxist theory in this area is that it does not fully take into consideration that the monopoly and control, or subordination, of the labour power of both the employed and those forced to live on the margins, are at least as important when it comes to creating capitalism today as production in general and "entrepreneurship" in particular. As long as both functions are engaged in by a capitalist, these weaknesses in Marxist theory are not particularly noticeable. But the theory becomes unfruitful when these functions are separated.

This is especially true of a country like Indonesia. There, it is true, Chinese capitalists and others who do not have access to the state apparatus



are forced to direct recourse to economic struggle with production and trade with the imperialists, or to subordinate themselves. But why should a nationalist, usually a state administrator or military man, with similar interests in enriching himself, be served by directly throwing himself into a monopolized field of production? Rather it is obvious that it is in his interests to use what he is best at — politics, ideology, administration and martial force — to make things more difficult for the traditional imperialist interests on the one hand, while offering the more dynamic imperialists political stability and a disciplined workforce in exchange for greater production and part of the profits on the other.

In sum, Marxist theory has, to its credit, pointed out that imperialism has usually made it impossible for a classic national capitalism to develop. But there is a way of escape for the profiteers of developing countries — to submit to imperialism as compradors. When nationalists within the civil and military apparatus of the state try to use extra-economic means to enrich themselves, Marxism consequently regards this as the bureaucrats' way of subordinating themselves to imperialism while at the same time receiving a share of the imperialists' profits. Whether any economic development occurs must depend on whether the imperialists employ their own power to change and develop their activities and whether they become interested in encouraging a certain economic growth in a few developing countries. (Otherwise they may be victims of the development of technology.)

With the support of my empirical results,<sup>62</sup> I would rather maintain that the Indonesian example indicates that certain administrators, politicians and military men have used and continue to use the state apparatus to nationalize companies and direct the economy, to monopolize raw materials and markets as well as to control the labour force: all this in struggle against not only the working people, but also domestic private capitalists and troublesome imperialists. In this way they have acquired an economic base of their own and offered important preconditions for capitalist development which did not exist previously. They are therefore able to build a post-colonial capitalist system which is not totally subordinated to, but works in collaboration with, interested foreign capitalists. And with a consolidated political and economic power base, the post-colonial capitalists can finally take the step of combining their monopolies and control of the labour force with their own private ventures in production. Hence the post-colonial capitalists who are interested in production acquire their own interest in improving the efficiency of the state apparatus. And as they then become less dependent in a one-sided use of extra-economic instruments of power, it may be possible at best to ease up somewhat on naked repression, and perhaps to create limited room for modest democratic rights and freedoms.

Compared to the classical national bourgeoisie, the post-colonial capitalists thus start building their capitalism on extra-economic positions of power and lay stress on monopolies and the control of labour power

rather than on "entrepreneurship". With such a class base of their own, they also collaborate with foreign capitalists and expand within an international, and not an exclusively national, system of production.

Compared to the bureaucratic capitalists and the comprador bourgeoisie, the post-colonial capitalists have their own domestic class base. Using this as a base, they collaborate with imperialism. On the other hand, the base of the post-colonialist capitalists is not (as once Mao's special bureaucratic capitalists were) rooted in a private monopoly capital which led to bureaucratic power, but, on the contrary, is rooted in political, administrative and military positions.

In the case of Indonesia at least, it is important to distinguish between the post-colonial capitalists and those whom I previously called technocratic state capitalists. The latter have no appreciable political and economic base besides their administrative competence and advanced education. They thus remind us of traditional bureaucrats in the apparatus of the nation state. Consequently, they alternate between seeking protection from the post-colonial capitalists and advocating an efficient mixed economy, under state leadership, which would give them greater influence.

The private bourgeoisie can no longer in a meaningful way be divided into a national fraction and a comprador fraction. I am not even sure that the considerable conflict between Muslim and Chinese is based on different ways of functioning, I would say it has more to do with a struggle for the spoils. Most of the private capitalists have been forced to become clients of the post-colonial capitalists, as executive directors, or simply because they are dependent on patronage for diverse orders, permits, etc. Some are indeed more inclined towards domestic production for a domestic market than others. But this national accumulation is usually interwoven with the expansion of the internationalized economy.

Of greater significance are certain incipient contradictions among the post-colonial capitalists themselves. This powerful fraction of the capitalist class can be divided into those who still have most to win by exchanging political and military power, as well as shares of the markets, for shares in others' surplus production, and those who are sufficiently strong to make the transition into the sphere of production. The latter want to retain their extra-economic positions of power, but use them partly to increase their own profits from production, and are not prepared to share these profits with those who only try to acquire power over the surplus of others.<sup>63</sup>

When the economic crisis in the old industrialized nations has spread itself to newer industrializing countries with oil, like Indonesia, it is not out of the question that pressure from the IMF, for instance, can further split the post-colonial capitalists. Real growth of the gross national product has fallen from nearly 10 percent in 1980 to two percent at most. This may mean that those who have become properly involved in production might accept some belt-tightening measures including a certain liberalization and rationalization of the state apparatus without giving up their positions of power, while others continue to base their power over the economy more on

administrative and military strength, and have difficulty in accepting cutbacks in their preserves. At the same time, groups hard hit by contradictory economic demands, with or without stable jobs, are beginning to unite in protest at political ills and bad government and to demand democracy. Such opposition can deepen the split within the regime. And demands for democracy need not be directed only against the most extreme forms of repression, but can be developed to deliver a death blow to the undemocratic political, administrative and military base of capitalist growth.

In the long run the working class ought, indeed, to become more important in the struggle against post-colonial capitalism, since wage workers are becoming more numerous all the time. But the new growth hardly means a broad industrialization process is under way. Modern production is often limited to relatively capital-intensive plants. The working class is growing, but not as rapidly as one might be led to believe. Even in smaller, modern units, the workers are often split between the comparatively privileged, permanently employed and contract workers, day labourers, etc.<sup>64</sup> The trade-union organizations which are permitted to function are run from the top and are corrupt, and almost exclusively concerned with the permanently-employed company workers, and seldom reach the temporarily employed, in putting-out systems, petty commodity production and trading and so on; in the wider sense of the term, the absolute majority of the working class. Industry and trade are indeed the core of the new capitalism, and the workers have the potential to paralyse the economy. But only a small part of the necessary discipline and control is to be found inside the gates of the factories. The extra-economic base of the state and its means of power are seldom within the factory gates and are only partially threatened by conflicts between workers and management of the companies.

In and around state companies the risk of state intervention and repression is particularly large. When the world economic crisis reaches, as it finally has, even the dynamic developing countries, the extra-economic control of the workforce, not least that part of it which does not have permanent employment, is even more important. These are additional reasons why a broadly-based struggle for democracy, which unites all who are affected by the extra-economic repression and can be developed to deal a death blow to the extra-economic foundations of a brutal but dynamic capitalist expansion, seems to be more realistic and politically more fruitful than unadulterated class struggle.

Furthermore, we do not know the reaction of all those who have been proletarianized in the rural areas but have not become industrial proletarians; those who have not found proper jobs. But at this point I touch upon the conclusions of the next chapter, on the struggle of the peasants.



## Notes

1. For the PKI's analyses of and deliberations over the so-called bureaucratic capitalists, see, e.g., the PKI (1961) p.5, Aidit (1962) pp.445, 460ff., 473-476 and Aidit (1963) p.570 in Aidit (1963), Aidit (1964) pp.73ff. and 93ff., as well as *Review of Indonesia* No 1, (1965) pp.7 and 32. Cf. also Archipov (1970-71) p.69, Castles (1965) p.23, Fessen (1966) pp.56ff., Hauswedell (1973) p.131 ff., Leclerc (1972) p.79, Oey (1971) p.328 and Mortimer (1974a) Chap. 6, p.258.
2. Unofficially the PKI said that it was, nevertheless, important that an anti-imperialist course should not be so militantly and single-mindedly pursued, that the army should be given the chance of reimposing the state of emergency and once again equipping the army. Mortimer, (1974a) p.243.
3. See Chapter 14 fn.31.
4. Cf. fn.2 above.
5. In connection with the cabinet reshuffle in March 1962, Aidit and Lukman were given the status of ministers without portfolio. See the PKI's comments in, e.g., Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp.422, 449 and 450. In 1964 Njoto was also allowed to join the more than 70 ministers. See Mortimer (1974a) p.126 and Oey (1971) pp.80ff.
6. See Chapter 14 above, as well as Mortimer (1974a) pp.225ff., 240 and 244, Kroef (1965b) and Castles (1965), p.22, Hunter (1971) pp.273.
7. Mortimer (1974a) p.112. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) p.2. After 1965 SOKSI was revived for some years.
8. See Castles (1965), Mortimer (1974a) pp.267-275, 375-383 as well as Aidit's speech in *Review of Indonesia* 3-4 (1964) pp.22-31, as well as his statement *ibid.* No. 1 (1965). I have also found an interview with Nasution useful (22 November 1980, Jakarta). Regarding the worker-management councils, see Panglaykim (1965).
9. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) p.112ff., 377.
10. *Ibid.* pp.376ff., as well as Chapter 14 above. Interview with Adam Malik (27 November 1980, Jakarta.)
11. For an analysis of the PKI's position on the question of disputes within world communism, see Mortimer (1974a) Chap. 8; also *ibid.* pp.176-86 and 226-37.
12. See, e.g., Palmier (1973) p.236.
13. *New York Times* 27 April 1966, p.28.
14. For a detailed but none too weighty analysis of this and similar questions, see Simon (1969).
15. For general analyses of Indonesia's economic crisis during the first half of the sixties, see, e.g., Castles (1965), Mackie (1967) and (1971), Palmer (1978) Chap. 2 and Paauw (1967). Cf. also Mortimer (1974a) Chap. 6.
16. See, e.g., Castles (1965) pp.25-30, Feith (1967) pp.389-90, Mackie (1967) pp.37-89, Oey (1971) *inter alia* p.106, Paauw (1967) *inter alia* pp.199-206 as well as Mortimer (1974a) pp.386-7.
17. Cf. Collier (1978e) p.6.
18. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) p.13. Cf. Mortimer (1974a) p.273.
19. Interviews Nos. 29, 52 and 59 with former members of the central leadership of the party who belonged to the opposition. (Jakarta, 1980.)
20. *Review of Indonesia* 1 (1965) p.5; cf. Mortimer (1974a) pp.273 and 375ff.
21. See fns. 15 and 16 above. I think the best analyses are to be found in Castles (1965), Feith (1967) pp.398-402 and Mackie (1967).
22. On the effects of the retooling campaigns, see, e.g., Castles pp.28-9.
23. Quoted from Oey (1971) p.229. (*Bung Karno* is both a respectful and popular way of addressing Sukarno.)
24. For trade-union organization see Chap. 13, and for political organization see Chap. 11, above.
25. Utrecht (1979b) pp.124-5, interview with Jan Pluvier (2 October 1980, Amsterdam), see Pluvier (1965) and (1978), cf. Mortimer (1974a) pp.208-9.
26. Hindley (1964b) p.904.
27. For particularly interesting analyses of these questions, see *ibid.*, Utrecht (1979b) pp.124-5, Curtis (1964) p.32, Kroef (1965a) pp.271ff., Mortimer (1974a) pp.203-21.

28. See fn. 27. I have also found useful an interview with Nasution (22 November 1980, Jakarta).
29. For a short presentation of the programme, see e.g., Mackie (1967) pp.37-41, Hindley (1964b) and Payer (1977) pp.86ff. For a detailed treatment, see Bunnell (1969) pp.308-441.
30. See e.g., Mackie (1967) pp.40-41.
31. The only clear exception is, according to Mackie (conversation in Jakarta, 22 October 1980), Hindley (1964b).
32. Interview with Dorodjatun, the economic faculty at the Universitas Indonesia (17 October 1980, Jakarta).
33. Prime Minister Djuanda, who was one of the foremost advocates of the stabilization programme, died late in 1963.
34. After the takeover of power in 1965-66, Widjojo became chairman of *Bappenas* (National Planning Board) and Sadli became chairman of the Foreign Investment Board. Both were among the weightier members of the so-called "Berkeley mafia", a corps of technocrats educated in the US, who in 1965-66 were prepared to help the military and the foreign capitalists. See Ransom (1970).
35. Interview, 22 October 1980, Jakarta.
36. For a discussion of the different backgrounds of various company managers, see Panglaykim (1964).
37. Cf. Hindley (1964b), Castles (1965). I have also found a discussion with Utrecht useful (2 October 1980, Amsterdam).
38. Interviews with primary sources. Nos. 17, 19, 21, 26, 50, 54, 60 and 66 (Jakarta, 1980).
39. Discussion with Harold Crouch (10 October 1980, Melbourne) and Dorodjatun (17 October 1980, Jakarta).
40. Hauswedell (1973), p.119, pointed out that till then no one had given a good explanation. I have not seen one since 1973 either.
41. See, first Robison (1978) and (1981), Crouch (1975) and (1979), Palmer (1978), May (1978) and Riefel and Wirjasuputra (1972). On the question of the concurrent structure and system, I have made good use of interviews, discussions and correspondence with Robison, Crouch (Melbourne, 10 October 1980; Kuala Lumpur, 4 December 1980), Siau (Amsterdam, 1 and 2 October 1980), Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980), H.W. Arndt and O'Malley (Canberra, 8 October 1980), van Langenberg (Sydney, 7 October 1980), Hans Røden (IMF) (Jakarta, 15 October 1980), Sarhini (Jakarta, 16 October 1980), Dorodjatun (Jakarta, 17 October 1980), M. Lubis (Jakarta, 20 October 1980), Mackie (Jakarta, 22 October 1980), Adi Sasono (Jakarta, 24 October 1980), Moehyato (Yogyakarta, 5 November 1980), Kwik Kian Gie (Jakarta, 18 November 1980), Hadisasastro (Jakarta, 20 November 1980), Panglaykim (Jakarta, 24 November 1980) and Alex Alatas (Jakarta, 26 November 1980).
42. *Review of Indonesia* 1 (1965).
43. Robison (1978), who summarizes important parts of his thesis. In addition Mortimer's anthology (1973) should be named as well as, e.g., Gordon (1978) and Tichelman (1980).
44. Crouch (1975) and (1979).
45. Robison (1978).
46. Discussion with H.W. Arndt (Canberra, 8 October 1980).
47. Robison (1978) esp. pp.25 and 27.
48. See fn. 41 above.
49. Personal communication with Robison.
50. E.g. Robison (1978) esp. p.32. See also fn. 41 above.
51. Robison (1978), Tichelman (1980) pp.155ff., Mortimer (1973) and Gordon (1978) pp.213-14.
52. Crouch (1975) and (1978), as well as discussions with Crouch, as in fn. 41 above. Cf. Tichelman (1980) p.155.
53. See fns. 41 and 43 above. Mortimer (1973) is particularly clear on the theses of the dependency school.
54. See e.g., May (1978) Chap 10, On the question of General Sumitro's attempted *coup d'état* in 1974, I have found useful discussions with former students who were prominent at the time. Interviews No. 71 (Jakarta, 1980) and No. 38 (Bandung, 1980).

55. Perhaps May's (1980) greatest contribution is the analysis of how Suharto gradually out-manoeuvred his opponents and converted them to his viewpoint. I would not even like to rule out the possibility that Suharto might have been prepared to accept Sukarno as president if the latter had not, immediately after 30 September 1965, tried to ride roughshod over Suharto when it came to appointing a new commander of the army, and had he not tried to defend the PKI, instead of, as he had formerly done, looking for new ways of collaborating with the army but without the backing of the PKI. See further, Chap. 18 below.
56. Interview with Hans Røden (Jakarta, 15 October 1980).
57. McFarlane (1977) pp.456ff.
58. Robison (1981) pp.25ff.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. See, e.g., Mackie (1967) and Castles (1965).
62. See Chap. 10 and this chapter. I am not yet prepared to agree with Jan-Otto Andersson that the nation state has its own logic, comparable to that of capitalism. See latest summary in Andersson (1981). Such a state logic, I maintain, ought to be related to, but not mechanically determined by or typologized on, the basis of differing models of accumulation.
63. Cf. e.g., Robison (1981) pp.2-3ff.
64. Recently it seems to be primarily those with no permanent employment who are protesting and striking. According to a secret police report, there occurred 51 wild-cat strikes in and around Jakarta alone from April 1979-March 1980. About 25,000 workers were involved. Interviews No. 51 and 72 (Jakarta, 1980) (reliable sources). Cf. also Stoler (1979a) and (1979b).



# 17. Peasant Struggles Against the Wrong Monopoly of Land

## Mobilizing the Peasants for a Political Offensive

At the turn of the year 1959-60 President Sukarno suddenly took the initiative and passed a land reform law. For years the communists had been pursuing very cautious policies regarding the peasants. Now they immediately tried to expand their campaign for lower land rents (40 percent of the net harvest to the landowner and 60 percent to the share-cropper) to include demands for a redistribution of property.<sup>1</sup> The BTI and the PKI devoted considerable efforts to these problems.

During the renewed offensive against Holland for control of *Irian Jaya*, the attempts to pursue radical peasant policies were set aside in favour of campaigns for "1,001 ways of raising production".<sup>2</sup> But in 1963 the communists renewed their attempts. At the same time as the serious confrontation with Malaysia broke out in September, the PKI leadership placed the land question very high on its agenda.<sup>3</sup> At the central committee meeting in December, Aidit spoke of an imminent revolutionary situation and declared that the party should support and lead peasant activities to implement the land reform laws, even if these activities bypassed the established co-operation and consultation between communists, nationalists and Muslims (*Nasakom*).<sup>4</sup> In the public debate, these activities were called *aksi sepihak*, unilateral or one-sided actions.

## Villages at the Focal Point

As I have shown in Part II, the direct background to the PKI's offensive was that the communists found themselves at an embarrassing disadvantage since their old strategy was a blunted weapon. To be able to withstand the pressure and emerge from this subordinate position, it was not enough for the PKI to be in alliance with Sukarno and some of the more prominent nationalists in Jakarta. The communists also needed to mobilize their own forces. Even the very cautious workers' offensive of 1960-61 had led to a cul-de-sac. The positions of the "bureaucratic capitalists" had not been affected.<sup>5</sup>

With an increasingly Maoist accent, Aidit hinted that even if the bureaucratic capitalists were strong in the towns, they were weak in the

villages.<sup>6</sup> Since the first peasant conference the communists had grown in strength among the peasants in the villages. An extensive organizational campaign, with strong emphasis on improving political work among the peasants, was concluded in April 1963. Now the PKI was said to be a well-developed mass and cadre party with 2.5 million members, while it was claimed that the BTI organized seven million adult peasants, or 25 per cent of the active peasant population.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the communists still spoke of the need for such basic measures as the more effective establishment of the BTI among the poor and landless peasants, as well as the need to get rid of the rich peasants and even of individual feudal landlords. Their ideological influence was regarded as particularly pernicious and undesirable. But the BTI leader Asmu emphasized at the same time that much progress had already been made.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, by passing the land reform laws, Sukarno had legitimized efforts to pursue the peasant struggle. Even the PNI had tied itself to the land reform laws, and the NU had at least not opposed them openly. A communist effort to see that the laws were implemented ought not lead to political isolation and repression.<sup>9</sup>

The confrontation with Malaysia and the about-turn of Sukarno in favour of a strategy of self-reliance finally made it possible for the PKI and the BTI to take the offensive with vigorous activities in the rural areas. With Sukarno backing them, the communists were able to claim that a rapidly implemented land reform, which would induce the peasants to produce more, was vitally important to Indonesia, so that the country could be self-reliant and emerge victorious from the conflict with the imperialists and Malaysia.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, Aidit believed, the PKI could combine nationalism and the class struggle in the rural areas. Thanks to nationalism the party did not need to break with Sukarno's *Nasakom* policy, despite the dictates of the class struggle. Consequently it would also be difficult for the PNI and the NU to withdraw from the *Nasakom* front, even though the communists were called one-sided.<sup>11</sup>

The PKI leadership had, in my view, made another skilful manoeuvre.

Hence there existed the organizational and political preconditions for the communists to put into practice their theory of an Indonesian peasant struggle led by the PKI.

Their fundamental assumptions were linked to Lenin's theses of the 1920s; that peasants in the underdeveloped countries had a more or less bourgeois interest in struggling against the feudal lords and their benefactors, the imperialists. In the struggle against these enemies, contradictions between the peasants themselves were of subordinate significance. Secondly, preconditions existed for an anti-feudal unity between the peasants on the one hand and, on the other, the revolutionary (Lenin) and later the national (Stalin) bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, imperialism weakened the anti-feudal bourgeoisie to such

an extent that it could not prosecute the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle to a victorious conclusion. As it then became obvious that the bourgeoisie would not be able to solve the problems of the peasants, the workers and the communist party should be able to shoulder the task instead, and lead the peasants in the struggle to finalize the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution.

When in 1963 the PKI came to the conclusion that the national bourgeoisie was no longer pursuing the anti-feudal struggle,<sup>12</sup> the leadership dressed up the theoretical issues primarily in Maoist terms, with the important exception that the PKI did not advocate the armed struggle. Cooperation with the nationalists, the representatives of the so-called national bourgeoisie, was regarded as being of less importance than the alliance between workers and peasants.<sup>13</sup> The peasants were regarded as being definitely the most important revolutionary force. In the alliance between workers and peasants the party represented (replaced?) the workers.<sup>14</sup>

The national development strategy which the communists were fighting for was now characterized by ideas of self-reliance rather than of non-capitalist development. Hence peasant mobilization and land reform became the fundamental recipe, even when it came to breaking out from underdevelopment and to stimulating the economy.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the communists produced a primarily Maoist analysis of the classes in the rural areas. The leadership of the PKI and the BTI made strenuous efforts to produce and disseminate statistics and qualitative studies which indicated that there was a considerable concentration of land in the hands of a small group of feudal landlords, while the vast majority owned no land at all, or else so little that it did not suffice to support their families<sup>16</sup> — i.e. the landless and the poor peasants. Despite the political importance of the middle peasants, the PKI, like Mao, played down their importance and instead stubbornly emphasized how important it was to root the peasants' struggle amongst the landless and the poor peasants.<sup>17</sup> Minister of Agriculture Sadjarwo used, for instance, to maintain, and the communists used to quote him, that 60 per cent of Java's and Bali's peasant families were landless and that 42 per cent of the arable land on Lombok was owned by one family.<sup>18</sup>

As I pointed out in Chapter 12, the PKI started doing its own research soon after the first peasants' conference in 1959. The following year BTI chairman Asmu presented the results of 21 village studies. These showed that a very small number of feudal landlords (seldom more than 10 per cent of the households) owned considerably more than half the land in these villages.<sup>19</sup>

The party's research was intensified during 1963-64 to test, and if possible confirm, the assumptions of land concentration and class structure which the party and the BTI had made.<sup>20</sup> Not unexpectedly, the studies — or at least those that were published — unambiguously pointed to a very intense concentration of land.<sup>21</sup>

First, the figures showed that those who maintained that the majority of



peasants had little land, but that very few had a lot of land, were wrong. Not even in the villages where communal land ownership had until quite recently dominated did this hold, said Aidit. The feudal landlords did indeed often appear to own only a little land, perhaps only three or four hectares, but surely they owned land in a number of villages and controlled land which others formally owned. In consequence, there really were feudal landlords to be found who must be combated.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, the figures showed that the concentration of land was so significant that the landless and the poor, as well as the middle peasants, must rationally have common interests vis-à-vis the landlords who concentrated that land. By mobilizing these peasants, the PKI could mobilize some 90 per cent of the village population against isolated feudal landlords. Rich farmers would remain neutral, on condition that they were not provoked.<sup>23</sup>

The communists identified seven so-called village devils: "wicked landlords, blood-sucking money-lenders, the *ijon* dealers [see Appendix II] wicked middle-men, bureaucratic capitalists, wicked authorities and village bandits."<sup>24</sup> The figures indicated, in the third place, that all these devils were more or less based on the feudal landlords' land.

According to the PKI and the BTI, a consistent anti-feudal land reform ought therefore to be directed by the slogan "(free) land to those that till it". All share-cropping would thus be forbidden.

When the Indonesian land reform laws were being debated in 1960, the devout Muslims were amongst the first to protest. They said that to limit the amount of land one person could possess was against Islamic law. In addition, Sukarno pointed out that a large number of under-paid civil servants, who lived partly off the interest of their land, would be forced to return to their villages if the only ones allowed to own land were those that tilled it.<sup>25</sup>

The compromise was based on fixing the maximum land a family might own, including land which had been taken in pledge (*gadai*) or leased (*sewa*). In the most densely populated areas, with rice cultivation in the paddy fields, the upper limit was, for instance, five hectares, while the ideal minimum was two hectares. This was judged to be the minimum necessary for the survival of a family. In this way it was indicated that those who still had less than two hectares after the reform ought to look for another job in the expanding national economy, or else move elsewhere.<sup>26</sup>

Landowners who did not live in the village, i.e. absentee landlords, should give up their possessions, but exceptions were made for civil servants, among others.

The property of religious organizations was also exempted from the reform.

It was, however, prescribed that land which had been mortgaged for seven years or more ought to be returned to the original owner, whose debt ought, after so many years, to be regarded as paid.

In addition, the land was not distributed free, but should be paid for, at a

low rate of interest, over a period of 15 years. Spiralling inflation lightened these burdens.

Finally, share-cropping was retained. But now a law prescribed that the net harvest should be equally divided between tiller and owner.

In addition to the land which was to be redistributed, the laws also referred to the redistribution of state-owned land, which was often land that had previously been leased for plantation cultivation, and of land under the jurisdiction of *rajas* and *sultans*.<sup>27</sup>

I have outlined only the most important parts of the land reform laws. They deviated from the communist view that the land should be redistributed, without cost, to those that tilled it. But, on the other hand, the laws did confirm the PKI's thesis that the national bourgeoisie was unable to conclude the struggle against feudalism.

Thus the PKI, both in 1960 and in 1963, regarded land reforms as an important first step. The leaders did indeed point out that the upper limit (five hectares) was far too high, as many feudal landlords had less land, e.g. in the area around Klaten in Central Java. In addition, the ideal lower limit (two hectares) might make the poor and middle peasants unsure of their position: would they forfeit their land if they did not have as much as two hectares. And surely 60:40 was a more reasonable division of the net harvest between tiller and owner than the 50:50 division stipulated by the law on share-cropping. But despite this and similar criticisms directed against the compromise, the communists accepted the laws and worked hard to implement them.<sup>28</sup>

The attempt by the communists in 1963 to take the offensive by combining nationalism and the class struggle did not, however, merely concern the implementation of the land reforms within the pale of the law. The PKI and BTI also encouraged the retention of 60 per cent of the net harvest, if the landlord refused to accept an equal division of the harvest as the law prescribed.<sup>29</sup> And, more important, the communists started an intensive propaganda campaign to demand that the land be given free of charge to the tiller.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the PKI wanted to show itself as being more radical than the PNI, which in 1960 almost took the initiative away from the PKI when Sukarno suddenly raised the question of land reform.<sup>31</sup> But, more important, the propaganda exercise was intended to raise the class consciousness of the poor and landless peasants, in particular, as well as to mobilize them to continue the struggle. The theoretical and strategic models declared that it was up to the communists to lead the peasants when it was evident that the bourgeoisie did not have the capability of concluding the anti-feudal struggle.<sup>32</sup>

Massive demands and demonstrations for a more radical land reform would assist the PKI also to out-manoeuvre the opposition, force a *Nasakom* cabinet to take over and, from that platform, to pursue considerably more revolutionary land reform policies, among other things.

## The Land Reform: A Blunted Weapon

### Progress

Towards the end of the fifties and during the early sixties the communists mobilized and organized the peasants without breaking with the established local leadership — the village leaders, religious leaders, local state "bailiffs" (*pamong praja*) and others.

Among the major successes of the new offensive was that the PKI and BTI started to come to terms with some of these contradictions. By beginning to combine nationalism with the class struggle, and by directing unilateral peasant action to implement an officially-sanctioned land reform, the communists were increasingly able to distance themselves from the traditional leaders, whose authority was called into question even by the centrally imposed and directed laws on agriculture.<sup>33</sup>

The BTI and PKI created their own alternative channels at the village level and right up to Jakarta. The communists simply took the step of openly offering an alternative to the political and economic patronage of the establishment.<sup>34</sup> This consciousness raised contradictions which at least to some degree bore clear class characteristics.<sup>35</sup> Now the poor and landless peasants were often aligned against major landowners and others in the upper echelons of the rural community — not always successfully, but that is another matter.

The very fact that the PKI succeeded in developing and actively applying an offensive strategy of class struggle without sparking off massive repression, only a few years after the situation had seemed to be one of total deadlock, was a remarkable step forward, the importance of which cannot be over-emphasized today, now we have the benefit of hindsight and most of us, including myself, are concerned with what went wrong.

The PKI and BTI also developed as active organizations in the struggle. And their analysis was clarified. In addition consciousness of conditions in the rural areas rapidly increased. The radicals in the party who were devoted to action became more important. (In the agrarian context they were often linked to Ismail Bakri.) Studies of class structure in the rural areas were on the verge of producing analyses which might have provided a basis for a less rigid strategy. Aidit, however, kept an eagleeye on the party's interpretations and on what could be published openly.<sup>36</sup>

All this occurred without threatening the unity between the *Nasakom* front and the almighty father of the nation, Sukarno. On the contrary, the PKI was able to point out that, as early as his Independence Day speech on 17 August 1960, he had indicated that the objective must be a land reform law in which the land went to those that tilled it.<sup>37</sup> And when conflicts broke out over the unilateral actions of 1964, the president showed understanding for the position of the peasants.<sup>38</sup>

I shall shortly show that the land reform, such as it was, was a fiasco. But that it began to be implemented, that land-reform committees started work, that the registration of land at least began to be supervised, even if only to a



limited degree, that agreements on share-cropping were improved to some extent, and that at least a few hundred thousand of the roughly three million landless families on Java and Bali were allotted land, was, in the first place, due to the work of the communists.

### **Problems: The Land that Vanished**

Problems of strategy were, however, to dominate. As I have shown, the communists had counted upon the "feudal landlords", a large number of state administrators, local "bailiffs" (*pamong praja*), and perhaps also those who had or represented national bourgeois interests, sabotaging the land reforms at their inception. In addition, this had proved to be the rule with other land reforms in South and South-East Asia. The PKI and the BTI were prepared to respond with exposés of actual land holdings and vigorous action to defend the legal rights of the poor and landless peasants; all with the backing of Sukarno's authority and in the name of the national interest. If it were correct that land was concentrated in the hands of a small number of feudal lords, these would hardly be able to escape critical review, even if the administration of the land reforms was in their hands. A landlord, even a small one, could not entirely conceal all his property or abandon it without losing power.

But it was not such a simple task to expose and reveal large property holdings. And there were other loopholes which were more difficult to close than the communists had expected. Quite contrary to the PKI's assumptions, it was as though the landowners were able to spirit away a large part of their land holdings without losing any of their power.

When the land-reform committees, which had been appointed from above,<sup>39</sup> finally started work in September 1962<sup>40</sup> they worked badly. Registration of "surplus land" was often bungled. There was no reliable register of land ownership on which to build.<sup>41</sup> During Dutch colonial rule, the peasants had tried to evade correct registration of their properties, as landowners were heavily taxed.<sup>42</sup> Village leaders and their assistants were the only ones with any real knowledge of which land was owned by whom, and particularly of which land had been mortgaged (*gadai*) or rented (*sewa*).<sup>43</sup> (The law indicated that *gadai* and *sewa* should be included when registering actual land holdings.<sup>44</sup>) But village headmen were particularly liable to commit perjury. The law did not affect the land owned by the village and the significant areas of very fertile land which were reserved for village headmen and their assistants, the *tanah bengkok*. Village leaders also had private land interests and loaned out money, etc.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover it was only landlords with "surplus land" who were liable to declare their land holdings. The others were exempt, and the committees only checked the declarations which were submitted.<sup>46</sup>

If anyone made a complaint, the lords had considerable opportunity to delay the lodging of all replies, for example on questions of rent and debt arrangements, as well as rights of inheritance. The settlement of disputes lay not with the village headmen, but also with the committees at an infinite

number of levels, as well as with the overworked courts.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, the large landowners were able to circumvent the law. They were able to donate land to religious institutions, usually Islamic,<sup>48</sup> but also Catholic,<sup>49</sup> whose land holdings were exempt from the law. They assigned land to relatives and friends.<sup>50</sup> They gave notice to inconvenient sharecroppers who in the first instance would have been given the surplus land of the landlords, and replaced them with intimates, who were given the formal land rights instead.<sup>51</sup> What were the consequences?

The government in 1961 estimated that there were about 600,000 hectares of state and principality land to distribute as well as about 400,000 hectares of "surplus" feudal land to redistribute.<sup>52</sup> Keeping in mind all the loopholes, these figures should be more reliable than information reported subsequently.

By 1963 the 600,000 hectares was reduced to 287,000. (Only 25 per cent of principality land remained.) About half of this land was to be found in "Area 1", in Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok, where the land reform was to be implemented first.<sup>53</sup>

Of greater interest is, however, the 400,000 hectares which was to have been redistributed from the feudal lords to the poor and landless. In 1961 the government announced that there was 178,000 hectares of surplus land in Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok. Shortly afterwards the lords declared that they had a "surplus" of only 92,000 hectares, just over half the government figure. Later the land reform committees reduced the lords' figure to 73,700.<sup>54</sup>

Even less land was actually distributed. Official figures in 1963 revealed that only about 120,300 hectares of state and principality land and 40,700 hectares of "surplus" land had been distributed in Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok.<sup>55</sup>

Ladejinsky, a consultant from the Ford Foundation, who had been specially brought in by the Minister of Agriculture, Sadjarwo, said that by the end of 1963 only 128,000 families on Java had benefited by receiving land in either category, and that the best forecast was a total of 248,000 families.<sup>56</sup> With an average family size of seven persons, the best that could be hoped for would thus be that 2.7 per cent of the 65 million inhabitants of Java at that time would benefit; or a little more than eight per cent of the three million landless peasant families in Java.<sup>57</sup>

On Independence Day on 17 August 1964 Sukarno did, however, speak up for the poor and landless peasants.<sup>58</sup> Some land-reform courts were set up, the communists stepped up their unilateral actions, and it seemed possible that more land would be found to distribute.

In January 1965 Minister of Agriculture Sadjarwo maintained that in Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok there were actually about 337,000 hectares of land to distribute.<sup>59</sup> This was at least 70 per cent of the figure which he had given in 1961 and, in addition, some 100,000 hectares more than the area that was supposed to have been available a year earlier. In addition he maintained that about 296,000 hectares had been distributed, nearly twice the amount claimed the previous year.

Hence, according to Sadjarwo, the land reform had on the whole been implemented in Area I. Sukarno had been given the somewhat tighter policy and figures he had demanded.<sup>60</sup> Whether or not they were accurate is an open question. The PKI protested vigorously, for example regarding eastern Java. And in November 1964 some BTI leaders told Rex Mortimer that no more than 57 per cent of the land that the authorities had said could be distributed or redistributed within Area I had in fact been parcelled out. They added that if one took cognizance of the acts of deception (mainly distribution to intimates), the figure 9-10 per cent would be more realistic.<sup>61</sup>

But if we keep to the official figures which I have cited, the conclusion would be that only between 45 and 70 per cent of the land which the government had said could be distributed was registered, and that at most 35-60 per cent of the 1961 estimate was distributed or redistributed.

That land could to this extent be spirited away indicates a lack of validity in the PKI's analyses and theses about a marked concentration of land. Attempts to conceal land ownership are part of the common-place realities of life in South and South-East Asia. But the conditions in Java, and the degree of deception, were extraordinary. The land of the "feudal landlords" was clearly not so concentrated that they could not use their political and administrative powers, as well as a number of loopholes, to conceal a good deal of their land. And their power was not based on such relatively large land holdings that they could not, in their own interests, dispose of their own direct control of portions of it, presumably secure in the knowledge that they would be able to maintain their positions of power in other ways, which the PKI was unable to analyse.

### **Splits among the Peasants**

The Central Committee meeting of December 1963 became the launching-pad for the communist rural offensive. The PKI and the BTI were to mobilize peasants to participate in mass actions, involving 90 per cent of the villagers, in defence of the poor and landless peasants' rights in accordance with the land reform laws. Distinctions between feudal landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants and others were not too important. The enemy was, quite simply, everyone who either had land which, according to the law, could be redistributed or kept share-croppers who were given too small a share of the harvest, as well as those who backed up these so-called landlords. The rest could either remain neutral or join in the struggle for reform.<sup>62</sup>

Right from the beginning the communists' activities were unilateral, in the sense that the PKI and the BTI took the side of the poor and the landless, as well as giving them the benefit of the doubt in relation to those village overlords who were among the nationalists and Muslims whom Sukarno had tried to unite with the communists in his *Nasakom* front. But the communists did not want to do anything to break the law. On the contrary, they were out to see that the law would be observed. There are strong



indications that many communist leaders were convinced that they were protected from the outbreak of severe confrontation and naked violence because they stressed mass actions to isolate feudal landlords and could rely upon the land reform laws, which, according to Sukarno, were necessary in the nationalist and anti-imperialist struggle.<sup>63</sup>

The kinds of actions that were officially backed by the PKI and the BTI included the supervision of land registration, the exposure of false information, the encouragement of the poor and landless to demand their rights according to the law and a commitment to their protection. In the first place demonstrations, petitions and deputations were organized, for example when a share-cropper was sent away so that he would not acquire rights over the land, if and when it was redistributed.<sup>64</sup> To the extent that forceful measures were adopted, they concerned, for instance, support for those who were legally entitled to a specific piece of land, by ensuring that they would be able to till it even if the lord delayed his decision or forbade them from using it.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, the PKI and the BTI encouraged share-croppers to keep 60 per cent of the harvest, and divide the rest equally between the state and the landowner, until the landlord agreed to obey the provisions of the law, which prescribed an equal division of the net harvest. And the share-croppers on land which was to be redistributed did not need to deliver any land rent at all to the feudal lords, in anticipation of the implementation of their legal right to the land they were tilling.<sup>66</sup>

Even if the PKI's and the BTI's actions were aggressive when compared to the particularly cautious politics of the fifties in the villages, they were nevertheless relatively innocent and directed at defending or implementing the land reform laws.<sup>67</sup>

But, in addition, the communists conducted a conscious *propaganda* campaign for a land reform whose provisions would be more far-reaching than the current laws. At meetings like the one which Politburo member Njoto addressed at Klaten, in Central Java, in April 1964, the foremost slogan was "Land to the tiller".<sup>68</sup>

At the same time the communists aired their criticism that the upper limit for land ownership, even in the heavily populated rice-paddy regions, had been set as high as five hectares. The communists' studies showed that many who owned much less were often rich and powerful. They did not need to own more than perhaps two hectares.<sup>69</sup>

The PKI's campaigns usually made a great impact. Its slogan was probably better known to the poor and the landless than the current regulations of the land reform laws, which, in addition, were very complicated. Knowledge of the decrees from Jakarta was limited in the villages, where many were illiterate.<sup>70</sup>

As I understand it, the communists' propaganda campaign for a more radical land reform reached the villages at about the same time as more and more people became aware of the loopholes in the current laws, and that there was not much land being registered which was due for redistribution and that even less was actually being parcelled out.

The PKI's seven "village devils" perched unthreatened on their nests. What is more, the PKI and the BTI, with their petitions, demonstrations and other quite innocent acts, had not succeeded in improving things very much.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the late rice harvest of 1963 on Java was very poor because of the worst drought and the worst invasion of rats in living memory. In February 1964 it was reported that more than a million people on Java were starving, and many had died.<sup>72</sup>

What I am trying to indicate is that the combination of, on the one hand, starvation, a land reform which had run aground and not appreciably benefited the poor and the landless, and actions which did not lead to concrete results, and, on the other hand, an efficient propaganda campaign for a considerably more radical land reform policy — all this opened the way for tough action.

This action legitimized the opposition's epithet "unilateral actions" (*aksi sepihak*). In answer to the sabotage of the land reform, the poor and landless peasants took their own initiatives, overstepping the limits of the law, and tried partly to implement the law by taking it into their own hands and partly to force through the kind of radical land reform advocated by the communists, but which the communists did not encourage people to pursue by means of concrete action.

A reliable source centrally-placed during the peasant offensive relates:

... *Aksi sepihak*, yes, our opponent called all our actions that. But we followed the law... just saw to it that the landlords followed the law... No, I have said that we did not occupy any land... Yes, there were difficulties involved in propagating "land to those that till it" and trying to follow the law at the same time. Tough action developed from below. We supported it, but mainly by going to the authorities to try to find a solution... The tough action grew ever more common. Disputes arose. We tried to find ways of resolving them, it was difficult to follow them consistently. Our opponents kept accusing us of leading the conflicts. Even if BTI members were involved in them, the BTI did not lead them and could not therefore be held responsible... They demanded better contracts for share-croppers, village land, state-owned land, land from the feudal landlords... They had been working there so long that they thought of the land as their own... and didn't give a damn if there was an upper limit of five hectares. The land should go to those that tilled it. And they could not understand the law about a minimum of two hectares, when most people who owned land had hardly half a hectare... If the upper limit was five hectares there would be hardly any land to redistribute... Thus they demanded land even from those who had less than five hectares...<sup>73</sup>

During the second and third quarters of 1964 several "tough actions" were reported in Central Java, especially in and around the Yogyakarta-Boyolali-Solo triangle, the centre being in Klaten. Soon these actions started spreading. In June and July there were frequent reports of confrontation often with acts of violence, in East Java.<sup>74</sup>

In June these confrontations were the major national question. The waves of debate between the PKI and the PNI reached new heights in Jakarta, that is, within the *Nasakom* front itself. On 13 June Minister of Agriculture Sadjarwo joined the very conservative leaders of the PNI in

Central Java and banned the activities of the peasants. Acting President Leimena also condemned them on 15 June.<sup>75</sup>

The PKI replied that the peasants were only defending themselves against those who were trying to sabotage the land reform. The PKI gathered the support of different peasant leaders, not only communists. At the national conference of the party in early July, Politburo member Lukman declared impudently that it was more important to support the peasants and maintain the alliance with them than at all costs to retain the united front with the so-called national bourgeoisie.<sup>76</sup>

On 11-12 July Sukarno called a special meeting in Bogor of the Supreme Advisory Council to discuss the conflicts. Poor and landless peasants were disregarding the upper limit of five hectares. In the rural areas rumours circulated that, on the contrary, the upper limit was two hectares.

As has already been mentioned, Sukarno had greater understanding of the peasants' situation than Leimena. But, according to Ernst Utrecht, who was a member of the advisory council, Sukarno asked, "Who has told the peasants that the upper limit should be two hectares?" Delegates from the BTI and the PKI replied, "Not us. Maybe it happens locally. It could be a provocation from Masjumi." Sukarno replied irritably, "What do you mean? Don't you control your organizations?"<sup>77</sup>

Apparently, however, this was what the communists did not do. Now, indeed, the entire national press was forbidden to report on the rural confrontations. But, particularly in East Java, the conflicts only grew worse.<sup>78</sup>

The lack of reliable reports makes it difficult to analyse these confrontations more closely.<sup>79</sup> To a great extent, the actions of the peasants were a desperate answer to the lords' attempt to block any possibility of the legal implementation of the land reform. The peasants had simply taken the law into their own hands in order to implement the reform. Here are a few typical cases:

- A landowner with "surplus" land drives off a share-cropper to avoid giving the land to him. The share-cropper and the BTI protest, but nothing happens. The "law" is on the side of the landlord, at least locally. The share-cropper then refuses to pay land rent, and the conflict intensifies. When he is evicted, the BTI is mobilized and the share-cropper occupies the land he has been tilling. Then the landlord mobilizes his supporters, including the police, and a violent conflict ensues.

- Another case may concern mortgaged land. Peasants lay claim to land which they maintain their families mortgaged. According to the law, land mortgaged for more than seven years should now be returned to the peasant. Of course the landlord protests and procrastinates, perhaps mobilizing the village headman. There is no way in which the peasant can prove he is in the right. Instead, supported by his fellows, he occupies the land.

- But the peasants can go further. When there is no "surplus" land to speak of, the peasants take the initiative and demand that land is redistributed



even when the landowner has less than the stipulated five hectares. They challenge the village leaders by beginning to cultivate village land, by deciding whether the village headmen have any surplus land of their own, and by adding the landowner's private land holdings to that part of the land belonging to the village which he has at his disposal instead of a cash wage (*tanah bengkok*).

- In addition, many peasants refuse to follow the law when it prescribes what low-paid cash crops (sugar) they should cultivate for a company. The peasants instead demand that the price should be based on the value of the rice harvest which they could have sold if they had cultivated rice instead of sugar.

- And on the plantations, the squatters continue their occupations.

### Peasant Against Peasant

But confrontation often led to splits between the peasants. For less than 90 percent of the villagers were involved in mass actions to isolate the feudal landlords, which was what the communists had counted on and worked for.

Poor and landless peasants disputed who should have the right to the few pieces of land which could be redistributed. And a poor share-cropper might well be working on land which was mortgaged, while a poor peasant laid claim to it as land which should be returned to him. And so on.

When the militant peasants tried to carry out the slogan "land to the tiller", many landowners with far less than five hectares were threatened. And a considerable number of petty farmers, not only the feudal landlords, had share-croppers. At the same time the farmers themselves might be share-croppers on someone else's land. (If the slogan had been strictly followed in Klaten, each family would have received a maximum of a few thousand square metres of land.)

Many poor and landless peasants clearly chose to seek protection, not in a class collective, but from their patrons and their political as well as religious organizations. In East Java the devoted Muslims rapidly succeeded in depriving the confrontations of their class character, and turned them instead into a question for or against Islam. It was more important to many peasants to combat the "ungodly communists" than their "seven village devils". And in most places the political organizations, with their own peasant and youth organizations, pitted peasant against peasant. Worst of all, the PNI and the NU now worked together against the PKI. And even the PKI and the BTI sometimes favoured their own members in the first place, irrespective of whether they were large landowners or landless peasants.

The communists had not expected these violent confrontations in the rural areas, or the splits that developed between the peasants. To tackle these problems, among others, the PKI held a national conference in July 1964, at which Aidit talked of the importance of the PKI and the BTI working with greater discipline. In a number of villages the cadres had

become unreliable. They did not follow party rules and regulations and refrained from implementing decisions taken by the leadership of the PKI and the BTI. Aidit said that he had seen this himself earlier in the year when he led the party's research projects in the villages.<sup>80</sup>

The communists talked openly about these organizational problems. But, conflicts on the other hand, between the cadres in the central committee were hushed up. A group of radicals accused Aidit of stopping mass actions amongst the peasants, according to one of the members of this group:

... Aidit placed such severe restrictions on action that it was in practice prohibited . . . He was not only critical of Ismail Bakri [the radical peasant expert on the central committee], whom Aidit had made chairman in West Java to get rid of him [from Jakarta. Even Asmu [the BTI chairman] had to hear that the unilateral actions, which he had backed, were destructive . . .

No one defended Aidit directly. Instead, he himself said several times: "Without me the Central Committee might be better." But we did not have an alternative policy ready to put forward. And Sudisman, who led the session, exhorted us to remain united. So the problems were never solved . . . <sup>81</sup>

The communists hesitated and did not follow a clear line. A reliable source reveals that though no one stopped those members who participated in confrontations, neither was any decisive attempt made to step in and lead them properly.<sup>82</sup>

During the latter part of 1964, Aidit repeatedly emphasized the importance of safeguarding the *Nasakom* front. The view that the priority was to back up the peasants had become out of date.<sup>83</sup>

In November 1964 the BTI in East Java admitted that there was chaos in the villages. Needless to say, the counter-revolutionaries were blamed.<sup>84</sup>

At the beginning of December, even Aidit admitted that their opponents had succeeded in splitting the peasants. At the same time, Lukman declared on the anniversary of the BTI that everything must be done to avoid conflicts between the peasants. In East Java, Asmu declared that terror should not be met with terror, but with mass actions.<sup>85</sup>

Serious armed conflict outside Boyolali in Central Java led, at the beginning of December, to three peasants being shot dead by police.<sup>86</sup>

On 12 December Sukarno called all the political parties to his Bogor Palace to discuss the ever more serious peasant conflicts. In the so-called Bogor Declaration the parties once again pledged themselves to give first priority to *Nasakom* unity, to try to solve problems through negotiation and at all costs to ensure that unity be safeguarded.<sup>87</sup>

The PKI and the BTI tried to take the chance to make an ordered retreat. But especially in East Java, their opponents were on the offensive and the communists had great difficulty in defending themselves against fanatic Muslims.

During February and March 1965 the violence seems to have reached a zenith. The religious overtones were now so obvious in East Java that the

PNI qualified its support for the NU in the struggle against the PKI. The NU's youth organization, Ansor, took the lead, with statements such as the following:

... if the government permits people to trample on the Koran, Ansor will crush them itself: without belief in God, people will become crueller than rats.<sup>88</sup>

As late as August, continued conflicts were reported, in both Central and East Java.<sup>89</sup>

The communists had suffered an important defeat, but had not lost the battle. At the national level in Jakarta, the failures were not so marked. But in April 1965 the PKI did not succeed in mobilizing the customary millions to participate in a spectacular "long march" from East Java to Jakarta, where the party was to celebrate its 45th anniversary in May.<sup>90</sup>

The fourth central committee meeting since the special congress of 1962 was also held in May. Aidit defended the communists' support of unilateral action in support of the land reforms. There had been some successes. Nevertheless, he admitted that in some places the feudal landlords had managed to mobilize "counter-revolutionary mass actions". The reason for this, said Aidit, was that some party cadres had made mistakes. In some places BTI cadres had not followed on "small-scale actions". Nor had they made sufficient preparations to gather the necessary 90 per cent of the villagers behind them:

In several places, BTI cadres, carried away by their desire to spread the peasant actions immediately, became impatient, indulged in individual heroism, were insufficiently concerned with developing the consciousness of the peasants, and, wanting a "definite event", were not careful enough in differentiating and choosing their targets.

What was now vital was to safeguard national unity. The peasant actions should be co-ordinated together with the land reform committees and Sukarno's national front.<sup>91</sup>

That leading communists themselves had incited local activists by exhorting them to take the offensive and to give priority to campaigns for a more radical land reform than the current one was, of course, forgotten in the attempt to place the blame on those peasants who had taken up the light.

That the peasants were split, that the class struggle which was initiated often degenerated into violent conflict between the peasants themselves, that the "seven village devils" could split them along political, religious or other vertical lines — all this indicates that there were faults in the communists' analyses. The concentration of land was not so unambiguous, and the polarization not so clear, that a few feudal landlords could be isolated by a huge mass of peasants who had similar interests in the land reform question.



## Problems of Analysis

There are thus clear contradictions between the PKI's analyses on the one hand and the actual developments on the other.

- The land of the feudal landlords was not so concentrated that many could not hide a considerable part of it. They could even relinquish a part of their direct control without jeopardizing their positions of power.

- The peasants were split and the class struggle often degenerated into violent conflict between the peasants themselves. There was not sufficient concentration of the land for the peasants to be able to unite on questions of land reform and isolate a few feudal landlords.

Consequently, the strategic problems ought, at least in part, to result from inaccurate analyses by the communists which mistakenly showed a strong concentration of land.

Could the communists have produced better analyses without changing their theoretical perspective? First, the leaders knew perfectly well that the land in the heavily-populated rice-paddy areas would not suffice for all the peasants, even if *all* the land were redistributed equally to the tillers, not just a certain amount of "surplus" land.<sup>92</sup> Before the Aidit group had assumed the leadership this was, in fact, one of the reasons for demanding communal and state-owned land instead of private ownership.<sup>93</sup>

But Aidit and the other communists held the opinion that if there were feudal landlords who owned considerable land, then their land had to be redistributed, even if it would not suffice for all the poor and landless. This was the only way to crush the feudal landlords and their paralysing power. And the poor and landless peasants had a bourgeois interest in their own pieces of land. Only when they discovered that the pieces of land were too small could they make the transition to the struggle for collective solutions.<sup>94</sup>

Secondly, as early as 1952, Boeke, a "bourgeois" but very authoritative researcher of considerable personal integrity, had shown that those exploiters who were perhaps the most important ones in the villages — the middle-men, usurers, etc. — would not necessarily be particularly hard hit by a land reform aimed at feudal landlords who owned sizeable properties. (This may also provide a partial explanation of why it was so easy for the overlords in the villages to conceal their land holdings and avoid the consequences of the land reform. This was exactly what Boeke cautioned against.)<sup>95</sup>

But, according to current Marxism, the root of exploitation lay in the ownership of land, in the control over the means of production, which was why usury, etc. must be regarded as the result of certain people owning large amounts of land and others none at all. In a famous field study, H. ten Dam showed in the mid-fifties that exploitation did have its roots in land ownership.<sup>96</sup>

In the third place, Geertz, among others, had by the late fifties laid down his theses, which I have discussed above,<sup>97</sup> that there were no distinct classes

of peasants, that there was no significant concentration of land, and that tradition, as well as colonialism, forced the peasants to share both jobs and surplus, i.e. poverty. Lacking clear classes and, to a greater degree, lacking class consciousness, the villagers were vertically split on the basis of religion, pre-colonial modes of production and trade, and the *santri* and *abangan*.

Rex Mortimer, Ruth McVey and Fritjof Tichelman and others have, in more or less developed forms, used the theses on the lack of distinct classes, and on the conflicts between the *santri* and *abangan*, to explain the general failure of the PKI and particularly the splits among the peasants.<sup>98</sup>

Others, such as Ernst Utrecht and at times Wertheim, are hesitant about accepting that it is only the difference between the *santris* and *abangan* which split the peasants, and give some weight to strong patron-client relationships, which had long been obvious. Hence they do not exclude a definite class structure, but indicate that it manifests itself in a special way — exactly how is unclear — which breeds patron-client relationships.<sup>99</sup>

In principle, at any rate, it was possible for the communists to discount Geertz's theses by putting forward the type of factual criticism of the kind I have already outlined in Chapter 12: his work involved only one case study in one area at one particular time which ignored the landless and the work done in addition to petty farming.

Even more important for the communists must have been the fact that Geertz's picture, showing small class differences and relative egalitarianism in the villages, corresponded neither with the personal experiences of many of the politically active, nor with the research results of the party itself, nor with the conclusions of many other researchers busy in the late fifties and early sixties.<sup>100</sup>

It was more difficult for the communists to tackle patron-client relationships. I have the distinct impression that some of those who had responsibility for the party's research tried in vain to convince Aidit that the PKI and the BTI ought to pay more attention to the ties between the patrons and the clients. At the same time, however, the communists were faced with the task of simply and pedagogically showing cadres and peasants that there were feudal landlords, and that the peasants could and should unite in the struggle against them. Every nuance which contradicted that basic picture was presumably offending.<sup>101</sup> And even if the thesis on patron-client relations is an empirical generalization without a proper theoretical basis,<sup>102</sup> nevertheless a considerably more complicated class structure is implied, and a less unambiguous land concentration than that broadcast by the PKI and BTI.

Without changing their theoretical points of departure, the communists might thus have had difficulties in improving their analyses without denying the existence either of a monopoly on land or of powerful oppressors in the rural areas, while nevertheless taking note of the lack of land, of the important figures who had no explicit control over land, of the fact that classes were not as distinct, nor the land as concentrated as it had

been in Russia and China, the countries in which the communist theories had originated even though the pattern was complicated there as well. as well as, finally, taking into account and giving theoretical backbone to the patron-client relationship.

### **On Monopoly and Method**

What is it, then, that is missing from the party's theories of land monopoly and the agrarian class structure? One fruitful way of at least beginning to attack the question is, I believe, to take into consideration that a monopoly of land may not only be caused by land concentration, but also by the centralization of the surplus produced.

To the best of my knowledge, this is not done in studies of land monopolies. These investigations usually depart from institutionalized relations of production. One possible exception, the only one I know of, is Göran Djurfeldts and Staffan Lindberg's attempts to undertake a class analysis of an Indian village by, roughly speaking, following the surplus, and, among other things, seeing how it is produced and how it is appropriated.<sup>103</sup> I have not tried to utilize their method, which would not have been possible at my general level of analysis and due to lack of tenable data, but I have, perhaps, been inspired by their way of tackling the problem.

It ought to be possible to talk of land concentration when some few farms become ever larger since the majority of the peasants become landless. The feudal landlord bases his power on interest received from his large land holdings.

An ideal picture could perhaps be drawn from the manors of the late feudal period in Europe. The most important factor, however, is not the absolute size of the estate, nor yet that the fields are concentrated, but that, in relation to other land holdings, the manor is very large, and that the large size results from the fact the majority of peasants have lost much of their land.

When the surplus from the land is centralized, on the other hand, the land is split up among different tilling units with more or less formally independent peasants, despite the feudal landlords (or whatever they are to be called) having a *de facto* monopoly on land. This centralization of surplus is based on the small units not having sufficient economic liquidity to be able to preserve the independence of their tillers. Instead a small number of patrons are able to acquire indirect control over the petty farmer (clients) without owning and often without even having the tiny pieces of land at their disposal. In this case the power of the lords is not based on interest from their own large properties, but on being able to expropriate parts of the surplus which can be produced on formally independent units of land by the petty farmers.

While the first type of feudal landlord stands or falls by whether he owns or directly controls large land holdings, the second type is based upon the fact that many peasants have land that is too small.



If the concentration of land into manors and estates is a phenomenon of late feudalism, perhaps one can say that there were traces of centralization in early European feudalism, and, of course, in the Asiatic mode of production. The landlords (the state), without owning or controlling land directly, dominated the petty farmers in various ways, and could use the surplus for their own ends.

It appears as though the centralization of surplus which occurred in Europe was often followed by the feudal landlords concentrating individual and relatively independent units of arable land into large estates, which led to the majority of peasants becoming wholly landless, or very nearly so. By this I do not mean that it inevitably has to become like this in Indonesia as well, even if today's "green revolution" indicates that this is happening. The most important factor is that the concentration of land had begun to complement centralization before the theoretically educative peasant revolutions and land reforms occurred. In Mexico the concentration of land had also become dominant, and a similar process was well under way in China. This led to the current Marxist theories primarily dealing with the concentration of land and the struggle against it. That is one of the reasons why the current Marxist theories are so incomplete and can be dangerous in analyses of societies where concentration of land is not dominant but also the surplus is "only" centralized. I maintain that this is precisely what happened in Indonesia. And now I shall attempt to prove it.

### **The Centralization of Surplus**

The question is whether the Indonesian, or, more accurately, the Javanese, land monopoly rested primarily on the centralization of the surplus and, if so, how.

The pre-colonial agricultural societies<sup>104</sup> on the inner islands differed from early European feudalism, especially in Central and East Java where the PKI was strongest, in that there were relatively strong central powers. Local landlords virtually functioned as bailiffs. They lacked extensive private properties, or control of such properties, which might have given them an autonomous class base. The peasants often had the right to till the land, and were neither serfs nor completely independent landowners.

Naturally there were exceptions. In West Java private ownership was more widespread than in Central and East Java, and even there there were variations through geography and over time. And the Muslim traders made inroads. But as a general tendency, the gentry found it difficult to concentrate land when both they themselves and the peasants suffered from a lack of direct control and private ownership. Rather, they were often forced to centralize the surplus. In the name of the central despot and in their own interests, they expropriated the surplus from relatively independent small peasants.

The lack of private peasant ownership, which enhanced the right to cultivate land and encouraged communalism, prevented even the peasant collective from concentrating land holdings.

Through indirect rule, the Dutch colonial powers<sup>105</sup> took over the "bailiffs" and village headmen, who did not have significant owner interests but had great influence over the way land and labour were used in the villages, where the peasants seldom had rights of private ownership. The state confirmed this organization, generalized it<sup>106</sup> and exploited it for its own interests, rather like a despotic Asian state. "Bailiffs" and village headmen organized cheap labour for tobacco curing, plantations and road-building, and saw to it that the peasants cultivated staple products such as sugar and tobacco on part of the land. Furthermore, foreigners were forbidden to own land. State concessions were granted to the plantations. Private peasant land was so heavily taxed that it could be a disadvantage to be registered as an owner.

Even if the land was not concentrated to any significant degree, it is probable that the number of landless grew. Those who had the right to till the land developed different techniques for preventing further communal distribution as the population increased. The zealous colonial civil servants surely underestimated the number of landless, as they were primarily interested in collecting taxes from those who owned land.<sup>107</sup>

Since the concentration of land was in contradiction to state-run colonial exploitation, opposition was often very strong where there was significant private ownership and Muslim commerce. There the state, with its "bailiffs" and village headmen, was combated as vigorously as colonialism.

By saying this, I also mean that the simplest way of enriching oneself was not to concentrate land, but to centralize the surplus, with the help of those political and economic means of power which the village headmen, for example, had at their disposal.<sup>108</sup>

Village headmen without considerable private interests were, of course, prepared to defend the state and their own right to centralize the surplus. But of course they had every interest in retaining a major portion of the expropriated surplus for themselves, at the expense of their colonial masters.

Young domestic intellectuals who did not become administrators, "bailiffs" or village headmen went a step further and wanted to crush the colonial state, before they built a new one where their (and the people's) interests could be accorded their rightful place. Sometimes they collaborated with subversive Muslim anti-colonialists.

### **Indonesia, China and Vietnam**

These structural relationships, classes and class interests differed in several ways from the situation in China and Vietnam.<sup>109</sup> The peasant revolts and land reforms there were important models for the communists in Indonesia.

Especially in China, but also in Vietnam, the cash economy and private

ownership had a significantly longer historical tradition. A strong despotic state did not develop in China, but the nobility often had their base in private land ownership. French colonialism had a far more direct nature in Vietnam than did Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. In both Vietnam and China feudal landlords grew up and concentrated significant parts of the land.<sup>110</sup>

It was seldom a question of large properties. In Vietnam's rice-paddy areas, where there were strong communalistic traditions, the process of concentration was particularly slow. But the differences were nevertheless marked by comparison with Central and East Java. In the delta areas of the Red River, cultivation of extremely small pieces of land long retained its dominant position, the land was fragmented and proletarianization progressed slowly. But simultaneously a number of large owners expanded into minor landlords.<sup>111</sup>

It is not so important that the lands in Tonkin, as in Java, were very small, for, despite that, the landlords in Vietnam appear to have based their exploitation on the possession of land rather than the centralization of surplus. Proletarianization was also a result not simply of population expansion but of the concentration of land.

### **The Colonial Legacy**

During the 1940s the colonial state was crushed.<sup>112</sup> Princes (such as the sultan of Solo), "bailiffs", village headmen and others who had rallied to the support of the Dutch were fought against. Did that mean the way was clear for private ownership and land concentration? Both increased, but centralization of the surplus continued to dominate.

That the intellectual nationalists took over the state apparatus and allowed it to expand did not mean that the grip of the state over the land and the villages was maintained. At village level the wealthy increased their room to manoeuvre.<sup>113</sup> But they had difficulties in expanding and concentrating their land ownership since they had only small pieces of land to start with.<sup>114</sup>

In addition, there was no assistance from a continued high demand for colonial staple products such as sugar. Most of the sugar mills collapsed primarily because the peasants liberated themselves and the local lords could no longer force them to cultivate sugar on their rice fields for small sums of money.<sup>115</sup>

A similar fate met the bailiffs and village headmen, both those who retained their posts and those who took up new ones. They had got rid of the colonial state and were able to take a larger slice of the cake themselves. But at the same time the cake had shrunk, as the colonial agricultural system of production collapsed.<sup>116</sup>

It was not only lack of resources that prevented them from concentrating land. When they got rid of the colonial powers, they also lost its dictatorial support. Now the village leaders, at least, needed to acquire deeper local roots. That meant they could not use their new-won freedom to strip the



peasants of their land, but were often forced to content themselves with centralizing a portion of the surplus. They did not even have the power to dispose of their own lands (*tanah bengkok*) at their own discretion, but had to allow share-croppers and harvesters a certain freedom and grant them some privileges. But centralization allowed the village headmen to distribute patronage to clients among the small peasants and the landless, who thereafter were prepared to back their patrons.

Subsequently the multi-party system and vote-catching reached the villages. The communists, who defended the poor and the landless, gained strength. In the end, the land reform laws fixed a ceiling on the amount of land one might own. That made it difficult not only for the village headmen but for all the wealthy, to concentrate the land. They were often forced to be content with centralizing the surplus. They could then exploit the peasants, at the same time as they acquired many loyal clients.

### Sifting the Evidence

Despite these obstacles, some land was concentrated. In particular the number of absentee landlords increased. This was confirmed in a number of studies of villages in the late fifties and early sixties.<sup>117</sup>

Some of the studies indicated quite a high concentration of land, and these were used by the communists to prove the correctness of their analyses. But one can question whether the villages were representative<sup>118</sup> and wonder to what extent the polarization, between a few major landowners and a large number of landless peasants or owners of very small parcels of land, depended on the wealthy concentrating the land by taking it from the peasants, and how much can be explained by the creation of more poor and landless peasants through the increase in population.<sup>119</sup>

Finally, special attention must be paid to the way in which the studies often discuss the actual control of land. This can have its merits. But there is a risk that the extremely important question of how the landlords controlled the land may be disregarded. Did they base their control directly or indirectly on ownership, or on a substantial centralization of the surplus which was produced on lands formally owned by other men, so that one can (by means of a rather generous interpretation) maintain that the landlords did indeed control this land too? Surely the most important factor is not *whether* a minority of the rural population control the major part of the land, but *how* they do so. If the lords are to be effectively combated, then this question must be answered unambiguously.

That land was not mainly controlled through concentration is indicated by the experience of the PKI in seeing how "surplus" land could be made to "disappear", and by the way in which the peasants could so easily be split. In recent years this has also been supported by unusually systematic research which has not only looked at formal ownership structures but has also tried to account for actual control of the land. Despite the researchers' emphasis on and criticism of the considerable increase in concentration of land after 1965,

they maintain that the wholly or virtually landless in Javanese villages are still not more than 30-40 per cent of the rural population. About 30-40 per cent of the peasants are in a middle category and about 20-30 per cent are relatively well off.<sup>120</sup> (It could, of course, be maintained that many of the landless today have managed to move to the slums in the towns, but we must also take the population increase into account.) The estimates are, of course, put forward with a number of reservations about regional and local differences, faults in the investigation and so on. Nevertheless they are considerably less inaccurate than the investigations carried out in the late fifties and early sixties, with their rough estimates and haphazard village studies.

And if one relies on the official statistics from the population census of 1973, it is even simpler to refute the thesis of considerable concentrations of land.<sup>121</sup>

I would thus like to maintain that the concentration of land and exploitation in the villages ought primarily (but not exclusively) to be analysed in terms of the centralization of surplus agricultural production, at least during the days of the PKI's expansion and presumably to some extent also today, despite a certain concentration of land.

What are the characteristics of the post-colonial centralization of the agricultural surplus?

There are still very few who own relatively large farms and who, with a little goodwill, could be termed landlords who have concentrated their land. It is important to remember that the official statistics do not always take into account that the same owner can have several smaller properties. But when the 1973 census indicates that only about 0.5 per cent of Java's farms were larger than five hectares, the figures are nevertheless illustrative. Even if one goes as far as counting the five per cent of properties which were the largest, only 24 per cent of arable land is included.<sup>122</sup> In Central Java only 0.8 per cent of the farms were larger than four hectares and accounted for less than 10 per cent of the land.<sup>123</sup> Independent and often critical researchers confirm this general conclusion, even if they can show somewhat higher figures, especially from the rice paddies in the low lying areas. In Java there appears to be the lowest degree of land concentration in the central province, while it is somewhat higher in East Java, and highest in West Java. It is probable that the figures were considerably lower during the fifties and early sixties, before the communists were crushed and the "green revolution" got under way.<sup>124</sup>

Among the largest and best farming units is the village land reserved for the village headmen and their assistants in lieu of wages (*tanah bengkok*). In Klaten in Central Java, as much as 11 per cent of the rice paddies is *tanah bengkok*. Even if the *tanah bengkok* of the village headman is large enough to place him in the same group as the real landlords, at least if one includes his private land, he could not do what he wanted with the land, especially before 1965, when he was dependent on broad support to retain his position and thereby his *tanah bengkok*.<sup>125</sup>

The village overlords do not therefore have direct control of the major part of the land. They do not have any tangible monopoly over a significant concentration of the land. The lion's share of the land is, instead, in the hands of the peasants.

But the peasants' parcels of land are often very small. In a rice-paddy area a family can support itself on 0.5-1 hectares with today's high-yield varieties, particularly if one or more members of the family regularly do other work as day labourers and so on.<sup>126</sup> (Prior to 1965 more land was needed.) But, in the first place, even such a family needs loans to pay for seeds and fertilizers, for example. Secondly, most have less than 0.5 hectares. At a rough estimate half the farms in Java, not only in the rice-paddy area, are smaller than 0.5 hectares.<sup>127</sup> These pieces of land are too small for a family to be able to support itself independently. It has to take loans. It has to do a lot of work besides cultivating its own fields. This is true to an even greater extent of those families which only own the land around their houses. (Somewhat imprecisely, these are often included in the 30-40 per cent estimates of the number of landless peasants. But they do still have a little land which they could use, and the garden round the house can, if the soil is fertile and is intensively cultivated, provide an important source of nutritious food and a little cash for the household.)<sup>128</sup>

Thus one can say that most of the land is used by small and poor peasants who have such tiny pieces of land that they are unable to use them relatively independently. The land that is available for most of them is not even enough to support their families.

In the beginning, these peasants presumably try to get help from friends and neighbours. A poor peasant who cannot manage by himself may, for instance, allow a better-off peasant to share-crop his piece of land in return for a small loan, or while the poor peasant tries to find a job somewhere else.

But most peasants need to borrow money, and they are soon forced to turn to the lords.

It is by "helping" these peasants to the brink of ruin<sup>129</sup> that the lords can indirectly get control over a large part of the land, and of the surplus they do not have themselves and cannot obtain from their own lands. The lords do not concentrate the land but centralize the surplus.

This mutual but unequal dependency between the lords and the peasants, which the centralization process leads to, is at the same time, I maintain, the base for strong and extensive patron-client relationships. The base disappears as the concentration, including the process of proletarianization, increases. Even when the land is concentrated but is primarily used by tenants, especially share-croppers, certain weaker patron-client relationships survive, while in the ideal case they ought mostly to have been dissolved when property is tilled by "free" workers.

There are many ways of centralizing the surplus. Here are some.

The patron can lend money against a mortgage of the land (*gadai*) or himself lease additional land (*sewa*) for a minor sum. He can "help" the



peasant by allowing him to remain working as a share-cropper on his own land, with an extortionate agreement. The patron can lease in cheap non-irrigated land and then use his powers to get it irrigated for himself. He can also "help" a peasant by giving him a loan for seeds, fertilizer, equipment and so on, at a rate of interest that considerably exceeds what the patron needs considering his liquidity, good connections and state credit subsidies. And if the peasant cannot pay he may have to work as a bonded labourer instead. He can "help" a peasant by giving him a loan against the harvest of the standing crop (*ijon*), the classical form of usury. He can "help" the peasant by buying up locally and later selling the harvest, the difference being considerable. He can also "help" those peasants who want to travel to market themselves, by offering them room on a lorry or in a bus, for a fee. Finally, the village headmen, religious leaders and others assist in settling conflicts, making contact with the authorities outside the village, etc., again for a fee, and with the possibility of arranging other people's affairs to suit their own interests.

Those patrons, primarily village headmen, who are dependent on clients to retain their positions, from which vantage point they can continue to centralize the surplus, are not able to take care of their "enfefsments" (*tanah bengkok*) as though they were private property, but must favour some of the poor and landless by allowing them to share-crop the land on the basis of decent agreements, allowing many to take part in the work of harvesting the crops, etc. The village headman simply does not have complete control over the land. If he, on the other hand, can replace his need for support from the local clientele by unreserved state support, as was quite usual after 1965, then he can of course choose between dictating extortionate share-cropper agreements, leasing out land to those who pay the most or rationalizing operations himself. Then he has direct control over the land, whether or not it is privately owned. The land monopoly and exploitation relies more on the concentration of land than on the centralization of the surplus.

### **The Land Reform and the Centralization of the Surplus**

If, as my analysis indicates, the monopoly on land is primarily based on centralization, what happens if the peasant struggle is directed towards implementing and radicalizing a land reform aimed at hitting the landlords who have concentrated land? Let me draw the logical conclusion.

In the introductory phase the lords who have primarily centralized the surplus will not be much affected by a reform intended to combat a significant degree of land concentration. Those who centralize the surplus have every opportunity of conceding the extent of the land from which they expropriate the surplus. Some lords are nevertheless affected: i.e. those that really do have concentrated land. But they are few, and their estates are small.

If the surplus is centralized, there are thus only a limited number of landlords who can be identified as enemies, and there is little concentrated

land to redistribute. The strategic problem in Indonesia is *not* the tremendous scarcity of all land, but that so little of this scarce commodity is concentrated in the bands of proper landlords.<sup>131</sup> If the peasants try to bypass the problem by radicalizing the land reform and unilaterally lowering the ceiling for maximum land holdings, by tracing mortgaged and rented land and by then taking up the struggle under the slogan "land to those that till it", there are a number of serious consequences.

First, even the lords who primarily centralize the surplus are threatened. Even though their private farms may not be very large, the peasants will now want to redistribute them. In addition, the peasants will now take up the struggle for mortgaged and leased land and for "enfeoffments" (*tanah bengkok*). These lords make unusually dangerous enemies. They are strongly provoked but not significantly weakened. The peasants are not able to hit hard at the basis of the centralization of the surplus: that so many peasants are unable to manage on their own pieces of land but become dependent on the landlords. Indebtedness and other ills remain.

Secondly, a considerable number of peasants are threatened, far from all of whom can be called landlords, since the poor and landless peasants who take part in the offensive believe that even the relatively well-off ought to share what they have, since there is so little access to land that can be redistributed. Presumably it suffices for these relatively well-off peasants to feel themselves threatened to effectively cause splits in a united and broad peasant front. In the worst case, even the strategically important middle peasants feel threatened.

Thirdly, even the poor peasants are split. More poor peasants allow relatively well-off peasants, sometimes even lords, to use their land as share-croppers, while the poor peasant has perhaps been given a loan or worked as a wage labourer. Now the "land is to go to those that till it". Does that mean that the poor peasant must relinquish his land to a wealthy tiller? And whose is the right to mortgaged land? The tiller, or the peasant who long since was forced to mortgage his land and is no longer able to till it? And ought only the man who makes permanent use of the land, the share-cropper, to have the right to the land, not the day-labourers? In such situations there are considerable risks that poor peasants will not only fight one another, but also seek help from their patrons and the various organizations they belong to.

Finally, the landless. If the surplus is centralized, the truly proletarianized are not so numerous as if the land had been mainly concentrated. Many poor peasants own a little land, even if only a garden round their houses. This means that they are probably clients of a patron, which helps them to retain the land but also to be exploited.

Even the completely landless doubtless find it hard to resist the offer to become loyal share-croppers, for instance, in place of the previous share-cropper who demanded that his right to the land be accepted. And which landless peasant can afford to risk losing a share-cropper agreement without having a strong alternative patron to turn to, when he risks being

removed from agricultural production and often being forced into the urban slums?

There are fewer completely landless than there would have been if the land had been heavily concentrated, and the tremendous number who are nevertheless landless often have more to lose than to win by being in the vanguard against the lords.

The above prognoses agree well with actual developments, which I analysed in the chapter on the land that was spirited away and the peasants who were split. The prognoses are, indeed, constructions after the event, but not on the basis of the empirical answer-book. They are logically derived from an analysis of land monopolies in terms of the centralization of surplus.

With better theoretical tools of analysis, which would have included the concept of centralization of surplus, the communists would already have been able to make the same prognoses; the facts were there to be seen. It is true that I have made use of a good deal of new research that was not available to the leaders of the PKI. But the lack of a concentration of land is nothing new. What *is* new, is rather the systematic character of the studies and the fact that a marked concentration of land is getting under way.

### **Two Paths of Development**

Would it even have been possible to sketch an alternative strategy on the basis of analyses of the centralization of surplus? It is not impossible. But a strategy does not automatically follow from an analysis.

What I can do is to outline some paths of development which are implied by the analysis, and which every strategy must take into account, try to promote, modify or combat.

It follows from my analysis of the centralization of the surplus that there were (and are) only two likely paths of development. Either the peasants themselves concentrate their land into financially sound units, which can be independent of the lords, or the lords concentrate the land of the peasants and lay the foundations "from the top" for a brutal capitalist agriculture. A classical bourgeois land reform with redistribution of relatively large feudal properties was out of the question.

The path of development in the interests of the peasants takes as its point of departure that, even if all the arable land in Java were to be redistributed, this would not suffice to enable all peasant families to be decently economically independent.<sup>132</sup> If one were to limit oneself to redistributing the land which was concentrated by landlords, the effects would be marginal, and the peasants would be split and would lose the struggle.

If the peasants are really able to combat the basis of the power of the patrons, they must primarily attack the centralization of the surplus, not the concentration of land. It is centralization which affects the absolute majority of the peasants. That is why the preconditions for a united struggle lie here.

In the final analysis, centralization depends on the major part of the land



being divided into so many and such small pieces of land that the peasants become dependent on the patrons. It is not enough to expropriate the land of the patrons, since their main source of income does not come from their own land but from peasants who are dependent on them. And the peasants will continue to remain dependent as long as parcels of land are too small to be independent. It is not enough to demand the return of mortgaged land, or to combat usury, etc. As long as the peasants have farming units which are too small, they will continue to need to mortgage their land and get into debt, paying extortionate rates of interest, etc.

To be able to combat centralization, the peasants must, in other words, make their tilling units so large and farm them so effectively that they can become independent of the patrons.

In the short run it is in the interests of the landless peasants to collectivize the land, while those landowners who are not desperately poor are, presumably, interested in concentrating the parcels of land of the poorest peasants. But the landless are not able singlehandedly to push through collectivization. Neither can the petty farmers, on the other hand, lay claim to the bits of land of the poor peasants without offering them something in return.

A concentration of land could perhaps occur if the peasants who are not entirely without resources agreed to place a substantial portion of their surplus in co-operative enterprises, in exchange for which they would be able to take over the patches of land belonging to the very poor. The co-operative companies would produce tools and equipment for farming, buy fertilizers and sell the harvest, build houses, etc. The companies could be jointly owned by the newly-independent peasants and the old poor peasants who have relinquished their land. In the companies the poor peasants who have relinquished their land would be given secure jobs. And many of those who have been landless for a considerable period would be able to find employment in these enterprises.

This model is hardly more fanciful and unrealistic than the old one of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), that compensation to the lords for redistributed land could take the form of a division of shares in industry or the form of agricultural implements to enable industrial development to get under way parallel with a development of agriculture). In my model, however, the land is given to those small peasants who already own some, while it is the poverty-stricken who receive compensation, in the form of investment in local industry which creates jobs and promotes development.

The path of development which is in the interests of the lords is, on the other hand, based on the peasants having suffered defeat — for instance, because they tried to pursue an impossible classical bourgeois land reform — and have become virtually defenceless.

In this way, the patrons are given every opportunity of complementing their centralization of the surplus by concentrating land. They can, quite simply, get rid of a large number of poverty-stricken and defenceless peasants.

What remains, besides the lords, are those peasants who in the past already had enough land to retain their independence.

On the now relatively large farming units, cultivation is rationalized and in the best case production is also raised. An agrarian capitalism "from above" starts to develop, while more and more peasants become proletarianized and are forced out of the agricultural sector.

Since the land was not notably concentrated in the beginning, no revolutionary anti-feudal land reform is necessary in the interests of the peasants in order to promote capitalist development. It was not even possible to carry through such a reform. On the contrary, the land quite obviously needs to be concentrated, which demands that the majority of peasants will be brutally proletarianized and forced off the land.

### A Post-Colonial Agrarian Capitalism

This second path of development, which has been deduced from my analysis of the centralization of the surplus of production, is in close agreement with actual developments in Indonesia.

As early as February 1964, the specially-retained Ford Foundation expert, Wolf Ladejinsky, wrote in a letter to Minister of Agriculture Sadjarwo that what was primarily necessary for stimulating a (capitalist) agricultural development in Indonesia was *not* a redistribution of land from some parasitic feudal landlords to productive peasants. Land concentration was not a major problem. Above all, there was too little land for redistribution. What ought to receive priority were attempts to raise productivity.<sup>133</sup> What Ladejinsky was trying to sell was the "green revolution".

The PKI and the BTI, in particular, tried to block every attempt to ignore the problems of the poor and landless peasants in order to engage in raising production on the land of the wealthy.

The repressive tidal wave which broke in the latter part of 1965 tore down not only the PKI and the BTI, but also the land reform. Utrecht estimates that at least half the land which had been distributed was repossessed by the landlords, or was taken by new military overlords.<sup>134</sup>

Once the communists were crushed, the poor and landless were no longer able to defend themselves. At the same time the patrons were able, with the backing of the military, to acquire dictatorial powers which enabled them to be less dependent on the need to distribute patronage to as many clients as possible.

Thus it was suddenly possible for the rural lords to allow innumerable poor and landless peasants to survive as best they might, while the wealthy engaged in disposing of the surplus themselves, and perhaps also trying to increase it.

Hence the gates were opened to the green revolution, which was to raise production without giving any "surplus" land to the tillers: quite the reverse.<sup>135</sup>

What are, then, the general effects? A few years ago Ben White made a

## significant summary:

. . . unequal distribution of the direct and indirect benefits of new biological and chemical technologies in rice production; new technologies in cultivation, weeding, harvesting and processing which cuts costs for the larger farmer but reduces the employment and income opportunities of labourers; more frequent harvest failures resulting from the new varieties; vulnerability to drought, flood and particularly to pests, which have affected the income of small farmers more seriously than those of large farmers; declining real agricultural wages; unequal access to agricultural and other forms of subsidized government credit, while informal interest rates remain high for small farmers and the landless; unequal access to other government services; differential impact of inflation on large farmers compared to small farmers or labourers; shifts in the market system with larger traders taking over the role of small traders in the bulking process of rural produce; increasing landlessness and an acceleration in the purchase of agricultural land by wealthy villagers and the urban élites; decline of many traditional labour-intensive handicrafts and home industries in competition with more capital-intensive substitute products.<sup>136</sup>

What type of agricultural development is in question? Production per unit of area has increased and is greater than the growth of population. Perhaps that is not so strange when it comes to the input into types of rice, more fertilizer, better irrigation and so on, in the various parts of the green revolution. What is more remarkable is that there has not been a more significant increase.<sup>137</sup>

What is more interesting is that production per worker seems to have risen and that the landlords invest and accumulate capital: in other words, that some kind of capitalist development is under way.

It has not been possible to do any systematic research on the effects of the land reform since 1965.<sup>138</sup> One thing, however, is clear: the fact that the land reform was directed at private rather than communal or state-owned property ownership simplified things for the wealthy, who were more easily able to buy land, particularly after 1965.<sup>139</sup>

Many case studies indicate that more and more land is being bought or exchanged. But there is no one who knows exactly how much is involved. "If one turns to official figures, no land whatsoever is being sold or exchanged in this country," lamented Rudolf Sinaga, among others, at the Rural Dynamics Study in Bogor.<sup>140</sup> There is a certain hesitation about registering land transactions for fear of becoming a target for another land reform.

But in addition it does not always pay to buy expensive land. Often it is much cheaper to lend money to the increasingly poorer small farmers, and then to take good land in mortgage (*gadai*), or simply rent land (*sewa*) from those who are in desperate need of money. Sometimes the land of the very poor is even mortgaged to several different people, and if such land is bought, debts pile up.<sup>141</sup> *Gadai* and *sewa* have both risen markedly.<sup>142</sup>

The increase in the occurrence of *sewa* also depends on the fact that village headmen and other lords are now sufficiently powerful simply to rent out their land to those who pay most.<sup>143</sup> They no longer need the support of a flock of clients and do not need to retain share-croppers. Of course they can



also employ workers and they themselves can ensure that operations are more rationalized.

It can be disputed whether or not the number of share-croppers has fallen. The number of wage workers has, in any case, risen.<sup>144</sup> On the one hand, many share-croppers are being replaced by the leasing out of land and/or by agricultural workers, or simply because the family that owns the land manages to run it by itself with the help of a certain amount of rationalization.<sup>145</sup> On the other hand, there are now more who must mortgage or rent out their land and who become share-croppers on their own land, instead of remaining independent peasants.<sup>146</sup> And often, when the owner takes over the costs of seed, fertilizer, etc., the share-cropper is given so poor a contract that he may be cheaper than a wage labourer.<sup>147</sup>

To increase production per employee, the landowners have also tried to get rid of the thousands of volunteer harvesters, who have a traditional right to invade the fields and retain a certain proportion of what they harvest (*bawon*). Fewer workers with better tools, even if this means a sickle rather than the *ani-ani* (the harvesting knife), does, of course, allow the owner a higher yield.<sup>148</sup> Small peasant farmers may be able to manage the harvest themselves or with the help of their relatives.

In order to tackle the problem of the many harvesters, many large landowners started selling the standing crop to a *penebas*, whose workers swiftly and efficiently take care of the work of harvesting the crops, so that the farmer need not get rid of all the impoverished harvesters himself. This so-called *tebasan* contract is an old "feudal trick" which guarantees the landowner labour for the harvest, which now prepares the way for an agrarian capitalism by excluding all the workers who are not needed. When the masses of harvesters have resigned themselves, the farmers appear to be less interested in *tebasan*. The farmer himself can then ensure that the harvesting is done as effectively as possible.<sup>149</sup>

Another old "feudal trick" is sometimes called *kedokan*. The owner agrees with a worker that a certain amount of work will be done on the owners' land, in exchange for which the contract labourer — or shall we call him a completely dependent share-cropper? — receives a certain proportion of the harvest. Once again, the number of harvesters is reduced. *Kedokan* can also be used by a smaller number of landowners, sometimes as a simple exchange of labour.<sup>150</sup>

There are, indeed, a number of "feudal" methods which survive to regulate relations between owners and tillers, but they appear not to prevent, but rather to simplify, the process of proletarianization, the control of labour power and the raising of production. The crops put on the market are, in addition, larger. And it is not only rice which becomes a commodity, but land and labour power.

Hence, it appears to me obvious that we must build a theory not only of post-colonial capitalism and the state, as I emphasized in the previous chapter, but also of agriculture. An ideal type of capitalist agricultural development by the redistribution of relatively large feudal domains is not

only difficult but out of the question, if exploitation is primarily based on centralizing the surplus and not on a concentration of land.

Instead, with the growth of post-colonial capitalism, we find a capitalization of agriculture which happily combines with "feudal remnants". With the help of post-colonial capitalists in the state apparatus, the lords can crush the peasant movements, effectively subordinate the peasants, and combine centralization of the surplus with concentration of the land. In addition, the post-colonial capitalists contribute to an effective input of technology, credits and markets by, for example, the green revolution.

What then happens to the peasants, to the people? Even if an agrarian post-colonial capitalism is developing, it appears to be to the advantage of only a few of the old lords, who, like the Junkers in Germany, have adapted themselves to capitalism.

It is, indeed, true that millions of villagers are pushed out of agricultural production without getting jobs in industry. (This does not mean they can afford to be out of work. On the contrary, they work like animals to survive from their odd jobs on the margins of the production system, in petty trading, services, and soon.)<sup>151</sup> But at the same time, even the harshest critics admit that between 20 and 30 per cent of the peasants actually find the agrarian capitalist system useful.<sup>152</sup>

That 70-80 per cent find themselves in an unfavourable position is, of course, unacceptable. But, on the other hand, 20-30 percent is still far more than a handful of feudal lords, who can be isolated by 90 per cent of the villagers, as traditional communist theory and strategy counted on. The post-colonial capitalists have succeeded, where the national bourgeoisie failed, to initiate capitalist development in the rural areas, and thereby to solve the problems of so many dissatisfied peasants that a broad peasant coalition, which would be forced to support the communists' struggle for bourgeois reforms leading on to socialism, will be impossible.<sup>153</sup>

As Laclau pointed out, the Russian revolutionaries had issued a warning that if the Tsar's minister, Stolypin, succeeded in breaking down feudalism to such an extent that a strong class of capitalist farmers (or *kulaks*) was created, a possibility Lenin did not exclude. Stolypin would have removed the preconditions for massive peasant support for the revolutionaries, who wished to shoulder the traditional tasks of the bourgeoisie and then march towards socialism. In that case the communists should rather have to take up a direct struggle for communism, exclusively with the help of a small industrial and rural proletariat, which would delay the revolution for quite some time.<sup>154</sup>

That many peasants in Indonesia have been displaced does not mean that they have become a unified rural proletariat, still less that most have become agricultural or industrial workers. Neither post-colonial industrial capitalism nor emergent agrarian capitalism offers very many jobs. Even those who retain poorly paid agricultural jobs or work as share-croppers with wretched contracts are relatively privileged, at least compared to those who have been displaced from agricultural production and are completely

reliant on petty trading, handicrafts, services, etc. on the margins. Whole families have been forced into the towns and the slums. People try to remain in their villages as long as possible. It even happens that parents prefer to leave their children alone in the villages, with the older children looking after the younger ones, the household and so on. A living can be eked out in the towns as domestic workers, petty traders and so on. Working hours are unbelievably long. Naturally many are ill fed, including the children remaining in the villages to look after the household.

The outcast peasants become split. Those who can remain in the agricultural sector do not have any uniform conditions of employment and their small privileges are put at risk if they fight for their rights. Those who have been marginalized often do not even have a visible employer against whom to revolt. The peasants who are outcast are hardly likely to become the spark to ignite revolution.

## Notes

1. Concerning communist strategy in the rural areas before 1960-63, see Chapter 12 above.
2. Mortimer (1972) pp.20-24.
3. Ibid. p.26.
4. See PKI (1964) *inter alia* pp.22-27.
5. See Chapters 13 and 16 above.
6. See, e.g., PKI (1964) pp.84ff.
7. Ibid. pp.122-3.
8. Mortimer (1972) pp.22ff. Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp. 525ff. Sartono (1977b) pp.108. Cf. also Sartono (1977a) p.16 and his thesis that the PKI had bypassed and replaced village authorities.
9. See, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 7 (1960) pp.18ff., 8 (1960) p.7, and PKI (1961) pp.18ff. Interview No. 52 with former central leader in the PKI (Jakarta, 1980).
10. See, e.g., PKI (1964) pp.22-3 and *Review of Indonesia* 8 (1960) p.7. Cf. Mortimer (1972) pp.26-7.
11. Ibid. and the interview referred to in fn. 9 above.
12. PKI (1964), e.g., p.22. See also Mortimer (1972) pp.33-4, quotation from Bakri's speech at the same meeting of the central committee in December 1963.
13. Ibid. and *Review of Indonesia* 8-10 (1964) pp.8-14, esp. pp.8-9, a speech by Politburo member Lukman.
14. Ibid. and further information from the 1964 National Conference of the PKI. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) p.15 and the PKI (1964) pp.122-8.
15. See, e.g., Aidit (1962) in Aidit (1963) pp.471-2, PKI (1964) pp.29, 37-8.
16. See fn. 18 below.
17. See fn. 8 above.
18. See, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 8 (1960) p.35. Hindley (1964a) p. 177. Slamet (1968), interview with Sadjarwo (Jakarta, 26 November 1980); a good account of the figures can be found in Utrecht (1969) fn. 10 and 18 and in FAO (1966) pp.11-15. See also Lyon (1976) p.24.
19. See, e.g., Slamet (1968) pp.18ff.
20. Interview No. 24 with one of those in charge (Jakarta, 1980) Cf. Mortimer (1972) pp. 38-39.
21. Ibid. pp. 34-9. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) pp.27ff. and the interview referred to in fn. 20 above. (The PKI researchers never managed to complete the processing of the material. At least one copy was destroyed since several names were mentioned which might have betrayed members and sympathizers.)



22. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) pp.27ff.
23. See, e.g., PKI (1964) pp.134-5. This does not mean that the PKI's position had changed: cf. Aidit (1959) in Aidit (1963) p.31 f. On the other hand, and this was of some importance, the PKI seems to have, to some extent, abandoned its own distinction between landlords on the one hand and rich peasants on the other. See, e.g., Aidit (1957) in Aidit (1963) pp.50-6. Instead the simpler definition was adopted: those who have more land than the law allows are landlords: see, e.g., Huizer (1974) pp.127-8.
24. See, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) p.28; 8-10 (1964) p.23. Utrecht (1976b) pp. 270-1 even includes "rich peasants" amongst the "village devils", which is especially surprising since Aidit, whom Utrecht refers to, always laid strong emphasis on the importance of isolating the landlord elements. Sartono (1977a) p.20 fn. 31, nevertheless, using the same sources as Utrecht, possibly a few pages further on in the same Aidit text, does not include "rich peasants" amongst the seven village devils. (I have not been able to consult the Aidit text used by Utrecht.)
25. See, e.g., PKI (1964) pp.23ff. and 28. For the position adopted in 1960, see the excellent summary by Utrecht (1969) pp.1-2.
26. Utrecht *ibid.* Interview with Sadjarwo (Jakarta, 26 November 1980) and Iman Soetikinjo (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980).
27. Similar compilations can be found in *ibid.* Mortimer (1972) Lyon (1976) and FAO (1966); the text of the law can be found in English as a supplement to FAO (1966).
28. See, e.g., *Review of Indonesia* 8 (1960) p.7, and BTI Chairman Asmus' article, pp.31-2; 9-10 (1960) pp.20-1, as well as PKI (1964) pp.24-5. See also Mortimer (1972) pp.17-18.
29. See, e.g., Aidit's statement of 2 February 1964 in *Review of Indonesia* 3-4 (1964) p.2.
30. See, e.g., PKI (1964) pp.23ff. and 28.
31. As if it were not enough that Sukarno suddenly raised the question of land reforms, the PNI at first took a more radical position than the PKI by suggesting that land which had been mortgaged should also be regarded as "surplus land". Even old nationalists on the right, who actually wanted to implement an English-style "enclosure" reform, still enjoy relating how nearly they succeeded in drawing the sting of the communists by being more ready to take the initiative and be radical in 1960. Interview with the ex-Speaker in Parliament, Isaeni, formerly of the PNI (Jakarta, 21 October 1980).
32. Cf. fn. 30 above and pp.187-8 above.
33. Cf. Lyon (1976) pp.43-4 and Huizer (1974) p.93.
34. Sartono (1977a) pp.16ff.
35. See, e.g., Wertheim (1966).
36. Interviews Nos. 16, 24, 29, 52, 58, 62, and 67 with former centrally-placed and prominent members and those near them (Jakarta, 1980).
37. *Review of Indonesia* 7 (1960) pp.18ff. No. 8 (1960) p.7, and PKI (1961) pp.18-19.
38. See, e.g., Utrecht (1969) p.13.
39. FAO (1966) pp.9-10.
40. Utrecht (1969) p.13.
41. *Ibid.* p.11. Another complication was that the landowners in several districts, or *kabupatens*, were difficult to estimate since the most important land-reform committees were either at the same level or below that.
42. Conversation with Ben White Haag, 29 September 1980.
43. Cf. FAO (1966) p.33 and Lyon (1976) pp.43-4.
44. Utrecht (1969) pp.4-5.
45. See, e.g., Ladejinsky (1964a) pp.7, 15-16, 20; and Utrecht (1976b) pp.276-7.
46. FAO (1966) pp.17-18.
47. Lyon (1976) pp.43-4, Ladejinsky (1964a) pp.18ff., as well as interview with Iman Soetikinjo, who prepared the land reform by investigating the legal preconditions (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980).
48. Utrecht (1969) p.13, and Mortimer (1972) pp.50-1, who quotes Lance Castile's field data, among other things: an Islamic school in East Java had received 240 hectares in donations.
49. Wertheim (1966) p.123.

50. See, e.g., Utrecht (1969) p.5, Ladejinsky (1964a) pp.7 and 15, White and Wiradi (1979) p.41, Mortimer (1972) pp.18ff. In addition, I have made special use of Interview No. 67 with a former centrally-placed member of the peasant organization (Jakarta, 1980).
51. The same interview, as well as, e.g., Utrecht (1973h) p.154, (1976b) p.280 and Mortimer (1972) p.21.
52. FAO (1966) p.11. In footnotes 52-56 I have chosen only to refer to the data from the FAO. These figures have, however, as far as possible, been scrutinized with the help of Utrecht (1969). The FAO and others point out, of course, that the figures are very preliminary.
53. FAO (1966) pp.11-12 and 15.
54. Ibid. pp.11-12.
55. Ibid. pp.18-19. It can be added that while the official figures for the amount of surplus land redistributed in Java alone was about 36,000 hectares, the PKI's Ismail Bakri maintained at the same time that the true figure was only 19,000 hectares. Mortimer (1972) p.19.
56. Ladejinsky (1964a) p.5.
57. The figure of three million landless, and the size of the family, come from Utrecht (1969) fn. 18, and are based on data from the Minister of Agriculture, Sadjarwo.
58. Ibid. p.13.
59. Ibid. p.14.
60. Ibid.
61. Mortimer (1972) pp.19-20.
62. Huizer (1974) pp.127-8.
63. Interviews Nos. 52 and 67 with former central leaders of the PKI/BTI (Jakarta, 1980).
64. Ibid. See also pp.186-91, above.
65. The interview mentioned above, No 67. Cf. Utrecht (1976b) p.280, and *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) pp.29-30.
66. *Review of Indonesia* 3-4 (1964) pp. 2 and 5-6, both statements by Aidit.
67. Drastic occupations, and other events in which the peasants took the law into their own hands and finally went beyond the land reform laws, do not belong in this context. Usually it is claimed that the PKI and the BTI initiated such actions around (or soon after) the beginning of 1964. But, first, they began somewhat later, and, secondly, they were hardly consciously planned by the communists. Those who want to besmirch the name of the communists of course commonly date the actions as early as possible, as well as blaming both the PKI and the BTI. But even in work like Mortimer's (1972) it is quite unclear as to when the confrontations began. The term *aksi sepihak* has come to refer to both the quite innocent and the more violent activities. Mortimer pursued the thesis that the actions were initiated from the top, without distinguishing between restrained and unrestrained actions. See, e.g., pp.26-34. See also Lyon (1956) pp.52 and 56.
68. Mortimer (1972) p.40. (Sartono (1977a) p.20 mentions a conference at Klaten, a month earlier, at which similar appeals were made.) The appeals were even taken up at the centre, e.g. in connection with the 44th anniversary celebrations in May 1964. On that occasion Aidit even said that the slogan "land to those that till it" ought to be implemented as soon as possible. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) p.13.
69. *Review of Indonesia* 5-7 (1964) pp.27ff.
70. Ladejinsky (1964a) bears witness to the poor local knowledge and the difficulties in distributing information on the complicated laws, which led to considerable latitude in interpretation. Interviews with Soetikinjo (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980) and with the former leading communists within the peasant organization whom I have interviewed.
71. See, e.g., Mortimer (1972) p.19.
72. Ibid. p.31. see also *Review of Indonesia* 3-4 (1964), in which several articles are devoted to the food problem.
73. Interview No. 67 (Jakarta, 1980).
74. Lyon (1976) and especially Mortimer (1972) pp.40-44 and 48-53 provides a good overview. Walkin (1969) gives more detailed information on the question of East Java, even if the form is tendentious. Soegijanto Padmo has done a field study on the question of the Klaten area in Central Java. (Interview with Padmo, Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980.) In Utrecht (1969), (1974) and (1976b) there is also valuable information.

75. Mortimer (1972) pp.44ff.
76. Ibid.
77. Interview with Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980).
78. Mortimer (1972) pp.46-7.
79. The following analysis is so structured that I repeatedly use several sources or studies for each point in succession. Hence they are presented together: Huizer (1974) pp.124-34; Lyon (1976) esp. pp.53-9; Mortimer (1972) pp.40-4, 48-53; Utrecht (1969) pp.7-12, (1976b) pp.279ff. and (1979a); Walkin (1969); and Wertheim (1966) and (1969). In addition, Interviews Nos. 24 and 67 with centrally-placed leading communists (Jakarta, 1980) as well as with the following researchers: K.S. Astika (Denpasar 13 November 1980), Jang A. Mutialib (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), S. Padmo (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), Sartono (Yogyakarta, 16 November 1980), I. Soetikinjo (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), E. Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980), Sadjarwo (Jakarta, 26 November 1980) and field data in Collier (1980b).
80. See, first, Aitit's speech in the *Review of Indonesia* 8-10 (1964) pp.2ff. See also resolutions adopted. *ibid.* p.15.
81. Interview No. 52 (Jakarta, 1980). This was, however, a point of contradiction between the leaders, and not, as far as I can ascertain, a contradiction between the leaders and the peasant masses, which some other researchers, such as Wertheim (1966) and (1969), have suggested in order to explain why the unilateral actions started. Cf. also Mortimer (1972) pp.29-33, who gives an account and confutation of these arguments.
82. Interview No. 67 (Jakarta, 1980).
83. Mortimer (1972) p.46.
84. Ibid. p.54.
85. Ibid. pp.54-5.
86. Ibid. p.55.
87. The Declaration can be found in *Review of Indonesia* (1965) p.12.
88. Mortimer (1972) pp.56ff. (quotation from p.57). Lyon (1976) pp.63-67.
89. Mortimer (1972) p.64.
90. Ibid. pp.62 and 64 and Mortimer (1974a) p.376.
91. Mortimer (1972) pp.60-1.
92. Interviews with Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980). No.24 with a former prominent agricultural researcher for the BTT (Jakarta, 1980), and No.67 with a former leading and centrally-placed person in the peasant movement (Jakarta, 1980). Lack of land has been used (*inter alia*) by Pauker to explain why the peasant struggle failed. See Pauker (1968) and (1969).
93. See Chapter 6, above.
94. My interpretation is based, *inter alia*, on Aitit's analyses from 1953 (Chapter 6, above), comments on research results in 1964, (see fn. 22, above) Slamet (1968) and interview No.24 with one of those responsible for the preliminary investigations (Jakarta, 1980).
95. Bocke (1952).
96. Dam (1961).
97. See Chapter 12, above.
98. See, e.g., Mortimer (1963a), (1972), (1974a and b), McVey (1963) and (1969c) and Tichelman (1980).
99. See, e.g., Utrecht (1972), (1973a), (1974) and (1976b), as well as Wertheim (1966) and (1969).
100. Even researchers like Kroef emphasized this. See, e.g., Kroef (1960a), (1960b) and (1963). In addition, see Slamet (1968).
101. Interview No. 24 (Jakarta, 1980) with former leader among the PKJ's researchers.
102. This also applies. I would argue, to Scott's well-documented and very interesting empirical generalizations: Scott (1972).
103. Djuricldt and Lindberg (1975).
104. I am building, first, on Anderson (1972a), Geertz (1971), Gordon (1978) and (1979b), Knight (1980), Mulherin (1970-71), Sutherland (1973), (1974) and (1975). Discussions with Tommy Svensson in Gothenburg have also been very useful to me. See also Svensson's work referred to in the Bibliography.



105. On the question of colonial times: see *ibid.* and Breman (1980), Collier (1978d), (1980a), Elson (1978), Gordon (1979a), Kocntjaringrat (1967, a and b), Sarono (1972), Uirecht (1972) and (1974) as well as relevant analyses, with references in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 above.
106. Observe Knight (1980) in an interesting polemical exchange with Geertz. Knight maintains that there was a good deal of private initiative left to be found in parts of Java, especially on the western and central-northern coast, which was suffocated by the Dutch, who thus did not simply take over some kind of Asian communalism. See also Breman (1980).
107. Interview with Ben White (The Hague, 29 September 1980).
108. See the interesting work of Elson (1978), who shows that particular village leaders were able to do good business with the Dutch sugar industry, thereby gaining considerable control over the land. Geertz's "shared poverty" was conspicuous by its absence. (Elson studied an extensive area of East Java.)
109. For a contradictory opinion, see Smith (1974).
110. Tichelman (1980) esp. Chaps. 4 and 5.
111. *Ibid.* esp. pp. 75, 156 and 234.
112. For the 1940s, see relevant analyses with references in Chapters 5 and 6, above.
113. Interviews with Jan Pluvier (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980) and Wertheim (Wageningen, 3 October 1980).
114. Interview with Onghokham (Jakarta 18 October 1980).
115. Gordon (1979a).
116. *Ibid.*
117. See, e.g., the investigation referred to in Fessen (1966), Kroef (1960a and b), 1963, Pelzer (1967) and *inter alia* in Slamet (1968). Cf. also Taintor (1974).
118. Cf. Mortimer's criticism of Lyon (1976) in Mortimer (1970-1). Lyon (1976) was first published in December 1970.
119. Java's population has increased from an official 4.5 million in 1815 — or, at most, three times that amount, about 13 million; see Svensson (1982) pp. 63-67 — to today's figure of about 90 million. The island is about one-third the size of Sweden and has no significant possibilities for new agricultural development, as well as having rural areas reckoned to be among the most densely populated in the world.
120. Interviews with Ben White (The Hague, 30 September 1980), Jang Aisya M. (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), Lochoer W.A. (Saltiga, 7 November 1980), John Ihalaauw and Nico Kanan (Saltiga, 8 November 1980), Sartono (Yogyakarta, 16 November 1980), Will Collier and R. Sinaga (Bogor, 25 November 1980).
121. See Booth and Sundrum (1976) and Booth (1976). (The latter provides a scathing review of Keith Griffin's "The political economy of agrarian change", Harvard, 1974.)
122. Booth and Sundrum (1976) pp. 94-5.
123. Booth (1976) pp. 130-31.
124. See fn. 120 and the works of those interviewed there, as well as Hickson (1975).
125. See fn. 120, as well as interview with Hotman Siahaan (Surabaya, 15 November 1980). According to Jang Aisya and others, there is no research focusing directly on the village headmen and their methods of enriching themselves. It is, however, confirmed that they are wealthy. The figures from Klaten are taken from Booth (1974) pp. 135-6, a follow-up study to that of Utami and Ihalaauw (1973).
126. This concerns Klaten; see, for instance, interview with Jang Aisya (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980).
127. Booth and Sundrum (1976) p. 94.
128. Booth (1976) p. 131.
129. *Inter alia*, John Ihalaauw (Saltiga, 8 November 1980) points out that not even the peasants who cultivate rice paddies of little more than a hectare can survive without loans for a number of simple inputs.
130. See fn. 124, Sturgess and Wijaya (1979) as well as interview with Mochyato (Yogyakarta, 5 November 1980).
131. Cf. the PKI's analysis: see pp. 201-2, above.
132. See p. 201, above, and fn. 92 above, and cf., e.g., Ladejinsky (1964a) p. 23.
133. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-32. Cf. also *ibid.* (1964b).

134. Utrecht (1979a) p.179. see also *ibid.* (1973b).
135. For a good overview, see Martin-Schiller (1980).
136. White (1978) p.8.
137. See, e.g., Collier (1978c). According to the Asian Agricultural Survey, the production index of Indonesian food production per capita rose from 95 in 1963-67 to 102 in 1970-74 (1952-56 = 100), and production numbers were 122 and 159 respectively: ADB (1977) p.39. According to World Bank figures, the increase in agricultural produce was 2.7 percent for the period 1960-70 and 3.6 per cent for 1970-79: World Bank (1981) p. 136. During the same periods the rate of population growth was 2.0 and 2.3 per cent respectively (*ibid.* p.166). According to the Asiatic Development Bank's more detailed 1978 report, the increase in production was nevertheless somewhat less than expected, particularly after 1974.
138. White and Wiradi (1979) p.40.
139. See, e.g., *ibid.* p.21 and Collier (1978b). Even the interview with Collier (Bogor, 25 November 1980).
140. Interview with Sinaga (Bogor, 25 November 1980).
141. Interview with Nico Kanan (Saltiga, 8 November 1980) and R. Sinaga (Bogor, 25 November 1980).
142. One of the most common results of the research of recent years: see the collected references in Appendix II. For one of several interesting examples, see Siahaan (1979).
143. Another common result from research. See, e.g., Collier (1978b) pp.3ff., (1978d), and Utami and Ihalaauw (1973). Interviews with Collier, (Bogor 25 November 1980) and Lechoer Widjajanto Adhinegara (Saltiga, 7 November 1980).
144. Interviews with Ben White (The Hague, 29 and 30 September 1980). See, e.g., White and Wiradi (1969) pp.32-3.
145. White (1978) p.19.
146. Conclusions drawn from (*inter alia*) interviews with Lechoer and Kanan (Saltiga, 7 and 8 November 1980).
147. Common result of research. See references in Appendix II. A good analysis can be found in Collier (1980b) and Frans Hüsken (1979).
148. Yet another common result of research. Collier, Utami and Ihalaauw and others in Bogor and Saltiga are among the pioneers. See references in Appendix II. See also Hayami and Hafid's (1979) attempt empirically to check the paradigm of Collier *et al.* Also notes Aass' (1977) study from the same area that Geertz (*et al.*) investigated in the 1950s.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *Ibid.* esp. Collier (1978b) pp.17ff. and (1980b) pp.49 and 58.
151. White (1976) is excellent.
152. Interviews with White (The Hague, 29 and 30 September 1980), Ihalaauw (Saltiga, 8 November 1980), Sinaga and Collier (Bogor, 25 November 1980). See also, e.g., Collier (1978c).
153. Cf. PKI's analysis is Chapter 17, p.3. above, in this manuscript and the communist tradition in Chapter 3. above.
154. Laclau (1971) pp.28-9.

# 18. Mass Struggle Bypassed: Elite Conflicts and Massacre

Led by the chief of Sukarno's bodyguards, Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, a group of junior officers, known as the 30 September Movement, tried to arrest seven of Indonesia's leading generals, among them Defence Minister Nasution and the Army Chief of Staff, General Yani, on the night of 30 September to 1 October 1965.<sup>1</sup>

The movement believed it had proof that the seven generals were building a council which, with the support of the CIA, was planning a coup d'état on 5 October, Army Day. The movement wanted to forestall the coup and defend Sukarno by arresting the generals, moving them to the Halim airforce base, just outside Jakarta, interrogate them and then hand them over to the president. The movement was planning to build a national revolutionary council which would organize general elections, which in turn would lead to a government in which all political trends were represented, including the PKI.

One of the seven generals, Defence Minister Nasution, managed, however, to escape from the soldiers who were sent to arrest him. Three of the others were killed when they resisted arrest. The other three were soon executed at the Halim base. At the base there were, among others, Airforce Commander Dhani (who came out in support of the 30 September Movement) and probably also Aidit of the PKI. Sukarno found the central buildings in Jakarta occupied by the 30 September Movement and arrived at the airforce base in the morning to seek security. It is not clear whether he became fully informed of the killing of the generals or not,<sup>2</sup> but he was aware that blood had been split.

The president had to appoint a successor to General Yani. He refused to appoint his deputy, General Suharto, Commander of the Strategic Reserves, who was not one of the seven generals who were assumed to be planning a coup, and had therefore not been arrested. Instead, Sukarno appointed Pranoto, a general of lower rank, as acting commander of the army.

After some hesitation, Suharto launched a counter-offensive in Jakarta, cheered on by Nasution. Suharto refused to allow Pranoto to join "the enemy" at the Halim base, and instead Suharto occupied the base that evening. Sukarno moved to his summer palace in Bogor. Aidit fled by plane



to Yogyakarta.

During the following days, Sukarno had to admit that Suharto had taken control over the army, and had to give him the powers to restore law and order.

Suharto executed these orders with adroit efficiency. While putting down revolts by officers in Semarang, Yogyakarta and Solo in Central Java, among other places, Suharto broadcast on the radio that the bodies of the dead generals had been found in a well at the Halim base. He said that the airforce must have been involved. But he added that members of the PKI's youth and women's organizations had also received training in arms and ammunition at the Halim base. The bodies were exposed in the press and on television.

Soon, however, the PKI was made solely responsible for the actions of the 30 September Movement. Rumours were spread that the communist women and youth had committed sexual, ritual murders of the generals. The press in the West faithfully reported this. After the funeral on 7 October of the young daughter of Nasution, who had been killed during the attempted arrest of the general, Muslim extremists were incited and paid to attack the headquarters of the PKI and also Aidit's home. In addition, on 17 October Colonel Sarwo Edhie moved his commando soldiers into Central Java to "clean up". This move legitimized not only protests against the PKI, but also the murder of communists. The massacres were most macabre in Central and East Java as well as in Bali. During this period, on 22 November, Aidit was arrested and executed.<sup>3</sup>

Neither in the towns nor in the rural areas did the communists offer any substantial resistance. Sukarno did his best to halt the reaction and restrict the excesses, yet in March 1966 Suharto was able to demand more personal power and the formal banning of the PKI.<sup>4</sup> The number of corpses continued to increase, the prisons were overflowing and throughout the country prison camps mushroomed.

What the PKI's analyses and strategies were vis-à-vis the coup and the massacre is still not clear. Did the PKI really support the 30 September Movement? Was it purely an internal army affair, in which some communists simply found themselves in the vicinity? Why was Suharto not arrested? Was he informed of what was going to happen? Was it all a conspiracy against the PKI? What part was played by Sukarno? To what extent was the CIA involved?

There are still no definite answers to questions like these, despite intensive research and a good deal of speculation.<sup>5</sup> In this book I shall not make another in-depth study of the historical material. My investigation is not a historical one which has as its primary objective to find new sources, nor yet to reconstruct what happened in September-October 1965. What I wish to do instead is to use my earlier analyses of the party's strategic problems to reconstruct the probable long-term deliberations which preceded and characterized the actions of the PKI during the latter half of 1965. Did the strategic problems pave the way for the coup? Did the leaders

of the PKI have any reason to join in a conspiracy? Is it correct as has been maintained by several researchers, that the peaceful strategy of the PKI had been so successful that there was no reason for the leaders to reject the mass struggle and engage purely in struggles among the élite?<sup>6</sup> By doing this, I may also be able to contribute fruitful hypotheses for the continued work of historical detectives.

The same is true of the massacre, which has become something of a mystery. The most important thing in my study is not to try to clarify how many hundred thousand people were murdered, nor exactly what happened, but, through an investigation of the strategic problems, to make fresh suggestions as to how such a large and strong communist party could collapse within just a few months. Was the PKI's strength a bluff, as many researchers on both the right and the left have hinted?<sup>7</sup>

### Mass Struggle Bypassed

As I have shown in Chapter 17, the communists were forced to give up the peasant struggle towards the end of 1964 and in early 1965. Besides certain mistakes made by a number of lower cadres, Aidit was unable to detect any faults in the party's analyses and strategy.<sup>8</sup> Instead, in his 1965 New Year Message, for instance, he maintained that setbacks were due to the "bureaucratic capitalists" who were strong enough to split the peasants and sabotage the land reform.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently the tough peasant struggle was shelved. The PKI ought instead to return primarily to combating the "bureaucratic capitalists". An offensive directed at them was, according to Aidit, the primary task for 1965.<sup>10</sup>

But, as I have shown in Chapter 13, the PKI had also postponed the workers' struggle against the capitalists. Now Aidit said, in a commentary on the counter-revolution in Brazil in 1964, for instance, that it was important for the Indonesian communists to back Sukarno. He recommended a return to the broad front,<sup>11</sup> which ought to be directed first at accentuating the anti-imperialism of Sukarno, and then at exposing and attempting to purge those who broke with his guidelines.

In Chapter 16, however, I showed how the work of the broad front equally did not lead to any significant results. The "bureaucratic capitalists" were, indeed, forced to retreat ideologically, but they were able to retain their positions of power.

When the communists continued to employ this strategy, with all the problems it entailed, they encountered new difficulties in 1965, which soon led to a risky direct confrontation between the PKI and the army.

I have dealt with the background to this unfortunate conflict between the PKI and the army in Chapter 16. In December 1964 Sukarno banned the BPS, the Body for the Promotion of Sukarnoism, which had gathered a considerable part of the anti-communist nationalists. In January 1965 the

*Murba* Party was also banned. Consequently a number of influential anti-communists in the government and the army, with contacts in the West and in the East, lost their ability to demonstrate their opposition in more or less democratic forms. In addition, up to the middle of the year, the right wing within the PNI, which had its strongest support on Central Java, was forced to leave the leadership of the party. Amongst them was the former deputy prime minister, Hardi, who tried to collaborate with Nasution.<sup>12</sup>

Since the Socialist Party and Masjumi, among other parties, had been banned in an earlier phase, all secularized and legal political opposition was now formally eliminated. The communists' commitment to political democracy was, as I have shown in Chapter II, remarkably tenuous. But this was the last time they applauded restrictions of democratic rights.

### **Democracy: With Limitations**

The result of the bannings was that the opposition was forced to abandon a relatively democratic public arena, where they had been forced to follow at least certain rules of the game and where the PKI and others could keep a watchful eye on them. Instead the opposition was now forced to collaborate with extremist Muslim groups whose existence was still tolerated, and, what was worse, they were driven right into the arms of the army. There the communists were least likely to be able to get at their opponents. The political opposition may have been isolated, but it was, in truth, not disarmed.

Consequently nothing remained for the PKI but to engage in direct conflict with the army, which had become the largest "opposition party".

The PKI tried to disarm the military, following the same principles they had used in the general struggle against the "bureaucratic capitalists". The PKI had partial success in interesting Sukarno in a people's militia, a fifth armed force besides the army, air force, navy and police, justifying this through the need to intensify the struggle against imperialism in general and Malaysia in particular. The PKI also had some success in arguing that it was necessary to "Nasakomize" the armed forces, i.e. that representatives of the nationalists, Muslims and communists should be placed as political officers at different levels in the military.<sup>13</sup>

A people's militia would not pose a real military threat to the other branches of the armed forces, but they would find a fledgling cuckoo in their nest. Together with the political officers, this "fifth force" would be able to open locked doors and break down much of the camaraderie and unity.<sup>14</sup>

First, the PKI mobilized broad mass opinion behind these demands, to help Sukarno to pursue these questions by reference to the popular opinion. Then they had to force the military to choose sides, for or against Sukarno, and to "retool" the disloyal among their ranks.



The result was half-hearted. In June, Sukarno encouraged the military to seriously consider his proposal of a "fifth force". (Now, it should be noted, Sukarno presented the proposal as his own, and not as that of the PKI.)

The Commander of the Airforce, General Dhani, agreed immediately, and added that he had nothing against Nasakomization. In July the airforce began training volunteers from the *Nasakom* movements, including the PKI.

Like the airforce, the navy was particularly dependent on support from Sukarno to get a small part of state funds in competition with the gigantic army, which, in addition, had treasure troves among the state-owned companies. So the navy dutifully agreed to a fifth force.

Even if Army Chief of Staff General Yani was reluctant to go against the wishes of Sukarno, he clearly showed his displeasure by maintaining that it was up to the president to make his own decisions.

On 17 August, Independence Day, Sukarno seems to have made up his mind about creating a fifth force. On 27 September, Yani was forced to confirm that the army was definitely against the idea.

Doubtless the communists had succeeded in splitting the military and had forced the army command to oppose Sukarno. But even if their opponents were in a tight corner, they were still very strong. The communists had not succeeded in getting any of the key figures weeded out, but had managed to provoke several generals. Rumours of imminent coups d'état became frequent. But not only were there rumours of coup attempts against Sukarno and the PKI, but also of growing discontent among junior and younger officers.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, at the beginning of August, Sukarno fell ill, and Jakarta immediately began humming with speculation about which politicians and generals were jockeying for the best positions in preparation for the day when the tightrope walker with such incontestable authority and unrivalled charisma would disappear.<sup>16</sup>

The economic crisis at the same time deepened. The price of rice, for instance, quadrupled in Jakarta during July, August and September.<sup>17</sup> And, as has been mentioned previously, Sukarno told the US to "go to hell" and proposed an axis between Peking, Pyongyang, Hanoi, Phnom-Penh and Jakarta.

In the same way as the army infiltrated the PKI, Aidit had some years before secretly allowed a former socialist trade union leader called Sjam, to whom he probably owed a favour, to organize what its opponents called a special bureau, *Biro Khusus*. Its tasks were to gather information and make contacts in the armed forces.<sup>18</sup> Aidit had not asked his central committee for their approval of his little information bureau.<sup>19</sup> It would presumably have been devastating if the army could have proven that the PKI was trying to infiltrate the army in exactly the same way as the army was trying to infiltrate the PKI. And there were risks of leaks from the central committee. In addition, there were major flaws in the internal democratic processes within the PKI. Aidit governed with an iron and sovereign hand.<sup>20</sup>

Aidit and presumably also some other members of the Politburo thus had the possibility of informing themselves both of the threats, true or false, of a coup against Sukarno and of the counteraction planned by the officers in the opposition.

The position in which the PKI leaders found themselves was very awkward. It was unthinkable to meet the threat from the military with a renewed and tough mobilization of the peasantry, as the peasants' struggle was blocked. The same had long been true of the workers' struggle. And a broad mobilization of the masses behind Sukarno was troublesome for the generals, but did not affect their basic positions of power. If the leaders of the PKI chose to beat the drums of propaganda and with the help of the party and the mass organizations publicize revelations of the likelihood of the generals planning a coup d'état, the threat would, of course, be instantly removed. But there would have to be indisputable proof if the coup-makers were not to retain their positions and make new plans.

What my earlier analyses indicate, and from what I have learned from former leading communists, it appears that Aidit instead abandoned the mass struggle in favour of élite conflicts. Presumably he judged that the advantages outweighed the risks when he decided not to stop, but on the contrary to more or less foment the 30 September Movement. This might partly make possible what Castro had achieved so successfully, i.e. to take up the cudgels for communism without having the hammer and sickle stamped on their foreheads.<sup>21</sup> In the best case it would disarm the most prominent and most powerful anti-communists in the country, and in the worst case, if it failed, it would still cause considerable damage and lead to splits within the army. If only Aidit could keep the PKI as an organization outside it all, then the risks should be minimal.

In other words, mass struggle was the first to be abandoned, and then also cadres as high up as members of the central committee, presumably also some members of the Politburo. In the end, only Aidit and some of his trusted aides remained.

Understandably, there is considerable bitterness directed towards Aidit. "He betrayed us" is one of the most common conclusions. But the tangible peasant and worker struggles were in fact blocked, as long as there were no changes in the analyses and strategies, which could not be done with a wave of the hand. And any attempt to expose a number of plans for coups d'état might have lifted the struggle for the day, but would hardly have prevented the generals from retaining their positions nor from trying to find new ways of getting at the PKI. In that situation, when the army was on the offensive, Aidit would surely have been criticized for not having displayed sufficient interest in the contradictions within the armed forces and for having lost the chance of allowing an officers' movement to disarm the generals. This might have given the PKI room to breathe and new opportunities.

## Elite Conflicts

The unsolved strategic problems I have analysed in previous chapters would thus indicate that it ought to have been natural for Aidit to abandon the mass struggle and instead bank on the possibility that the officers' movement that had emerged could stem the military threat primarily against the communists.

The actions of the 30 September Movement were, however, such a resounding failure that the new command of the army was able to maintain that the PKI was the spider in the web and in that way unite the divided armed forces against the communists, and not attempt the impossible by trying to turn them against Sukarno.

The first thing that happened was that the arrested generals were murdered instead of being detained, interrogated and turned over to Sukarno, according to the orders of Lt.-Col. Untung.

Second, Defence Minister Nasution managed to escape and to make demands in Jakarta for rapid action against the 30 September Movement.

Third, General Suharto did not remain neutral, which the 30 September Movement had obviously believed he would. In the end it was he who hit the movement hardest.

These are the main circumstances which led to significant historical research which indicates that the 30 September Movement was infiltrated and perhaps should even be regarded as a group plotting against the PKI.<sup>22</sup> How was it possible, otherwise, for an officers' movement to make such a grave mistake?

But provocation and infiltration are one thing, conspiracy is quite another. What we know at present indicates that the 30 September Movement grew up quite independently, and that some of the top communist leaders knew what was in the offing. Consequently I stick to my thesis that the strategic problems forced Aidit to abandon the mass struggle and instead in some way to foment the officers' movement which had already grown up.

I do not deny that many provocations were directed at the PKI during the latter part of 1965. It would be surprising if there had not been. The military, many political groups which had been driven out into the cold, and others — including the CIA — had similar vital interests in "exposing" the PKI for offences against the state and against Sukarno, as the PKI had in exposing the generals. It has, for instance, never been conclusively proven that there was a real council of generals which was planning a coup against Sukarno. It might have been just a rumour in order to provoke compromising counteractions from the PKI.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the new regime has of course done all it could to hide possible traces of evidence that the murdered generals really were involved in planning a coup d'état.

But the generals themselves could hardly have conspired against the PKI, since they were the ones to be killed.

If others, such as members of *Murba*, the army's secret service, or American or British under-cover agencies, arranged the murder of the



generals in order to discredit the PKI, why did they not see to it that *all* the generals were killed at the Halim airforce base, for there were one or two communists there to take the blame? And why did they not gather more communists at Halim? It has been difficult for the regime to prove that the communists were responsible.<sup>24</sup>

The killing of the first three generals may, as Crouch maintains, have been a mistake due to ambiguous orders. And maybe the three remaining generals were simply shot in panic, to silence witnesses, etc.<sup>25</sup> It appeared that Sukarno was prepared to smooth this over, saying, "That sort of thing will happen in a revolution."<sup>26</sup> And in Jakarta everything depended on what steps Nasution and Suharto, the latter believed to be neutral, would take.

It was Suharto who gained most from the actions of the officers. Can he have engineered a conspiracy against the PKI?<sup>27</sup>

Suharto was certainly aware of the plans of the 30 September Movement. But this was not because he himself was behind them, but because one of the real leaders, Colonel Latief, informed him that a coup was being planned by other senior officers, and that preventive action was being planned by an officers' movement. Latief was convinced that his old friend and colleague Suharto would not turn against the 30 September Movement.<sup>28</sup>

Suharto was in the good books of neither Nasution nor Yani. But that he would attempt to have them murdered is unlikely.<sup>29</sup>

Above all, he did not need to. It is plausible that when Suharto learned of the plans of the 30 September Movement, he refrained from informing Nasution and Yani, in order to await events. Since Suharto was ordinarily Yani's deputy, he would consequently replace him, or at least get considerably more power even if Yani were not murdered but only arrested for planning a coup, particularly if Nasution were also neutralized. Nasution had been trying to pin corruption charges on Suharto.<sup>30</sup> And if the officers' movement were to fail, Suharto would always be able to bend with the wind and hit the rebels hard, thereby "saving the nation".

Consequently Suharto at first hesitated. But Nasution had got away. Thus Suharto was not able completely to ignore his orders to launch direct action to destroy the 30 September Movement.<sup>31</sup> Only when Suharto found out that Sukarno had not appointed him as Yani's successor, but had appointed Pranoto, a lower-ranking general who was much more friendly towards Sukarno, and who had tried to get Suharto charged with corruption, did Suharto take up the big stick and allow Colonel Sarwo Edhie to occupy the Halim base.<sup>32</sup> And another few days passed before Suharto became obsessed with accusing the communists of the actions of the 30 September Movement. At first the culprit was held to be the airforce.<sup>33</sup> It is hardly likely that Suharto can be held solely responsible for planning such a gigantic conspiracy against the PKI.

Only too soon, however, the army took advantage of the situation to deal a death blow to the communists at the same time as the divided military thereby acquired a common enemy, reunited, and mobilized support from

fanatic Muslims, Christians, right-wing nationalists, former leading socialists, the West, etc.

## Massacre

With the exception of a very few leaders and activists the entire apparatus of the Communist Party and the mass organizations were caught napping by the unsuccessful actions of the 30 September Movement and the accusations levelled against the PKI. Indeed several of the members of the Politburo were away at the turn of the month.<sup>34</sup>

On 5 October a declaration was issued by those members of the Politburo who were able to meet. They made it clear that the 30 September Movement was an internal affair of the armed forces, in which the PKI had not interfered and would not interfere. They warned that there might be provocations and encouraged their members to join ranks behind Sukarno, relying on him to solve the conflicts. On 6 October Lukman and Njoto participated in a meeting of the government.<sup>35</sup>

But Aidit had fled, or perhaps had been tricked into fleeing, to Yogyakarta, which was unprepared to receive him. He was forced to creep stealthily round in the PKI heartland round Solo, without achieving anything more than helping the cadres to avoid being provoked too far. Finally he was betrayed, arrested and, on the general orders of Suharto, executed, without standing trial, on 22 November.<sup>36</sup> Not long afterwards, the rest of the prominent leaders were divided among themselves and were also on the run like Aidit. By December 1966, all the members of the Politburo were either dead or in detention, with the exception of Jusuf Adjitorop, who was in China at the time of the events.<sup>37</sup>

Not even the radical opposition to Aidit within the leadership of the party was able to offer an alternative leadership. After the meeting in Jakarta in October, divisions arose on questions such as whether all collaboration with Sukarno was unacceptable and whether a new central committee could be proclaimed or not.<sup>38</sup>

And Sukarno was unable, despite his single-minded attempts, to stop the anti-communist crusade which was now being organized.<sup>39</sup>

All that remained was a total catastrophe.

First the world's third largest communist party, with probably tens of millions of sympathizers, had been put aside because the mass struggle had been blocked by insoluble strategic problems. Then a few individual centrally-placed leaders had taken over the so-called Leninist mass party and staked everything on elite conflicts in general and particularly on a rebel officers' movement, while the membership, doubtless "for the sake of the party", was kept in blissful ignorance.

Thus it was of course impossible for the innocent masses to organize themselves to meet the repression, let alone initiate a strong workers' and peasants' struggle, since this avenue was blocked. But they were not even

prepared to launch a broad defensive movement. Their leaders did not succeed even in meeting, let alone in uniting and leading "their" huge mass party with a firm hand. Consequently, the entire party was left in the dark, and the strongly-centralized movement left without a hope of defending itself, despite Sukarno's support. Had things been otherwise, it might have been possible to mobilize everyone for fundamental democratic principles, or at least for the human right to live without the threat of terror and murder.

It was primarily because of this sabotage of the necessary preconditions for the functioning of a mass party that the army could freely arrest and murder whoever it wished. There was no genuine party democracy, nor informed members and sympathizers. It was not because the PKI may have been a bluff, nor yet because it was a broad mass party with many poorly-schooled members and sympathizers which came nowhere near the Leninist standards of an élite party, as some researchers and political critics have argued.<sup>40</sup>

And without broad popular protests against the attacks, the army's rampage suddenly opened the way for those forces which had been muzzled during the struggle for a land reform: religious, political and economic contradictions could come to the forefront.<sup>41</sup> The PKI's opponents were able to take the law into their own hands, particularly in East Java and Bali, and with no restrictions, meeting no opposition to speak of,<sup>42</sup> nor even any authoritative admonitions to exercise some self-control, they were able to destroy, plunder, burn, murder, expel . . .<sup>43</sup>

In the same way, racism against the Indonesian Chinese was unleashed again, once the only consistently anti-racist party had been destroyed.

In West Java, where the PKI was not as strong as further east, and where there was little division in the armed forces, it appears that communists and communist sympathizers were for the most part arrested, despite several murders and general terrorism.<sup>44</sup>

The picture in Central Java was more complex. First showing itself capable of extreme terror and murder, the army was later able to work quite "legally" in some cases. It could use lists of registered communists, or get help from certain villagers in identifying people and complementing their information, and those identified would then be arrested. In other cases, the army and young right-wing terrorists helped each other to hunt down and execute people with left-wing sympathies.<sup>45</sup>

The most widespread massacres occurred in those places where the army did not manage the situation alone, or where it did not need to do so, but was helped by anti-communists leagues. This was the predominant pattern in East Java and Bali.

In East Java fanatical Muslim youth organizations were the first to go out in a "holy war" against the communists. Afterwards it was possible to see that the population density fell in areas where the PKI had had the most votes in previous elections.<sup>46</sup> And in the Kediri area it was necessary to prevent the bodies in the rivers from floating into the irrigation canals



leading to the rice paddies. When the bodies in Surabaya were stranded on the banks at low water, they became a health hazard.<sup>47</sup> Many communists were teachers. When the schools in East Java opened in early 1966, more than a third of the teachers were missing.<sup>48</sup>

In Bali it was not Muslim fanatics but primarily young right-wing nationalists who managed to create such a bloodbath that the entire social structure was threatened, and the military had to be called in to check the excesses.<sup>49</sup>

It was in Java and Bali, where the PKI had been strongest, that there were the most murders and arrests. But there were also reports of massacres in other areas. In North Sulawesi Christian groups were behind the mass murders. And in Sumatra General Kemal Idris is said to have murdered about 20 per cent of the plantation workers, on the orders of Suharto.<sup>50</sup>

It is impossible to say how many people were murdered in the whole country. The figures vary between 100,000 and a million. Probably many more were arrested, even if the majority of detainees were released after a few months. But up to a few years ago about 100,000 people still remained in prison and internment camps.

At first it was possible for some communist leaders to live underground and try to reorganize. But the most prominent leaders were arrested one by one. People came under increasing pressure and grew frightened. The Secretary-General of the PKI, Sudisman, who led the Politburo after the death of Aidit, and who delivered a Maoist-coloured self-criticism,<sup>51</sup> was arrested in December 1966. After that, the leaders, with Central Committee member Hutapea in the vanguard, seem to have found it necessary to create liberated areas from which Maoist-style guerrilla struggle could be launched.<sup>52</sup> In 1968 the army succeeded in crushing most of the guerrillas.<sup>53</sup>

Today not only the communists, but the left as a whole, are trying once more to develop analyses and lines of action which do not simply copy famous foreign models. As far as I know, they are trying to build a broad, informal front, sufficiently vague so as not to become a living target, but strong enough to undermine the regime and force through the protection of democratic rights.

## Notes

1. The following brief account of events is primarily based on Crouch (1973), Holzapfel (1979), May (1978) Chap. 3, McVey (1969b) pp.378-88, Mortimer (1974a) Appendix A and B, Rey (1966), Utrecht (1979b) pp.141-52, Wertheim (1970) and (1979) and Budiardjo (1982).
2. See esp. Holzapfel (1979) p.233.
3. In fn. 36 below I return to this point.
4. See, e.g., Utrecht (1979b) pp.152-64 and May (1978) Chap. 4.

5. See literature in fn. 1 and other references in those works. For the version of the regime and those close to it see, e.g., accounts in Mortimer (1974a) pp.418ff., Brackman (1969), Kroef (1966) and Pauker (1969). For a macabre thesis on the possibility of Sukarno being involved see Dake (1973) and cf. Utrecht's (1975b) review.
6. See, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) pp.392ff., and Wertheim (1979) pp.202-3.
7. See, e.g., Brackman (1969) Chap. II. Cf. Griswold (1979) and note a typical answer in interviews: "At most 5 per cent of the 3.5 million members were real communists." Interview No. 22 with former PKI activist (Jakarta, 1980).
8. Mortimer (1972) pp.60-1.
9. Ibid. and *Review of Indonesia* 1 (1965) pp.1-6 and 8-11.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. and *Review of Indonesia* Nos. 5-6 (1974) p.19.
12. Rocamora (1974) pp.531-9. Interview with Hardi (Jakarta, 25 October 1980).
13. For the suggestion of the PKI and the development of events, which is retold below, see, e.g., Mortimer (1974a) pp.381-5.
14. Ibid. p.383, which cites personal communication with McVey.
15. See references in fn. 1 above. Utrecht says, e.g., that Njoto of the Politburo told him as early as April 1965 that dissatisfied officers were planning an action against the generals in Jakarta. Utrecht (1979b) p.141. See also Holzappel (1979) p.221.
16. See, e.g., Brackman (1969) p.51 amongst the references in fn. 1 and 5.
17. Mortimer (1974a) p.386.
18. In addition to the general references in fn. 1, I here base my writings on interviews with former leading members of the party who had central positions as well as a former relatively close associate of the *Biro Khusus* and a reliable activist; some of them have had the opportunity of questioning, *inter alia*, Sjam and Njono. Sudisman and Njoto of the Politburo. For the debt of thanks to Sjam see also p.63, above.
19. Interviews No. 29, 52 and 58 with former members of the central committee (Jakarta, 1980).
20. Ibid. and fn. 18.
21. In addition to the parallels with Castro, whose successes and methods were discussed in leading party circles, former activists have pointed out in interviews how Aidit analysed the fall of Ben Bella in Algeria. A former close associate of the party mentions that Aidit had privately explained that a coup or revolution like that in Algeria did not affect the balance of forces between the classes to any significant extent, but that it could be used as an excuse to mobilize the people. "Aidit encouraged an Algerian activist to use Boumedienne's need of popular support to mobilize the people behind more radical demands and to involve them in more far-going actions. Maybe he had similar ideas about the 30 September Movement." Interview Nos. 16 and 24 (Jakarta, 1980). To what extent the fact that Aidit — according to a reliable source quoting Aidit's wife — had learned that he was seriously ill (which he had kept as a top secret) affected his decisions is more dubious.
22. See, e.g., Wertheim (1970) and (1979). Holzappel (1979) and Budiardjo (1982).
23. Wertheim (1979) pp.211ff. (Sjam's role as leader for the *Biro Khusus* has also been debated: was he a double-agent? Sjam is the strongest source of evidence enabling the regime to prove that it was the PKI which was the spider in the web. Doubtless Sjam had a grip of some kind over Aidit, because of the debt of gratitude owed to Sjam. See p.63, above, and fn. 18).
24. Although Holzappel (1979) promotes the conspiracy theory, he himself shows how double agents did not succeed in involving communists in these actions. Of all the PKI leaders, it was only Aidit who presumably was at the Halim air base (see pp.244-5), and it has been difficult to show that there really were communist activists involved in the murder of the generals at Halim. (Cf. May (1978) pp.103-114, as an example of the difficulties involved in pinning the blame on the PKI.)
25. Crouch (1973) pp.16-17.
26. May (1978) p.99.
27. Wertheim (1970) and (1979), and Budiardjo (1982), indicate this.
28. Ibid. (1979) pp.208ff. and the Latief case (1979) or the complete Indonesian version in Latief (1978).

29. Holzapfel (1979) p.237. also admits this. Concerning the conflict between Suharto and Nasution see, e.g., Wertheim (1979) p.209. I have also made good use of an interview with Nasution (Jakarta, 22 November, 1980). Concerning the contradictions between Suharto and Yani, see especially Budiardjo (1982) pp.13-14. but also May (1978) p.119. Similar contradictions were pointed out to me in Jakarta in 1979 during conversation No. 02 with people close to Yani's widow.
30. Utrecht (1979b) pp.69-70 and Wertheim (1979) p.209 on Nasution, Sukarno and Suharto's corruption.
31. According to Nasution (interview, Jakarta, 22 November 1980). Suharto did not carry out Nasution's order — until sometime between 2 and 3pm — to use the radio transmitter in Bandung to answer the 30 September Movement and rapidly call troops to Jakarta from the reliable Siliwangi division. Suharto used his own troops instead and troops from East Java which until quite recently had belonged to the rebels. As far as I have been able to ascertain, General Nasution's version is correct.  
In addition, it ought to be noted that Suharto made sure of getting rid of Nasution on the morning of 1 October, by sending him to hospital for the treatment of slight injuries sustained during his escape from the soldiers and probably also for the treatment of his daughter's serious injuries during the attempt to arrest him: May (1978) p.99. Later Suharto succeeded in outmanoeuvring Nasution completely. Since 1968 Nasution has belonged to the conservative opposition. When I asked him about why the officer's movement did not arrest Suharto, he even thought Wertheim's thesis on Suharto having prior knowledge of the 30 September Movement etc. was very interesting.
32. See fn. 28 and Utrecht (1979b) p.148. and Wertheim (1970) p.55. on how Suharto played a double waiting-game once before, during the revolution in the 1940s. Cf. also how he used a similar tactic in outmanoeuvring General Sumitro in 1973-74. May (1978) p.304ff.
33. Wertheim (1979) p.200.
34. See, e.g., *ibid.* p.204 and fn. 37 below.
35. Mortimer (1974a) pp.388-9.
36. According to former communists who have looked into the circumstances surrounding Aidit's flight (for example, through interviews in prisons), Sukarno first planned to leave Halim by air for the Madiun air base. He did not do this because of the threat of attack by Suharto's soldiers who had access to anti-aircraft systems, and because he was thus afraid of provoking a civil war. In that situation, Aidit was duped into fleeing to Central Java, while Sukarno travelled to Bogor (personal communication No. 73). Sjam is said to have ordered Aidit to go to Yogyakarta, Noone is believed to have been there to meet Aidit in Yogyakarta, who searched in vain for some comrades and then took the bus to Solo. He continued by bicycle to a certain village, but returned to Solo again. One of his assistants, Kusno, tried to help him to flee further to East Java, but Aidit refused since he could not speak Javanese. (Aidit was born in Medan in North Sumatra.) Interviews No. 22 and 29 (Jakarta 1980). In the end, Aidit was betrayed by an *agent provocateur* who was working in the PKI on Nasution's orders. Aidit was arrested in Solo on the morning of 22 November and was first treated well, as befitting a cabinet minister. Later he was to be taken to Semarang. Colonel Yasir Hadisubroto left the column with Aidit, however, and at a house in Boyolali, just west of Solo, he was executed by angry soldiers who reacted when Aidit began agitating while standing against a wall. The present governor and now General Hadisubroto, who mentioned this in a newspaper interview (*Kompas*, Jakarta, 5 October 1980), added that he allowed Aidit to be executed on the orders of Suharto. See Tapol (1980).
37. Mortimer (1974a) p.391.
38. Interviews 52, 58, 59 and 62 with some of the participants (Jakarta 1980). I do not want to make the details public. See also p.234.
39. May (1978), e.g., Chap 4. Sukarno was removed from office in March 1967 and died on 21 June 1970. On his death, see *ibid.* pp.240ff.
40. See fn. 7 above. Hauswedell (1973) pp.141-2 is perhaps an exception. The fact that in due course of time leading cadres were informed about the likelihood of a generals' coup, and that the party's response would be to wait and strike back afterwards, but that another alternative — to take their own initiatives — was introduced only a few days before 30 September among a very limited number of members, did not improve matters.



41. On the connection between the struggle over land reform and the massacres, see, in addition to Chap. 17 above, Mortimer (1972) pp.64ff. and Wertheim (1966).
42. Some limited local and presumably spontaneous resistance did, however, occur, at least in the PKI heartland round Solo and Klaten in Central Java. For example, activists blocked the roads with trees they had cut down to stop troop transports. Resistance also occurred in the area around Banyuwangi in East Java, as well as around Medan in North Sumatra. Interview No 52 with former leading member of the party (Jakarta, 1980).
43. A readable general report on the massacre is Hughes (1968). See also Ron Hatley's forthcoming doctoral thesis on the massacre.
44. Jackson (1978) pp.7-8. Nasution was also keen to point to these circumstances. According to Nasution, a responsible army would even, after 1968, have been able to create some kind of reconciliation between all those who once had backed the PKI, in exactly the same way as was done with the rebels of 1958 once they had been conquered. As I have already pointed out, Nasution joined the conservative opposition against Suharto in 1968. Interview (Jakarta, 22 November 1980). In this connection it ought to be added that the PKI organization in West Java, under one of the left-wing opposition members within the party, Ismail Bakri, rapidly dissociated itself from the 30 September Movement. Interview No. 29 with a former PKI leader who took part in this decision (Jakarta, 1980). Also note that Secretary-General Sudisman, in his defence speech does not mention any extensive mass murders in West Java. Sudisman, (1975) p.21.
45. Interviews with Ron Hatley (Bendigo, Australia, 10 October 1980) as well as researchers in Yogyakarta (4 and 16 November 1980).
46. Hatley, op. cit.
47. May (1978) p.123.
48. Hatley, op. cit.
49. May, op. cit.
50. Ibid. p.123-4.
51. The self-criticism which was the most Maoist in colour was dated September 1966; see PKI (1971). It has since been internationally publicized, especially by the former member of the Politburo, Jusuf Adjitorop, who has been based in Peking since 1965. Sudisman was co-author of this document. It was written as a reaction to the so-called Bandung theses, which, among other things, put the blame for failures on the collaboration with Sukarno. Bakri's ideas lie behind these theses. Though many of these theses were also to be found in Sudisman's self-criticism, Bakri and Sudisman were not able to put forward a joint viewpoint. For references, see fn. 38 above.

Sudisman's defence speech in 1967 (Sudisman, 1975) nevertheless exhibits considerably more nuance and is based on an independent reappraisal from the standpoint of genuine Javanese conditions, when compared to the self-criticism.
52. Interviews No. 31, 52, 58, 62 and 67 with former leading communists and others with first-hand knowledge of those who tried to carry on the work of the PKI and to remodel it as a Maoist guerrilla party (Jakarta, 1980).
53. See, e.g., Utrecht (1975a) and May (1978) Chap. 6, e.g., pp.203-4.

# Summary and Conclusions

## 19. Why Did the PKI Fail ?

### Defective Theory and Analysis

In my approach and method I have used research on structural factors which determined policies in order to see to what extent the PKI succeeded in taking these factors into account when its strategy was formulated and applied.

It was, doubtless, obvious that there were factors which the leaders did not have the opportunity of taking into account nor of affecting, and which contributed to the failure of the party — so-called objective causes. It was also obvious that the organization of the party had major defects and that one could discuss whether the path of peace and democracy was practicable or not. But I have not paid particular attention to so-called objective causes or organizational problems, nor to the question of the peaceful or the armed struggle. With my approach and method I have, instead, been able to show that the analysis of the development of society by the leadership of the party was so defective that the strategy could not possibly have led to success without a considerable amount of sheer good fortune. This is because a strategy based on a sound analysis of the factors determining political developments must be regarded as a necessary, if insufficient, precondition for a communist party's success.

### Ethnocentric Theory on the Rise of Capitalism

The strategy of the communists was directed towards critical support of and collaboration with the social forces interested in realizing a "national and democratic revolution". These, of course, included the workers and peasants, but also, according to current theories, those bourgeois forces which tried to build a national capitalism but were prevented from doing so by imperialism and feudalism. Other capitalists, compradors and so-called bureaucratic capitalists, as well as feudal forces, would be out-manoeuvred and isolated through an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal policy.

Since national capitalist development was regarded as being blocked within both the agricultural and the industrial sectors, those who were

working for such a development would not be able to complete the revolution. The communists would thus be able to take over the leadership, and, with the support of the masses, ensure the economic and social development which the bourgeoisie had managed to bring to Europe, but had not succeeded in implementing in the Third World. Successively they could then advance towards socialism.

One of the basic causes of the failure of the PKI was that this strategy did not hold. This was because capitalism in both agriculture and industry and trade, while not being able to develop in the same way as in the current European model, could nevertheless develop in different ways and in other forms that the communists were not able to analyse. Relevant Marxist theory lacked and still lacks good tools for analysing how capitalism can develop in areas where imperialism coexisted with and dominated pre-colonial modes of production. It is not fruitful to talk in terms of Europe's pure capitalism and feudalism.

The way in which capitalism emerged in Indonesia was very different from that of its classical European counterpart, the model for both Marxist and non-Marxist theories. Consequently, newly-emergent capitalism could not be properly understood by using the theories of the communists, nor could it be counteracted by their established strategies.

In no way do I deny the decisive importance of state intervention in the development of European capitalism, for example, in Germany, Russia and Sweden, as well as in the countries where it originated. But the significance of this has too often been neglected in prevalent theories, including Marxist ones. We must also take into account the colonial heritage of countries such as Indonesia. They inherited a state that was far ahead of the domestic economy and classes. Furthermore, it is obvious that the emergence of new forms of capitalism is not only due to extensive state intervention led by a bureaucratic social category, but also to the success of decisive sections of this "bureaucracy" in getting individual control of parts of the state apparatus. Thus these "bureaucrats" were able to develop their own bases, and to use their political, administrative and military powers over the economy to subordinate labour, to monopolize markets and to control natural resources in building capitalism. The importance of international capital is a new phenomenon compared to the period in which European capitalism emerged. Thus the new potential capitalists in Indonesia could offer a vitally important ability to control the extra-economic prerequisites for capitalist development to international and domestic Chinese owners of capital.

It is true that it was possible for the national upperclasses to reach success by directly investing in trade and production. These sectors were dominated by foreign capital. But it was perfectly possible for certain fractions of these same upper classes to use extra-economic powers to create their own bases, as well as new and better preconditions for capitalist trade and production which served their own interests, and benefited those fractions of domestic and foreign capital which were prepared to co-operate.



Similarly, the theoretically ideal type of agricultural development which required the redistribution of relatively large landed estates was out of the question in Java. There was no traditional feudalism where landlords dominated and concentrated the land. The predominant pattern was, instead, that of patrons centralizing a surplus produced by clients whose plots were too small to give them the economic strength to stay independent. Thus extra-economic powers were required within agriculture too, against the many small and poor peasants, in order to separate man from land, to concentrate the land thus acquired, and to turn both men and land into monopolized commodities. Only then was it possible to introduce today's controversial "green revolution" and to capitalize agricultural production.

The PKI could neither analyse the vacillating interests of the nationalists in private capitalism, democracy and anti-feudalism in the villages, nor appreciate how the nationalists in the state apparatus, most of whom were in uniform, were able to build not a neo-colonial but a post-colonial capitalism — with the assistance of anti-imperialist forces, of formally state-owned, but in reality privately-controlled monopolies, and by control over the labour force. As I wrote in Chapter 9, the bourgeoisie in Europe advanced where feudalism was weakest — on the economic level. In most underdeveloped countries, the bourgeoisie was, however, hampered by the economically superior imperialists. Many of those who otherwise might have become private capitalists thus went in for careers in administration and politics, where the imperialists were relatively weak, and used extra-economic positions of power to build themselves another capitalism.

The PKI was also unable to make a correct analysis of what kind of monopoly of land determined the decisive contradictions and hampered development in the rural areas. The rural lords did not mainly base their exploitation on concentrated land but on centralization of surplus produced on others' land. Consequently the PKI did not realize that the typical capitalist model of redistribution of relatively large properties was excluded and that there were basically only two ways open for development to take place. Either the peasants would have to concentrate the land themselves or else the overlords, supported by the post-colonial capitalists in the state apparatus, would be able to subordinate the peasants and combine centralization of the surplus with the concentration of land, thereby laying the foundation for a brutal post-colonial capitalization of agriculture.

In all essentials, this meant there was nothing left of the PKI's strategy. The mass struggle was not effective, despite considerable dissension and despite the very broad support the PKI enjoyed. The leadership of the party took refuge in élite struggles in Jakarta. They failed, and were followed by a massacre of the left, which was caught napping and was utterly defenceless.

## Nationalists without Classic Bourgeois Interests — Post-colonial Capitalism and the State

### *The national bourgeoisie and other monstrosities*

The communists sought collaboration with and supported the nationalists generally, primarily the PNI and particularly Sukarno. It was said that they represented the interests of a so-called national bourgeoisie in building a traditional capitalist development which was in conflict with imperialism, compradors and feudal landlords.

The result was, certainly, the launching of an anti-imperialist foreign policy and the beginning of the disintegration of the colonial economy. But there was no attempt to build a national economy which could replace what was ruined. Instead, Indonesia was hard hit by economic and political crises. The so-called national bourgeoisie of the nationalists became largely a corrupt monstrosity trying to use political and administrative positions in the state to enrich themselves. At the same time, skilled Chinese capitalists were hampered from going from trade to domestic production. And the blows to the colonial export economy not only hit imperialism, but also adversely affected domestic producers for export, as well as traders. These were mainly to be found on the outer islands, where there was now intensified smuggling and where extensive regional rebellions broke out.

The contradiction between the analyses of the PKI and actual developments was significant. The communists may well have been able to make a more subtle analysis of their concept of the national bourgeoisie by deciding to apply Lenin's theory consistently, and not a mixture of his theories and Stalin's. (The reader will recall that the PKI identified a national bourgeoisie on the same political grounds as Lenin, but built its analysis of how this bourgeoisie would act on Stalin's economic theories.) With Lenin only, the PKI would at least have been rid of Stalin's determinism: capitalist development *is* blocked and the national bourgeoisie *must* move against imperialism. As I wrote in Chapter 9, it has seldom happened that a party so large has attached so much importance to, invested so many hopes in and adapted itself to such a degree to a fraction of a class that it has known so little about.

But an analysis built on Lenin's theories would not have revealed that the nationalists would turn against imperialism and feudalism mainly by acquiring political and administrative positions, and not by trying to build a traditional capitalism. As long as the nationalists had not acquired any significant political and administrative power over the economy, even the political road to capitalism was, however, not traversable. What the communists' so-called national bourgeoisie actually did was to push Indonesia from a colonial economy into a national economic crisis, without the leadership of the PKI being in a position to foresee this by use of its theoretical tools.

*The New Lords of Anti-Imperialism*

Side by side with, and increasingly complementary to, the investments in a so-called national bourgeoisie, the PKI worked hard for the nationalization of foreign companies and for a state-run national economy. The communists had a vague but positive view of the state. It was no longer colonial and the capitalists were so weak that they could not use the state exclusively as their own tool. The PKI believed that the nationalists could seize control of the state apparatus and use it in the struggle for a national economy and against imperialists, compradors, corrupt domestic businessmen, feudal landlords and so on. Even the army was looked on with some approval. At least it fought against regional rebels who were trying to collaborate with imperialism. In several respects, the PKI anticipated the discussion of the early sixties on non-capitalist development.

As part of the struggle for *Irian Jaya*, all the Dutch companies in Indonesia were confiscated and nationalized, much more rapidly than the communists had anticipated. According to the PKI's strategy, the workers would take over the companies and then turn them over to the government, but what actually occurred was that the workers were driven out of the boardrooms or were forestalled by the army. A state of emergency was proclaimed and retained up to 1963. And the army did not do more than formally hand over the companies. On the contrary, the officers acquired a firm grip over the state's guidance of the economy. New capitalists grew up within the indistinctly class-based state that the PKI conceptualized: they were partly military company managers with civilian subordinates, and partly regular army officers who guided the economy at the centre, side by side with civilian bureaucrats. The new capitalists often mismanaged the companies, pocketed large portions of the surplus themselves and sent the rest to the army, which thus acquired an independent financial base.

Not only was the PKI's analysis overtaken by actual developments but so were its theoretical assumptions. It cannot be maintained that a proper capitalist state proved to be the danger. And the capitalist threat did not depend on certain nationalists allying with the comprador bourgeoisie and, with its support, trying to unite the state with imperialism, which would have been a theoretical possibility. Instead, it was the nationalists of indistinct class base who started to build an unusual form of capitalism in their own interests, despite, or rather because of, their role in combating imperialists and compradors nationalizing foreign companies and allying themselves with the PKI (among others), when it came to preventing the privatization of the companies.

According to current Marxist theory, it was inconceivable that indistinctly class-based leaders could transfer the economic base of the state to their own control without privatizing it to any significant extent.

The officers in Indonesia did not have any greater interests than the civilian nationalists did in trying to create a traditional form of private capitalism against imperialism. The officers would have lost every single company they had confiscated if they had agreed to privatize them!



The ideal national bourgeoisie would, according to the theory, have used the surplus from the nationalized companies to build a nationally integrated and balanced economy and used it to defend themselves against imperialism. The PKI was counting on the nationalists doing just that, when they had finally acquired economic power. But the inconceivable capitalists did not need to put priority on an integrated national economy in order to withstand pressure from imperialism. What they needed was even stronger political, administrative and military positions. Thus they used the surplus to reinforce these extra-economic mechanisms. This was their path to capitalism. And the PKI was unable to anticipate it.

### *Democratic Cul-de-Sac*

The communists tried working with the help of peaceful and democratic methods and a so-called Leninist mass party, within the framework of a long-term strategy in several stages. The PKI declared that this was possible because the progressive bourgeois nationalists themselves needed a bourgeois democracy in order to dissolve the political power monopoly of the feudal landlords and liberate as well as mobilize the masses against the feudal landlords and the imperialists.

Indeed the nationalists protected the PKI. And several attempted coups were pre-empted. The party and the mass movements grew rapidly and the electoral gains made were considerable. The nationalists and the communists co-operated in isolating the so-called anti-democratic forces.

But the isolation was soon followed by prohibitions, the state of emergency and demands from Sukarno, among others, for "guided democracy".

From the point of view of the communists, there was no reason to protest as long as it was the enemy who was feeling the pinch and the PKI was protected. The party spoke about a future people's democracy, democracy for the "people" and not for the "enemies of the people".

All was well, as long as the PKI gathered the masses behind the nationalists. But when it became impossible to keep promises of a flourishing national economy, and the PKI tried to create democratic rights and freedoms in connection with the elections of 1957, which made the PKI the largest political party in Java, the nationalists' real power base was threatened, just when their need for it was greatest. The PKI threatened nationalist control over the state apparatus, both centrally and locally, right down to the headmen of the villages and including the patriarchal instruments of mass mobilization.

The army command and the nationalists forced through a guided democracy which, among other things, led to the cancellation of the general elections due to be held in 1959. The PKI would surely have won them and would thereby have become the first communist party to have achieved government power entirely through democratic means. Now, however, centralized controls and the state of emergency were used against the communists too.

The leaders of the PKI should have been able to have produced better analyses which would have made them more sceptical of the democratic reliability of the nationalists. Ever since the inception of the "bourgeois democracy" in 1946, the nationalists had devoted more energy to acquiring mass support from above as patrons than to giving the people democratic rights and freedoms.

But, at the same time, it was theoretically unlikely that democracy would degenerate. As I wrote in Chapter II, since the theory could not predict that the nationalists would lack all interest in building a national economy in the classic bourgeois manner, it could not reveal that the nationalists also lacked the equally classic bourgeois interest in breaking down the political monopoly and building a genuine political democracy with the support of the masses. What the nationalists needed, in reality, were their traditional instruments of power — administrative, political and ideological — in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism. They were not bourgeois and had no significant economic strength.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the communists were not really completely reliable when it came to democratic issues, even though, relatively speaking, they belonged to the most prominent democrats in the country, especially at local level as, for example, in the villages. The strategic problems of the postponement of democracy hardly depended on the PKI engaging in democratic mass organization without regard for the risks of repression. During the period of the "bourgeois democracy", the party was able to celebrate considerable victories, which it could use against its enemies. It was only after even the PKI had given up pluralism, and began to applaud "guided democracy" instead, that things started going wrong for the party.

The limitations imposed on democracy had, in the end, made it difficult for the PKI to organize and mobilize the very base for its work, the peasants and the workers.

### *The Mobilized Peasant Society*

According to the PKI, the peasants were the most important factor in the national and democratic revolution in Indonesia. Thus an alliance between workers and peasants was required, an alliance based on the peasants' bourgeois anti-feudal interests.

The PKI had counted on being able to pursue careful and basic schooling, mobilizing and organizing of the peasants, sheltered by the "front from above" with the nationalists for, among other things democracy. The PKI further assumed that the nationalists, who were seen to represent the interests of the national bourgeoisie, would not disagree with the communists starting their struggle against feudalism in the rural areas. For the national bourgeoisie to be able to build their classic national economy, they would first have to destroy the remnants of feudalism. The "front from above" with the nationalists for democracy and against imperialism did not stand in contradiction to the communists' "front from below", the anti-feudal alliance between peasants and workers, in Aidit's view.

The communists succeeded in reaching out to the villages and initiated an unusually successful mobilization of the peasants. Together with the nationalists, the communists were, moreover, able to isolate commercial, feudal, often Islamic, forces and the nationalists documented their interests in anti-feudalism by passing the land reform laws.

But the front from above set an unexpectedly narrow framework for the PKI's work among the peasants. The communists first reached the peasants whom the nationalists had gathered on cultural grounds in competition with the Muslim leaders and with the help of patronage. The PKI was unable to break with this vertical mobilization of the peasants by inflating the class struggle against "feudal remnants", since that would threaten the "front from above" with the nationalists. A good deal of the strength of the nationalists was based on patronage and other extra-economic power monopolies. To safeguard the "front from above" against imperialism and not lose its protection, the PKI was forced to set aside the alliance between the peasants and the workers and even to accept the so-called patriotic feudal landlords.

The theory and analysis of the communists vis-à-vis anti-feudal nationalists was thus correct in so far as the nationalists were interested in combating a private, commercial and often Islamic feudalism which threatened their power. But, as I have shown previously, the nationalists based their power not on free economic activities, as did the classic bourgeoisie of the theory, but rather on political and administrative positions. Consequently, the communists' theory and analysis were incorrect as they emphasized the interests of the nationalists in breaking down all forms of feudalism, even traditional patronage in the villages.

#### *Workers' Struggle in the Face of Obstacles*

According to the PKI, the working class must wait before struggling for socialism. Instead, workers should build an alliance with the peasants against feudalism and defend a front with the so-called national bourgeoisie against imperialism and for democratic rights. Of course, the workers ought to defend their jobs and their standard of living. But, said the PKI, only an independent national economy could give the workers a considerable number of new jobs and substantially raise the standard of living. Consequently the workers ought to support the national bourgeoisie and state non-capitalism, as well as concentrating their activities on hitting out at foreign companies.

The trade union movement closest to the PKI reinforced its positions and was the most successful when it came to defending the workers. In addition, the workers were successful in counteracting foreign capitalists.

But no independent national economy was created either by a national bourgeoisie or by the state. As I have already shown, the PKI was unable to utilize its theoretical perspective to analyse and foresee this.

There were fewer jobs and the standard of living of the workers fell. According to the strategy, the workers were supposed to support the



nationalists. But the more they did so, the more they supported the new capitalism, which was quite different from an independent national capitalism that might have given the workers a better standard of living. Nationalists both in and out of uniform met the opposition of the workers with undisguised repression. Quite contrary to what the PKI's theory predicted, they based their capitalism on the reinforcing of their own political, administrative and military powers *over* the economy, not by strengthening their powers *within* the economy and becoming classic industrious capitalists who replaced political repression with economic force.

As I wrote in Chapter 13, the leading class (the proletariat) was out of the picture, since those who ought to have been led by it — the nationalists, the state and the peasants — contradicted the theoretical perspective of the party and did not raise progressive bourgeois demands and actions. On the contrary, the state and many nationalists attacked the workers.

*Anti-imperialism against the Wrong Form of Capitalism*

As I have outlined above, the PKI analysed the problems of the state's non-capitalist development as a deviation caused by the so-called bureaucratic capitalists. Up to now, the latter did not have the significant economic base in production as prescribed in the Chinese models, but only political, administrative and military strength. This was based on favours to and, in exchange, support from feudal and particularly imperialist forces, said the communists. Lacking their own class base, the "bureaucratic capitalists" had not been able to take over state power. The state continued to have considerable autonomy and was still not a true capitalist state. But it might become one since a characteristic of "bureaucratic capitalists" was that, with the support of imperialism, they would try to privatize state companies and drastically reduce the state guidance of the economy, according to the PKI.

The PKI leaders believed that, consequently, the best way of combating the "bureaucratic capitalists" was to accentuate the anti-imperialism of Sukarno and the declarations he had made in favour of a powerful state economy aimed at national self-reliance. Thus, it would be possible to expose the "bureaucratic capitalists" for going against Sukarno and in the end to have them purged. The workers would be able to contribute to such exposés at the same time as they demanded the right to be consulted in the boardrooms of state companies and indicated that foreign firms which remained should be nationalized. But the workers were not allowed to threaten public companies. Were that to happen their opponents would be able to say that the communists were going against Sukarno, as well as against the interests of the state, and would be able to use this as an excuse to use open repression.

The PKI was successful in intensifying the anti-imperialism of Sukarno. In addition, the state of emergency was lifted, which gave the communists greater freedom, while more and more of the political opponents of the PKI and Sukarno were forced underground.

But quite contrary to the theoretical perspective of the communists, the PKI was unable to expose the majority of the so-called bureaucratic

capitalists as pro-imperialist traitors who wanted to privatize the economy. They did not need to break with Sukarno. They participated in the confrontation with Malaysia. Many of them even worked against the proposal by the US and the IMF for a liberalization and stabilization programme. While the "bureaucratic capitalists" were consolidating their positions of power within the state economy and administration, as well as living luxuriously, the political, social and economic conditions of the workers grew very much worse. And the strategy stipulated that they were not allowed to use direct action to defend themselves.

By the end of the fifties, the "bureaucratic capitalists" had already, partly with the help of the nationalizations, started making the economic base of the state their own, instead of building their political, administrative and military strength primarily on feudalism and imperialism. By adopting an intensified anti-imperialist stance, accepting new nationalizations, state ownership, stronger state guidance and so forth, they were able to reinforce their class base even more during the first years of the sixties.

The new capitalists are specialized in *part* of the necessary area of work of every monopoly capitalist: acquiring monopolies and controlling the labour force. When it comes to building capitalism today, these qualities are at least as important as being directly engaged in production, especially in a country like Indonesia.

Since the new capitalists made the economic base of the state their own, the state also acquired a distinct class base with reduced freedom of manoeuvre for the nationalists, the communists and others. By defending the state economy and postponing the workers' struggle in state companies, the communists hardly contributed to the struggle against the state power of the bureaucratic capitalists. Quite the contrary.

Without modifying their theoretical tools as I have suggested, the PKI would not have been able to produce much better analyses. Even present-day Marxist analyses, though they have access to the empirical answer book, continue to talk about "bureaucratic capitalists", without a class base of their own, who impede capitalist development by being parasitic rather than real classic capitalists, as well as by being especially dependent on imperialism.

I have suggested that, instead of talking about "bureaucratic capitalists", we should start building a new theory, not about neo-colonial but about post-colonial capitalism. The example of Indonesia shows that classic national capitalism is hampered by imperialism. But administrators, politicians and military men do not necessarily need to subjugate themselves to imperialism as the compradors do.

They can instead create their own economic base and offer important preconditions for capitalist development which did not exist earlier. They do this by using extra-economic methods within the state apparatus to nationalize companies, control the economy, monopolize raw materials and markets and control the labour force, in the process combating both the working people and the internal private capitalists and traditional



imperialism. Thus they can build a post-colonial capitalism in co-operation with more dynamic foreign capitalists, and when they have consolidated their positions, they can take the step of uniting power over the economy and the labour force with involvement in the economy and in direct production.

The growth and expansion of a post-colonial capitalism certainly increases the number who become marginalized. But at the same time the working class is also expanding and is alone in having the potential ability to hit hard at the heart of the new ruling class — modern industrial production.

### **Land Monopoly without Land Concentration — Post-colonial Agrarian Capitalism**

#### *Peasants Struggle against the Wrong Monopoly of Land*

The PKI assumed that the absolute majority of peasants had common interests in combating feudal landlords, who were preventing agrarian development from taking place. The power of the landlords and the obstacles to development depended on their having acquired a monopoly of the land by concentrating it. This agrarian stagnation, of course, made it impossible to implement policies that would enable the establishment of an independent and national capitalism as a whole. A national bourgeoisie would thus find it in its interest to counteract the "feudal remnants", but were prevented from leading the peasants to victory by the strength of imperialism, the PKI believed. When this became obvious the communists would, instead, be able to shoulder the task of bringing the anti-feudal struggle to completion.

At the beginning of the sixties, the workers' struggle was blocked and the "bureaucratic capitalists" perched unruffled on their nests. But they were weaker in the villages. The peasant movement had reinforced its positions, said the PKI. In addition, Sukarno had passed a law concerning a limited bourgeois land reform and made demands on national self-reliance as a part of an intensified anti-imperialist struggle. The communists said that this made it possible to conduct a radical struggle in the rural areas without challenging nationalism, the very foundation of the *Nasakom* "front from above".

Consequently, the communists directed themselves at realizing Sukarno's limited land reform to stop land concentration. But, at the same time, they campaigned intensively for a complete showdown with the feudal landlords and for the land to be redistributed to the tillers. When the nationalists were hesitant and tried to avoid implementing their own reform, the PKI thought that the time was ripe for taking over the leading of the peasants and declared that it was more important for the party to maintain its alliance with the peasants than with the national bourgeoisie.

As I pointed out in Chapter 17, the fact that the PKI succeeded in developing, and actively started to apply, an offensive strategy based on



class struggle without meeting massive repression, only a few years after the situation had appeared to reach deadlock, was already a tremendous step forward. Today, when we sit with the answer book in our hands, prepared to investigate what went wrong, this success cannot be overemphasized. It was primarily due to the work of the communists that the land reform did not simply remain empty rhetoric from Jakarta.

But the most dominant problems were strategic ones. The contradictions between the theoretical and analytical perspective of the PKI on the one hand, and actual developments on the other, were obvious. It appeared to be very difficult to expose large properties which, according to the land reform law, ought to be redistributed. There were many loopholes which were difficult to close. The land of the "feudal landlords" was not so concentrated that they could not conceal a great deal as well as refraining from direct control of the land without losing their power.

The concentration of land was not so marked that the peasants could unite against and isolate a few landlords. The class struggle turned instead into violent conflict between the peasants themselves.

The strategic problem in the peasant offensive was thus based on an analysis which overestimated the concentration of land. The power of the rural lords and the stagnation of agriculture must have had another basic cause which the communists ought to have combated.

But without altering their theoretical perspective the communists could hardly have produced better analyses, as I have summarized in Chapter 17, which did not deny monopolies of land and powerful oppressors in the countryside, and yet took into account the scarcity of land, the important lords who had no direct control of land and the fact that the land was often less concentrated than it had been in the countries where the theories had originated. China and Russia (but perhaps needed to become more concentrated in order to be able to develop agriculture) and also accounted for and gave theoretical backbone to patron-client relationships.

The problem with current Marxist thinking on land monopolies and agrarian class structure is that it does not account for land monopolies being based not only on concentration of land but also on concentration of the agricultural surplus.

The land becomes concentrated when a few landlords appropriate more and more land so that the majority of the peasants become landless. The power of the feudal landlords is derived from interest from their large properties.

When the surplus rather than the land is centralized, a large number of formally independent agricultural units survive. The base of this form of centralization is the fact that these small units are incapable of being economically independent. Instead, a patron can centralize the surplus from clients who acquire some protection in exchange.

Modern theories of peasant revolutions and land reforms originate in areas where concentration of land has replaced centralization of the surplus. That makes current Marxist theories incomplete and even

dangerous in areas where land concentration does not dominate.

I have tried to show that the Indonesian land monopoly, especially in Java where support for the PKI was at its strongest, was in the first place based on the centralization of the agricultural surplus. The tendency already existed during the pre-colonial period. It was consolidated and became generalized during the period of indirect Dutch rule. In that respect, Indonesia differed from China and Vietnam. Independence led only to a limited concentration of land, since the economy was stagnant and political forces such as the PKI placed obstacles in the way of such a development. Since 1965, however, a clear change has occurred, but there is still no particularly extensive process of land concentration. (The mode of exploitation should not of course be confused with unequal distribution of land among various strata because of, for example, the increase of population.)

An analysis of land monopolies in terms of surplus and centralization would have enabled the PKI to foresee the strategic problems which confronted it. A reform directed against those who concentrated the land to a significant degree did not affect the majority of overlords who centralized a surplus from land belonging to others. And very few "real" feudal landlords existed from whom land could be confiscated.

If the reform were radicalized and prescribed that the land should go to the tiller, a policy which the PKI advocated and which the peasants tried to implement, the overlords who centralized the surplus would be threatened. But they would not lose their very basis of power. Only their own, relatively unimportant, land holdings would be affected to some extent. The basis for their centralization of the surplus would remain intact: many peasants still did not make ends meet on their own little parcels of land but remained or became dependent on the overlords. Their indebtedness, for example, continued.

In addition, a large number of independent peasants would be badly affected, perhaps even the middle peasants who had not concentrated their land to any significant degree. Even the petty peasants had tillers on some parts of their lands — and the really poor believed that everyone should have the same amount of land.

The poorest peasants were also split. Those who were forced to allow wealthier peasants to use their land were hardly likely to feel happy about a reform which gave tillers all the land. And was access to land to be solely reserved for permanent tillers, or could workers also have some land? And so on.

Finally, fewer were completely proletarianized when the surplus was centralized than when the land was concentrated. Many more poor peasants owned a small parcel of land round their houses. They needed protection and assistance from a patron. And share-croppers as well as those who were permanently employed were relatively privileged and tied to their patrons, compared to those who were marginalized in agricultural production.

An analysis of land monopoly in terms of the centralization of surplus would also have been able to disclose that an ideal type of capitalist development through the redistribution of relatively large feudal properties was out of the question. Instead there were only two probable paths of development for which to fight, or which ought to be combated. Either the peasants themselves ought to concentrate their land into self-supporting units which could be financially independent of patrons. Or, if the peasants desisted from this or were defeated in the struggle to consolidate, then the overlords themselves would be able to subordinate the peasants and combine a centralization of the agricultural surplus with a concentration of the land. At the same time they would thereby lay the foundation for a brutal post-colonial capitalization of agriculture.

Even if all agricultural land in Java were to be equally distributed, peasant families would still remain dependent on patrons who would be able to centralize the surplus. Instead, it was the peasants themselves who must concentrate the land. But collectivization was politically impossible and the relatively poor could not take from the extremely poor without giving something in return. Thus the peasants who gained land ought to go in for trade and producer co-operatives connected to agriculture and jointly owned with those who have relinquished their claims to land and found work in the co-operatives instead.

Post-colonial capitalization of agriculture can occur when the peasants have failed, or, as happened in Indonesia, have tried to implement an unrealistic classic bourgeois land reform. The peasants are then defenceless and, with the help of post-colonial capitalists in the state apparatus, the overlords can subjugate the peasants and at the same time complement their centralization of the surplus with a concentration of land. They can get rid of innumerable peasants and get an effective injection of new capital and markets through, for example, the "green revolution". Capitalization and "feudal remnants" can be most effectively combined. A kulak class develops and becomes more extensive than the few feudal landlords who, according to current Marxist theory, the peasants ought to unite against and isolate. A post-colonial agrarian capitalism which favours considerably more than a handful of overlords starts to strike root.

This development gained momentum in Indonesia after 1965. The peasants were split: some were favoured, others became proletarianized. Some of the wholly or partly proletarianized were tied to the lords but did not have regulated forms of employment, though they could remain in agriculture. Others were marginalized: most of them not becoming workers, but being forced to work in the informal sector, where they often do not even have a visible employer against whom to revolt.



## **Problems in Meeting the Threat from the Army with Steadfast Mass Struggle**

### *Mass Struggle Bypassed: Elite Conflicts and Massacre*

The PKI was forced to give up the peasant offensive. In 1965 Aidit declared it was blocked by the "bureaucratic capitalists", who had to be more effectively isolated before the struggle in the rural areas could be continued.

Since the workers' struggle was impeded, the PKI had to isolate its opponents more effectively by working through the broad front led by Sukarno.

But, as I have shown, not even the intensified anti-imperialism led to any significant gains. The "bureaucratic capitalists" were forced onto the ideological defensive, but were not exposed as traitors nor purged.

In addition, this strategy led to new problems during 1965. The PKI and Sukarno succeeded in banning the last of the secularized opposition. Thus, their opponents gathered in religious, primarily Islamic, organizations and particularly round the army. To get at their enemies, the PKI had to take up the struggle directly with the army. But the leadership of the army was not significantly weakened. On the contrary, they were provoked, and rumours of the generals planning a coup d'état became quite common.

But the PKI had difficulties in meeting the threat from the army with steadfast mass struggle, since this was blocked by all the unsolved strategic problems. With the help of the mass organizations the PKI leadership was able only to expose and disarm specific current plans for a coup; the position of the generals remained unaffected.

In that situation, it was clear that a few individual leaders who were well-informed (in a so-called Leninist mass party with limited internal democracy) chose to invest in an (already established) dissident officers' movement, without having received a mandate from the central committee. The masses were also kept in ignorance, presumably to protect the party from accusations of being involved.

The officers' movement was a total failure. It is probable that it had been infiltrated. But it was hardly a question of a genuine conspiracy against the PKI.

The army officers soon accused the PKI of being responsible for the actions of the officers' movement, in order to keep the armed forces united and to neutralize the PKI. Violent repression became the order of the day.

After the actions of the officers' movement, the party leaders were hardly able to meet, still less to lead "their" mass party in a broad mobilization for basic human rights, for example. And since the entire communist movement was caught napping by the elite conflicts in Jakarta, the masses themselves were not able to do very much to stop the repression.

It was in the first place this sabotage against the most basic preconditions for the functioning of a mass party — i.e. a working party democracy with informed members and sympathizers — which made it possible for the

army to arrest and murder without let or hindrance, as well as giving free rein to the contradictions caused by the struggle over land reform, after which anti-communist gangs perpetrated the worst attacks and massacres.

## Notes

1. For a national bourgeoisie to find it in its own interests to take up the struggle for, and to uphold, democracy, it must be in the process of building up a relatively traditional private capitalism, as perhaps in India. Cf. Martinussen (1980) and his exciting explanatory paradigm on the material preconditions for democratic regimes in capitalist developing countries. To be able to apply Martinussens' paradigm in the case of Indonesia, and in several other developing countries—the bourgeoisie of India is unusual — I believe one must go beyond the distinction “national bourgeoisie/no national bourgeoisie” and in addition count on other important domestic capitalists who are trying to create capitalism by other means than the traditional national bourgeoisie and who, therefore, irrespective of how domestic or how national they are, do not have the same potential interest in democracy.

## 20. What Are the Implications of the PKI's Strategic Problems for Prevailing Theories on the Struggle in the Third World?

Concurrently with the growth of nationalism and anti-imperialism in the early post-independence period, the PKI grew in strength and importance. By comparison with the compromised compradors and the weak national bourgeoisie, the communists appeared as guarantors for a national political and economic development which could create both growth and a decent standard of living, for which millions of Indonesians had been fighting and which they had been hoping for since their liberation from the Dutch and the Japanese. Up to this point the strategy bore fruit.

The PKI fell, however, with the rise of a new capitalist fraction which built a post-colonial capitalism within the framework of the nationalist state and anti-imperialist struggle, without the communists being able to analyse what was happening, let alone shape and apply an alternative strategy adapted to the changed circumstances in the country.

What, then, was this post-colonial capitalism, which was neither national nor neo-colonial? I have not concentrated on analysing the political economy of the emergence of post-colonial capitalism. But in my investigation of the strategic problems of the PKI I have at least identified the contradictions, the forms for subordination, exploitation and resistance which the party was unable to take into account in its analyses because of the faulty theoretical tools at its disposal. With these neglected factors as a point of departure, it is possible to lay the ground for a revised theory on how post-colonial capitalism develops in a society like the Indonesian.

After the final achievement of political independence in 1949, production and trade were still dominated by foreign capitalists and domestic middlemen. They were primarily Dutch and some US owners of capital, and locally there were Chinese businessmen. The important plantation sector, however, fell behind as the new state was unable to subjugate the labour force and outgrowing peasants, as well as their land, as the colonial state had done. Domestic businessmen had difficulties in making progress. But administrators and politicians with nationalist aspirations could use the state apparatus to acquire some influence over the economy, for



example by the use of import licences.

Feudal land concentration was not predominant in the agricultural sector, and the limited commercial production of staple commodities was minimized when the repressive colonial power was abolished. Instead some village leaders won more powerful political and administrative posts.

The administration and political nationalists, and soon military officers too, began, however, to make use of extended state intervention within the economy to acquire a share of the surplus produced, in order to remedy the paucity of opportunities for advancement within trade and production.

There were three methods which were mainly used. First, they pursued a nationalist and anti-imperialist line politically, to restrict foreign capitalists and domestic production for export. This was intended to benefit domestic importers and to lay the ground for import substitution. In the end, most of the foreign companies were nationalized. This enabled the nationalists to win wide popular support and allowed, for example, strikes to take place in companies and on plantations still owned by foreigners.

Secondly, a state-governed guided economy was introduced. Licences and numerous concessions became more and more important. Certain nationalists within the state gained access to important markets and even petty rice trading was drastically restricted. The nationalized companies were not privatized, but controlled by certain individuals within the state apparatus, especially by military officers. Groupings within the state apparatus saw to it that they got personal control over natural resources that were formally state-owned, and then distributed various concessions to themselves and traded them informally to others. Foreign aid passed, of course, through the coffers of the state.

Thirdly, so-called guided democracy was gradually enforced. General elections were postponed. A state of emergency helped the army to dominate the state apparatus and the economy. Strikes could now be even more restricted and labour could be more efficiently controlled by the military.

Within agriculture this extra-economic power over the economy corresponded to the age-old tendency of the local lords to substitute centralization of the surplus produced by formally independent peasants for the lack of concentration of the land. This centralization of surplus through patron-client relations was now further developed. It grew in importance and became increasingly affected by ethnic and cultural divisions as the patrons had to mobilize votes and other sorts of political support amongst the villagers. They did this by mobilizing the peasants essentially as their clients. The nationalists and their local followers supported anti-feudal measures against certain commercial activities, but they did not support measures which threatened the political and administrative positions of the patrons, since these positions were the ones that made the centralization of surplus possible. This state of affairs was cemented by the so-called guided democracy, which blocked the efforts of the communists to make local assemblies and administration more democratic.

From the very beginning, political, administrative and military nationalists achieved personal control of various parts of the growing state apparatus, the nationalized companies, the licences, concessions, market monopolies, foreign aid, etc. But their control and power were not total. There were certain politicians, workers and others who were reluctant to follow suit, and these were led by Sukarno and the PKI with its mass organizations. Domestic private and petty capitalists, who often lacked profitable connections with the leaders of the state, were also threatened. The lack of support from foreign capitalists, diminishing Western aid and other problems also caused worry. But at this time, such support could only be received in exchange for less state intervention, more privatization and other measures that would have reduced the powers of the administrators, politicians and military leaders, and thus their chances of appropriating substantial parts of the surplus produced would have been diminished.

The agricultural patrons also lacked effective control of land and labour. Their chances of concentrating land and of centralizing substantial amounts of surplus were limited, among other reasons because they had to protect many clients in order to retain their support and also because of the strength of the peasant organizations. At the same time, a traditional bourgeois land reform involving the redistribution of large amounts of land was out of the question, as the principal contradiction was not between land-concentrating landlords and peasants.

Most administrators and military leaders and certain politicians and agricultural patrons could, however, enforce their need for more effective and tighter control when the Sukarno regime had been crushed and the communists were eliminated. With the consolidation of their extra-economic power over the economy and the labour force, including the multitude who were not in permanent employment, the way was then open to co-operation with foreign capitalists, international groups of creditors, etc. without the administrators, military leaders and politicians risking their own positions. Capital and expertise were thus introduced to the now relatively favourable preconditions for trade and production. Market monopolies, sole rights to land or to other natural resources, etc. and efficiently subordinated labour were offered. Domestic bureaucrats, technocrats and private businessmen, especially the larger Chinese capitalists, often became clients of administrative and military patrons with a growing class base of their own.

Within agriculture these developments corresponded to the elimination of the peasant movements, while at the same time the patrons got their more absolute powers secured by the state in general and by the army in particular. Thus they were now able to get rid of, for example, economically superfluous clients and to add to their centralization of the surplus a substantial concentration of land. That the patrons had effective control of labour power and land was a decisive prerequisite for the capitalization of agriculture and for the capitalist production that now emerged. The additional contribution of foreign capital, which it was now possible to



introduce, was analogous to the agricultural inputs and credits through the "green revolution". "Semi-feudal remnants" within production and administration were combined with more capitalist methods, when the latter were more effective and more profitable.

Since then, this new post-colonial capitalism within trade and industry as well as agriculture has gradually developed further. Several post-colonial capitalists and new village leaders have added direct involvement in production as well as some privatizing of personally controlled state activities to their former extra-economic powers over the economy.

During the last few years, however, the impressive rate of economic growth has declined, mainly because of external factors. The real increase of the gross national product has shrunk from nearly 10 per cent in 1980 to some 2 per cent in 1983. The cutbacks in the old industrialized countries lead to export problems in countries like Indonesia. In particular, the high rates of interest in the US cause creditors and investors to be more restrictive towards the new industrializing countries. In addition, countries like Indonesia have suffered from lower oil prices, which is significant when some 70 per cent of the income of the state is from oil.

But in a longer perspective this is just as threatening for the Western economies in general, and the transnational banks and companies in particular, as it is for regimes such as Indonesia's. International capital might not make a "fair profit" out of investments and might lose dynamic export markets. And while the International Monetary Fund criticizes bureaucracy and state intervention, it is presumably also aware of the fact that state control of labour, raw materials and markets is precisely what has made it so extremely profitable to invest in Indonesia, among other countries. Thus the expansion of capitalist relations of production and markets continues. This is the most important aspect from a political point of view. The crucial question is no longer *whether* capitalism expands or not, but *how* it does so, and with what political consequences.

My brief sketch of a theory of the growth of a post-colonial capitalism in a society like Indonesia's must, of course, be complemented and refined by investigations of other countries where domestic capitalism has developed after independence. Such a task has not been undertaken in this book. It is worthwhile, however, to point out the importance of extra-economic factors, especially of the state, in the development of several developing countries. This has also been the case in those bastions of private capitalism, South Korea and Taiwan.<sup>2</sup> Even in India, that classic example of an Asian country which has relatively well developed private capitalism and a strong national bourgeoisie, there have been significant extra-economic inputs. These are not solely concerned with the almost corporative power monopoly of the Congress Party and its various fractions and the state of emergency proclaimed in the seventies. It should also be noted that the national bourgeoisie has not been strong enough to survive without the help of the village leaders in securing votes among their clients, and it has been incapable of implementing a traditional bourgeois land reform.



The inability of the PKI to analyse the growth of post-colonial capitalism or, despite tremendous popular support, to counteract it with an effective strategy, was not only based on theoretically faulty instruments for the study of Indonesia alone. Indeed the dominant theses in international communist thought on how societies in the Third World ought to be analysed, and the struggle prosecuted, had been modified by the PKI to fit Indonesia. But they were used as a starting point. And the analytical faults must be traced back to the general theses I have outlined in Chapter 3. It is not only important but also feasible to re-examine them to see whether they hold in the light of the experiences of the PKI and the growth of a post-colonial capitalism.

## **The State, Imperialism and Democracy**

### **Lenin's Theses**

The Comintern's and Lenin's theses on the struggle in the underdeveloped nations, as well as Stalin's revised version, were given a new lease of life during the fifties and are still cornerstones for many of the revolutionary movements in Asia and Africa. But the validity of these theses is undermined by the causes of the strategic problems of the PKI.

The thesis that the revolution in the underdeveloped countries must be of a bourgeois-democratic nature is contradicted by the growth of a deviant post-colonial capitalism. It is not possible to talk of the main contradiction being between pre-capitalist modes of production and a traditional capitalism. The majority of the nationalist movements in no way struggled for a classical capitalist development against feudalism and imperialism.

Lenin was indeed correct in saying that a classical capitalist development was hampered by imperialism. But with his theoretical perspective one is not able to analyse the growth of that deviant capitalism which I have called post-colonial. And Stalin, who maintained that all capitalist development worthy of the name was blocked, was quite definitely wrong.

This means that the current grounds for communist co-operation with Lenin's "revolutionary bourgeoisie" and especially with Stalin's "national bourgeoisie", against feudalism and imperialism and for democracy, are baseless. The tiny bourgeoisie, which resembles the European theoretical ideal, cannot become a powerful force for leadership, partly because of the power of the imperialists and partly because of their lack of political, administrative and military force. The so-called national bourgeoisie is thus, presumably, incapable of conducting operational anti-feudal and anti-imperialist policies or of starting to build an independent national economy with democratic liberties, as the communist doctrine assumes.

"Bourgeois democracy" will thus hardly be stable enough to protect communists when they try to attract followers from a weak position. Nor will workers be able to get new jobs and a higher standard of living when a

national economy fails to be successfully started. There will hardly be enough power to disarm die-hard enemies. The national bourgeoisie will not allow communists to stage anti-feudal peasants' movements on a consistent class basis. This thus hinders communist efforts to build an independent worker-peasant alliance within a "front from below", while protected by a "front from above" with the national bourgeoisie — an alliance which would give the communists a base of their own and enable them to move to a strategically more advanced phase.

To build capitalism it is not necessary for the nationalists to consistently go beyond all so-called feudal forms of extra-economic control. On the contrary, a large part of them are required to build post-colonial capitalism. Nor are the nationalists forced to create a "genuine bourgeois democracy". Instead, they need to use patronage and populist autocracy to create their own capitalism with the help of representative political organs as well as administrative bureaucracies.<sup>3</sup> It is true that in the introductory phase they must combat imperialism. But when post-colonial capitalism has taken root, it can coexist with a modified imperialism.

It is, of course, possible that the so-called national bourgeoisie has been and still is stronger in other countries in the Third World than is indicated by the example of Indonesia. If we limit ourselves to Asia, which is the part of the world to which Lenin and Stalin's theses are primarily meant to relate, it is India, with its relatively strong domestic capitalism and national bourgeoisie, which appears most deviant. As I have already indicated, however, we should not forget that the Indian nationalist movement has never been capable of coming to grips with anti-feudal questions. Even Gandhi avoided the problem.<sup>4</sup> The Congress Party and its fractions also appear to have been instrumental in building up capitalism with extra-economic means, and in 1975 a state of emergency was imposed. The possibility of generalizing and refining criticism of Lenin's and Stalin's theses, based on my results, would be improved by comparing them with India and its indubitably more traditional capitalist development.

#### *Nationalism, state intervention and non-capitalist development*

Because of the vacillating national bourgeoisie, some communists turned instead to nationalist political leaders and used state intervention in particular to complement their role. The argument is that the state in the Third World does not have a distinct class base. Feudal and imperialist forces have been weakened, but no domestic capitalist class with hegemony has emerged. The state in the Third World thus has an extremely relative autonomy compared to the state in industrialized countries which have a solid class base. Consequently the state apparatus can be used by individuals and groups to further their own interests. Progressive leaders, whether in or out of uniform, can, for example, nationalize foreign companies, build state-owned industries in vital sectors, support anti-monopolistic fractions of the national bourgeoisie (i.e. the middle bourgeoisie) and implement anti-feudal land reforms.



According to even more optimistic ideas of non-capitalism, the national leaders will have to rely on support from workers and peasants, as well as aid from socialist states, against imperialists and other enemies, thus introducing some sort of democracy, at least for those who mobilize workers and peasants, such as the communists, in order to carry out the "state project". It is uncertain whether, after that, there will be any room or role left for a communist party. Due to industrialization the proletariat should, however, grow in number and the leaders of the state will have to introduce democratic reforms. Non-capitalists might thus be able to bypass fully developed capitalism, replace it with their "state non-capitalism" and open the way for socialism.

The indistinct class base of the state is, nevertheless, motivated by a lack of capitalism, by the blocking of genuine capitalist development. That, of course, means that the theory of non-capitalist development is completely contradicted by the experience of Indonesia, which shows that it is possible to have a post-colonial capitalist development. The state acquired a distinct class base and there was reduced room for manoeuvre.

In some sense, the theory of non-capitalist development was, however, correct, in that the administrative, military and political power of the state in developing countries was and is a better source of development than the economic positions of the private bourgeoisie. Post-colonial capitalism grew within the framework of the non-capitalist and formally indistinctly class-based state! Nationalists in the state apparatus could make the economic base of the state their own without needing to privatize state companies, for instance, or to depend primarily on compradors or imperialists.

I do not maintain, as do the Chinese, that non-capitalist development is treacherous because the state in the developing world is already based on a domestic and foreign bourgeoisie, but because the class base is created within the state itself, as part of a post-colonial capitalist development.

This also corrodes the thesis of state leaders needing to create and support a democracy to gain the people's support for their non-capitalist development which conflicts with the so-called feudal remnants and imperialism. In principle, the peasants and workers could be helped by this democracy to organize powerful movements, preferably a communist party, which could in the long run pursue socialism. But no, the state leaders can build their own class base on which they can rely, instead of depending on support from the peasants and workers. State leaders can develop and safeguard their post-colonial capitalism through the exploitation of employees in state companies, through a strictly centralized agricultural policy to move food surpluses into the towns and through repression and a general lack of democracy.

Consequently, it is very difficult for the communists to mobilize the growing proletariat against the new capitalists. This is not only because of the political, administrative and military power of the latter, but also because of their capacity for dividing the people and buying off workers.



The general lack of genuine democracy plays a role, and protests can be labelled threats against the state, the nation and the need to build a national economy.

It is, of course, possible that the thesis of state intervention and non-capitalism can be corroded by forces other than those which develop within and around the state itself. To return to India and its stronger domestic capitalism, it is possible that the communists, who tried investing in a so-called national democratic state and in non-capitalist development in co-operation with Indira Gandhi's Congress Party, did not succeed because the domestic private capitalists counteracted the efforts of the state. But, it was Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party which proclaimed the state of emergency. And it was the state which, under her leadership, favoured monopolistic development of capitalism in the country. Once again, further comparison between Indonesia and India should be fruitful.

### *Anti-imperialism and the Class Struggle*

The problems with the Comintern's theses of collaboration with a progressive bourgeoisie do not diminish because Stalin divorced himself from his national bourgeoisie in 1928, nor because the Chinese re-evaluated the bulk of the bourgeoisie as compradors and bureaucratic capitalists whose base was in domestic and international monopoly capital. In the 1960s and 1970s, the theorists of the dependency school refused to admit that the so-called national bourgeoisie had a feudalism to combat, but said it had to choose between a foreign-dominated capitalism or socialism. No domestic independent capital was regarded as existing.

At the same time as the leading theorists wrote off the bourgeoisie, they continued formulating alternative recommendations on the assumption that real capitalist development was and is blocked. For example, since the national bourgeoisie cannot create a genuine capitalism, they are forced to join the compradors and choose the destructive capitalism of imperialism, especially when the peasants and workers make their protests felt. Thus the communists can and must take the vanguard role right from the beginning. To take a stand against imperialism is the equivalent of taking a stand against capitalism. Consequently, nationalism and anti-imperialism on the one hand, and the class struggle against capitalism on the other, must be combined in a struggle for liberation, irrespective of whether it is armed or not, gathering a very large proportion of the population behind the more or less openly committed communists.

The state, such theorists maintain, has no special autonomy. It is based on feudal, in particular imperialist, forces. It is a peripheral state. Consequently it is despotic but weak in all essentials, and can be successfully overthrown in a direct confrontation, according to the dependency school.

The experiences of Indonesia contradict all of that. It is true that a traditional capitalist development was blocked, but that did not mean that the only alternative was a neo-colonial capitalist development with compradors and the state as a prolonged arm of foreign capitalism. A post-colonial capitalism with a domestic base and a strong state could develop instead. The nationalists who started building that post-colonial capitalism did not take a stand for the compradors and imperialists. On the contrary, they counter-balanced them, and became equal partners in collaboration. It was not helpful to try to judge these nationalists as being pro-imperialist. In addition, it was very difficult for the workers to make direct attacks on and within state-owned companies and plantations, as long as the state and its rulers did not collaborate with imperialism. Those companies which were nationalized, after the workers had struggled against foreign capitalists, were taken over by the post-colonial capitalists and their state.

There was no way in which the communists could combine nationalism and class struggle, the two forces which had been so important in all successful Third World revolutions, such as China's and Vietnam's. When it became possible to start building a post-colonial capitalism, nationalist anti-imperialism tended to strengthen the new capitalists and the state.

Nor are the chances of succeeding with a classic Leninist frontal attack on the state substantial. A revolutionary situation seldom exists. The state may be despotic, like that in Czarist Russia. But it is not small and does not lack the power to act. On the contrary, it is very large and influential at almost all levels, playing a significant role in the emergence of capitalism.

Others tend to use Indonesia as a good example of a foreign dominated capitalist system with a military and a bureaucracy based on imperialism. Thus it is probable that my criticism of the theses on anti-imperialism are even more relevant in cases like India, with its considerably stronger domestic capitalism. The catastrophic failure of the Maoist Naxalites in India, in what was believed to be a revolutionary situation in the late sixties, in their attempt to strike against what was postulated to be a weak state based solely on imperialism and feudal landlords, is clearly an indication of the general applicability of the criticism.

### **Domestic Class Struggle**

When Lenin put forward his theses on the struggle in the Third World, the Indian delegate, M.N. Roy, protested. Roy disputed Lenin's idea of a central contradiction between some sort of feudalism, upheld by imperialism, and national capitalism, which opened the way for temporary co-operation with a progressive bourgeoisie. Roy argued, among other things, that the national bourgeoisie was already fairly strong and that it therefore did not want to fight imperialism, only to compete with it, and that the national bourgeoisie had no interest in uniting with communists to mobilize the workers and peasants. The state was thus primarily based on the domestic big bourgeoisie, which in addition to its own strength, was allied with compradors, imperialists and some feudal forces.

That capitalism dominated society did not, however, mean that it was capable of developing it. Following the Russian example, it was argued that the national bourgeoisie could not carry out its historical development mission, and that the communists thus had a chance of successfully taking over.

The communists should, consequently, initiate outright anti-capitalist measures against domestic capitalist forces and confront the state in the same phase, acting against capitalism, and not beginning with the remnants of feudalism. The basis for these actions would be provided by the workers and the large number of agricultural labourers produced by the penetration of capitalism into agriculture.

Neither the analysis nor the strategy were applied to Indonesia. But the experiences of the PKI and the emergence of post-colonial capitalism may be used to deduce critical propositions.

First, capitalists other than the paralysed national bourgeoisie may be able to start implementing capitalist development, thus reducing the chances of a communist take-over even with the full support of workers and agricultural labourers.

Second, it is not the theoretically prescribed private, traditional national bourgeoisie that is the decisive and dynamic force within post-colonial capitalism (even though strengthened post-colonial capitalists may co-operate with domestic as well as international capitalists). When post-colonial capitalists set the pace of development, they do it in a way that differs from that of a traditional national bourgeoisie. Consequently, it is very difficult to mobilize and organize workers when they are subordinated and exploited through the extensive use of extra-economic force, which does not leave room for free and open activity nor for the emergence of class consciousness. Post-colonial capitalists are not at all as interested in "bourgeois democracy" as are the traditional private national bourgeoisie.

It may be possible to confirm the validity of these extrapolations from the case of Indonesia in the more national capitalist India, where after 1964 the new Communist Party-Marxists tried to apply the analyses and strategy outlined above. The Indian Communist-Marxists almost foresaw the risks of a state of emergency being declared, but not the full implications of it, nor its consequences in causing splits within the bourgeoisie. Only later did the Marxists realize that they had first to struggle for democracy, long before they would be able to stage an outright anti-capitalist class struggle. And the problems of how to carry out this class struggle are still not solved.<sup>5</sup>

#### **"Social-democratic Marxism"**

In the meantime, it is not only the communist-oriented recommendations of how a revolutionary ought to relate to the state, to imperialism and to democracy which are undermined by the ability of a post-colonial capitalism to grow, contradicting theses of an inhibited or blocked capitalism.



Nor could "social-democratic Marxism" foresee the rise of deviant post-colonial capitalism. Classic Marxism from the time of the Second International, recently revived by Bill Warren,<sup>6</sup> which was optimistic about the role of capitalism, does acknowledge that global capitalism can also lead to capitalist development in the colonies. This must occur before socialism can take root. But the theory is based on traditional European capitalism, which has not spread. Its growth is still being inhibited by imperialism and now, also, by domestic post-colonial capitalists, who have no interest in "bourgeois democracy" and do not develop a capitalism with many new employment opportunities and a substantial domestic demand from the majority of the people.

Imperialism has not disappeared because it now allows a certain specific type of capitalist development. Nor is this development in the interests of the majority of the population, even though, until recent years, we believed that capitalist development in the Third World was blocked, and therefore equated development with a rise in the living standards of the majority of the populace and mass participation, etc.

## **Radical Peasant Struggle**

One of the basic assumptions in communist theory and analysis of the struggle in the Third World is that a development in the direction of socialism under communist leadership really is possible since the bourgeoisie does not have the strength to solve the problems of the peasantry, beset by feudal and imperialist exploitation. The alternative is to build an alliance between peasants and workers.

Generally it is regarded that exploitation of the peasantry is based on a few feudal landlords concentrating the land. This is especially applied to Asia. Consequently, the communists, it is argued, should mobilize, organize and stage land reforms against concentration of land, the so-called "land to the tiller" demands. This supports petty-bourgeois interests, opening the way for agrarian development, which benefits the rural masses and also industrial development. At this initial stage, all peasants may unite against a small number of landlords and other exploiters, even though the poor and landless peasants are regarded as being the most reliable force.

The problems of the communists in Indonesia indicate, however, that the dominant form of exploitation was not through land concentration but through the centralization of the surplus. The peasants were split. A classic land reform intended to redistribute large landed properties was not on the cards. Instead, it was possible to develop agriculture through a post-colonial capitalization, which reduced the possibilities the communists had acquiring a broad peasant base.

## **Land Monopoly and Land Reform**

Where land is scarce, land fragmentation is a real problem and

centralization of the surplus, rather than concentration of land, is the dominant form of exploitation. Hence classic land reform is inadequate. Communists who fight to give land to the tillers are confronted with intense competition among the peasants for the few available parcels of land, and by strong patron-client relationships generated by the centralization of surplus. The peasants are thus divided, while patrons are seldom seriously hurt. Land fragmentation means that the peasants cannot get enough new land to become independent of the patrons, who can continue to centralize the surplus of the peasants even if they lose part of their holdings. Consequently, the patrons may use the divisions among the peasants to subordinate them more effectively and to combine centralization of the surplus with the concentration of land they require.

Instead of struggling for a classic land reform in this kind of situation, the peasants themselves ought to try to concentrate the land and develop auxiliary crafts and other economic activities alongside agriculture.

It is unclear to what extent centralization of the surplus dominates in other countries, especially in Asia, or whether the traditional communist theses are also inapplicable there.

Presumably, concentration of land is more common in other countries, such as India. This does not, however, prevent the communists in West Bengal from declaring that there is a lack of concentrated land in some areas and that the peasants are easily split in the struggle for the land that is available.

### **The Worker-Peasant Alliance**

The lack of land concentration in Indonesia meant that there was no possibility of implementing a classic land reform. When the peasant movement had been split and the peasants were effectively subjugated by the overlords, agriculture could instead be capitalized from above. Centralization of the surplus from many small and formally independent cultivated units was complemented by concentration of land. With the "green revolution", capital was injected from outside. "Feudal remnants" were combined with capitalist features. Thus peasants were not liberated from extra-economic oppression. Many types of patronage including, for example, share-cropping are now used to promote authoritarian capitalist development within agriculture.

Even if land concentration has a more important role in other places where a redistribution of large estates is not excluded, a similar post-colonial capitalism has also occurred in several such areas in Asia and elsewhere. For here, too, the communists as well as the so-called national bourgeoisie have not been capable of mobilizing the peasants or of implementing a land reform.

Post-colonial capitalization is very brutal and marginalizes many peasants and their children. But at the same time, far more than a mere handful of landlords can make a living. About 20-30 percent of the peasants seem to have their petty bourgeois interests satisfied. These obviously find

no reason to support a communist-led alliance between workers and peasants.

Thus are shaken the very foundations for an alliance not only with workers and peasants, but also with communist-led revolutionaries in the Third World, before capitalism is fully developed and the working class is in the majority.

But what of all the peasants who are unable to make a living? What of all the proletarianized and the marginalized? Can they not support the workers in an anti-capitalist struggle against imperialism and conduct a similarly rapid revolution? Lenin had already warned the Bolsheviks that unless they had *massive* peasant support, the revolution would have to be indefinitely postponed, especially if they were forced to take up the struggle directly for socialism and only had the support of the proletariat in the cities and in the rural areas.

Today we can see that the marginalized peasants have not even become a homogeneous proletariat. Post-colonial capitalism does not offer many new jobs in industry and agriculture. Those who manage to remain in agriculture are dependent on patrons, lack uniform conditions of employment and, despite the terrible conditions, are relatively privileged. The marginalized are forced to do odd jobs, petty trading, service, etc. and seldom have a visible enemy to combat.

Thus the marginalized peasants hardly become an igniting spark. The Indonesian experience suggests that the day of the large peasant-based revolutions may be over. Perhaps the proletarianized and marginalized peasants must be mobilized from above by the workers. In all circumstances, workers are the only ones who have the potential of striking the post-colonial capitalists at the heart of the economic system: in industry and trade.

### **How Does the Left React? New Solutions?**

If the rise of post-colonial capitalism undermines current theses on the struggle in the Third World, it is reasonable to pose the question of whether the left has succeeded in developing new analytical tools, and to sketch alternative strategies for tackling the problem. It is irrelevant in this connection to inform oneself of the occasions on which the left embraced other old alternatives, such as when some chose Maoist theses instead of those the PKI adopted and sought to apply. What is important is to hunt for fresh suggestions which go beyond the inability of the old theories to tackle post-colonial capitalism.

Naturally this is a question requiring considerable fresh research, and I have not systematically addressed myself to this task here. Preliminary studies of Indonesia since 1965, and of India, do point in four directions: discussions of the struggle in democratic forms, the question of the struggle within the state, renewed worker and peasant struggle, and finally the



struggle for democracy as a potential strategic opening.

### The Party, the Masses and Democratic Work

The PKI did not try to apply only the general basic communist theories. Lenin's theory of the party was also revised, and at the same time the PKI tried to build a cadre and mass party. In addition, the PKI did not engage in armed and illegal struggle, but instead tried to struggle through peaceful and democratic means.

A simplified analysis of the strategic problems of the party does, of course, indicate that it was foolish to revise Leninism in this way. The broad mass party showed itself to be quite incapable of tackling open repression which came particularly from the military, and the peaceful path ended abruptly in massacres.

First, however, we must keep in mind that the break with the old cadre party in the early fifties was well founded, led to successes and did not lack a base in the communist tradition. The PKI retained democratic centralism, had a totalitarian central cadre and emphasized education, while stressing that it was the party which ought to lead the people, and should not allow itself to be controlled by their spontaneous consciousness. Leninism does not only consist of the extreme theses in *What Is To Be Done?*<sup>7</sup> The leaders of the PKI were more inspired by the considerably more cautious '*Left-Wing* Communism — An Infantile Disorder,'<sup>8</sup> as well as by Mao's attempt to complement élitist cadres with good contacts and collaboration with the masses.

But aside from the established theses for revision, there is no reason to blame the problems on an over-abundant democracy, either within the party or when it comes to the forms of struggle. The essential problem was not that the PKI grew into a lax, oversized party. That the members and sympathizers were dumbfounded in late 1965 depended more on the neglect of party democracy by totalitarian cadres and on the small group of leaders who steamrollered the movement right up in the central committee, thereby undermining the preconditions for effective mass party work. If there is one thing that most of the surviving communist leaders now agree on, it is how reprehensible the lack of party democracy was.

Nor is there any good reason to initiate armed struggle if the preconditions for peaceful democratic work are sound, as they were in the early fifties when the central lines of the strategy were laid down. The most important problems did not arise while the PKI doggedly defended "bourgeois democracy". They arose only after the party itself had helped Sukarno and the army to implement "guided democracy". Perhaps the communists neglected political work within the armed forces but, on the other hand, the demands for a people's militia and the attempts to utilize internal contradictions within the army contributed to the catastrophe of late 1965.

It would seem that a growing consciousness of the indispensability of democracy is spreading in the left today, both in Indonesia and in India.

where the old communist party acted like the PKI, applauding the Congress Party and contributing to the declaration of martial law in 1975. It is an open question whether the new attitude to democracy depends on the insight that a necessary precondition for being able to prosecute a struggle is that the activists remain alive and that people dare to involve themselves, or whether it *also* depends on new analyses which reveal that the post-colonial capitalists stand or fall through their extra-economic powers, including the lack of democracy.<sup>9</sup>

In any case, the demand is more emphatic, and neither in Indonesia nor in India is the left out of sympathy with alliances with bourgeois forces directed towards numerous power monopolies. In India the struggle for at least parliamentary democracy has been in the foreground for the new Marxist Communist Party ever since the declaration of the state of emergency. Thereby the party successfully broke with the current theses applied by both the PKI and the former Indian Communist Party.<sup>10</sup>

### Long-Term Manoeuvres within the State

That Aidit, step by step, developed a strategy of long-term manoeuvres, as well as advocating struggle within the state, even though he noted in 1963 that it was about to acquire a fixed class base, is indeed a deviation even from cautious Leninism. But revisionism was necessary. The Indonesian communists probably realized that not even a very strictly class-based state is, as Poulantzas later put it in analyses of the fall of southern European dictatorships,<sup>11</sup> a monolithic unit, but reflects the class struggle in society, irrespective of whether the classes are formally represented or not. Thus the class struggle ought to be conducted even within the state. Unlike Lenin's Tsarist Russian state, which was small, despotic, isolated and lacking the power to act, the Indonesian state was despotic but it was also large. It had influence over most of the central and local activities in society, including economic enterprises. It was not paralysed and unable to act, especially not the army. Perhaps the colonial state was more reminiscent of the Russian than of the European state. But that is hardly the case today, when states in the Third World and especially post-colonial state-initiated capitalism are growing. Surprise frontal attacks are useless in this situation; only patient, step-by-step class struggle will bring about the desired results.

In a difficult situation, I would myself maintain that it may even be a disadvantage to have a solidly welded and easily identifiable party which can be destroyed by a concentrated attack from, say, the army, an attack which can then serve as a pretext for demands for more weapons and more repressive measures.

Such insight is not lacking in Indonesia today, even if one hears less about patient class struggle within the state apparatus than previously with regard to those who have tried to liberate certain areas. But presumably the painstakingly slow class struggle being conducted today is more effective, more realistic and more responsible, keeping in mind the risks of a new bloodbath. This is particularly relevant when it comes to a combination of

struggle within the state and campaigns directed against the abuse of power and especially against corruption.

In India today the most independent and regenerated party of Marxist communists has had some success through the parliamentary form it has adopted, at the same time as it attempts to appear as an uncorrupt and upright alternative. At the same time it has tried to combine positions within the representative and federal organs with the mass struggle outside.<sup>12</sup>

### **Renewed Workers' Struggle and Controlled Peasant Militancy**

My analyses indicate that the workers are the only ones who have the power to strike the post-colonial capitalists at the centre of economic growth — industry and trade. But at the same time I have shown that this form of capitalism also limits the possibilities open to the workers' struggle. The working class is growing, but not so strongly as one might be led to believe. The majority do not have permanent jobs, but are to be found in handicraft-type production, sub-contracting and petty trade. Only a tiny part of the control and discipline exercised occurs inside the factory gates. The extra-economic base and instruments of power are seldom to be found there, and are seldom challenged by conflicts between workers and company management. Trade unions are led from the top and are corrupt.

In conclusion, post-colonial capitalism lacks certain possibilities available to traditional capitalists, namely the ability to allow trade union organization, since the latter can always fall back on their solid power in production and trade. Therefore the workers' struggle is considerably circumscribed by extra-economic instruments of power which split and isolate the workers' organizations.

A hopeful sign, however, is that the workers seldom content themselves with a hard fight only to improve their own economic gain (with only economic demands permanent employees at least could be bribed, as in Singapore). At the same time, they are often forced to take up the cudgels for basic rights and for a different kind of economic growth model. With such broad demands for democracy and for an alternative economic policy, they may evoke a response far beyond the factory gates, perhaps even among the marginalized and divided masses in the rural areas. I will return to this shortly.

Let me first add that my impressions of Indonesia today are reinforced by the strikes in the Sao Paulo area of Brazil, which indicated a similar direction, and where the backing given to the workers was reminiscent of that behind Solidarity in Poland. Even in India, worker actions have sometimes been combined with support from the rural poor.<sup>13</sup>

On the question of the mobilization of peasants, where the problem is a lack of concentrated land, the Indian Marxist communist attempts should be studied. Towards the end of the 1970s, the party limited militant activities in West Bengal to those which were practicable, and did not, for instance, allow occupation of land if there was a risk of splitting the peasants and inviting open repression. As a complement to the



redistribution of the land which had actually been concentrated, some attention has been paid to the system of placing the peasants in debt, the middle peasants' inability to pay higher wages to their agricultural labourers and attempts at a modest industrialization of the rural areas, which would provide jobs for many of those who have no chance of acquiring economically viable parcels of land.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Struggle for Democracy — A Strategic Opening?**

As I have previously pointed out, it is probable that the day of the broad peasant revolution is over, and that post-colonial capitalism also involves tremendous difficulties for a pure workers' struggle. Instead, my analyses indicate, particularly the outline for a theory on post-colonial capitalism, that the struggle for democracy can provide a strategic opening. I mean that the demand for democracy must have particular significance, since the lack of it is one of the bases of today's brutal but dynamic capitalist growth. It has been significantly created with the help of extra-economic powers.

Not least, when the crisis of the industrialized countries is affecting the newly industrializing countries, there is the need for political control and repression necessary to spread capitalism and maintain some growth. And it is far more important that workers who value the freedom to organize, and liberals who defend freedom of expression, may gather together in, and help to shape, movements with a centralized demand for democracy. This is because the masses are repressed with extra-economic measures.

Here the permanently employed have joint interests with day labourers and even with hawkers. Strikes do not need to be for isolated pay demands, or for the defence of the few who have jobs when some of them can be bribed. Student protests can be linked with workers' protests. The poor peasants and rural labourers can unite and link up with the workers in the towns. The struggle against corruption can be radicalized and directed towards political and administrative power monopolies, as well as involving private capitalists who are being hampered by the despotic state.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The causes of the strategic problems of the Indonesian communists appear to indicate that the background of the failure of the mid-sixties depended partly on faults in the general Marxist and communist theories about whether and how capitalism develops in the Third World and how the struggle there should be conducted. In the meantime, the PKI in Indonesia is but one of several cases. As I have indicated in this final chapter, I believe that it is important to complement my results by investigating the causes of the problems of the communists in India, where capitalist development after independence seems to differ from that of Indonesia.

Latter-day attempts to develop new theories and strategies, through the

experience of struggle also need to be analysed and evaluated in Indonesia as well as in a country such as India. There have scarcely been any major liberating steps forward. But there are the seeds of new developments in the ongoing struggle, for the struggle continues, of course, both inside and outside the communist parties. Exploitation and oppression do not disappear simply because we have difficulty in analysing them.

It is also important to scrutinize the effects of these Third World developments on the left in Europe and elsewhere. The upswing in anti-imperialist solidarity paradoxically came at a time when it became obvious that there were major problems in the Third World. For a while we could ride on the wave which was proclaimed in the cultural revolution in China (in which it was politically necessary to identify an upswing). For particular reasons the liberation struggles in Vietnam and in the former Portuguese colonies were victorious. But then the problems revealed themselves, with devastating effect, in the newly liberated countries too. And with post-colonial capitalism, as well as economic growth in the newly-industrialized countries of the Third World, it is no longer possible to equate economic development in the Third World with a development which is advantageous to the bulk of the population.

How have these changes in the Third World, and especially the problem of developing new and effective political strategies in changed circumstances, affected the relationship of the communist and socialist movements in the developed countries to the ongoing liberation struggles in the Third World, while at the same time the economic crisis has become general? I am afraid that the results of such a study would not be very encouraging. But it is important not to be afraid of the uncomfortable, not to search for substitutes in the essential but somewhat Eurocentric struggle for peace, and to make every effort to ensure that we move onwards.

Finally, I have no complete proposals to offer for an alternative concrete strategy. I have identified the most significant analytical and theoretical faults which we must tackle, and at the same time started work on finding new tools. The most likely directions development will take have also been outlined. But how they can be promoted or counteracted in organized political work cannot be sketched only from theories and analyses. To derive policies from analyses is collective political work which must take place inside the concrete societies in which we live, each with its own specific properties. The experts alone cannot solve problems. It would be a major step forward if the people, the experts and even the politicians stopped imagining that they could.

## Notes

1. Cf. concerning an analysis of the state, Anderson (1982), which I only recently acquired access to.
2. See, e.g., most recently Hamilton (1983).
3. See fn. 1, Chap. 19.
4. See for example Sen Gupta (1972) p.289.
5. See further, Sen Gupta (1979).
6. Warren, (1980).
7. Lenin (1961-), CW 5, pp.347ff.
8. Lenin (1961-), CW 31, pp.17ff.
9. See, e.g., Marx Lane (1982). I have also based this on several anonymous interviews, 1980.
10. See further Sen Gupta (1979).
11. Poulantzas (1976).
12. Sen Gupta (1979) and, concerning Indonesia, see fn. 6 above.
13. Cf., e.g., Waterman (1983).
14. See further Sen Gupta (1979).



# Appendices

## Appendix I

### Glossary and Abbreviations

Where possible I have tried to use the spelling used in Indonesia today for place names, designations, etc. I beg the reader's indulgence in the event of mistakes, since the official spelling has continually been changed.

I would also like to point out that I have used the term "Indonesian Chinese" in the broadest possible sense to refer to the permanently domiciled people in Indonesia who are of ethnic Chinese origin. As I see it, a narrower definition leaves the doorwide open for the racism which is rife in Indonesia, particularly since 1965.

*Abangan*: The old Javanese peasant culture, subordinated to the princes and their "bailiffs", *prijajis*, which adopted several characteristics from Islam, but retained several distinctive features.

*Adat*: Customary law.

*Aksi sepihak*: Unilateral actions. The opponents of the PKI used this term to characterize the radical peasant actions in 1963-65.

*Ali-Baba* arrangements: Politicians who get paid for using their influence to get Chinese businessmen, among others, licences.

*Ani-ani*: A knife used in the harvesting of rice. (See also Appendix II.)

*Ansor*: Muslim youth organization linked to the NU (see below). (Ansor is derived from the Arabic *al-ansar*: those that help the Prophet.) These black-shirted youths played a prominent part in the killings in East Java.

*Baba-Ali* arrangement: Cf. *Ali-Baba* above. This is the opposite. Now the politicians and military use the Chinese businessmen, among others, to launder their money and invest it profitably.

*Bapak*: (*Bapakism*) Father, protector, respected man.

*Baperki* (*Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia*): Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship. A pressure group for Indonesian Chinese. Undisputed strong leader: the late Siauw Giok Tjhan, who was close to the PKI.

*Bappenas* (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional*): National Planning Board.

*Bawon*: Share of the crop. (See Appendix II.)

*Becak*: Tricycle taxi, rickshaw.

*BIMAS* (*Bimbingan massal*): The Indonesian regime's agricultural development programme after 1965, linked to the "green revolution".

*Bintang Merah*: The Red Star, the PKI's theoretical organ.

*Biro Khusus*: The special bureau. The PKI's enemies used the term to refer to a presumed section within the PKI which had the task of infiltrating the armed forces as well as initiating a coup d'état on 30 September 1965.

BPP (*Badan Permusjawaratan Partai-Partai*): The advisory council of the political parties: a short-lived creation from 1951, in which the most significant opposition parties were gathered.

BPS (*Badan Pendukung Sukarnoism*): The Movement for the Defence of Sukarnoism, an attempt in the early sixties to unite anti-communist nationalists and others behind the demand for a one-party system.

BTI (*Barisan Tani Indonesia*): Indonesian Peasant Front, the country's largest peasant organization, close to the PKI.

*Bung Karno*: Respectful and popular reference to Sukarno.

CGMI (*Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia*): Student organization close to the PKI.

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency, United States' secret service.

Comintern: Third International, Communist.

*Darul Islam*: Islamic state. An extremist Muslim movement with its centre in West Java, which fought the Dutch but continued with weapons, terror, etc. to fight for an Islamic state after independence, during the period 1948-62.

*Dekon*: Sukarno's economic declaration from March 1963, in which he talked about a guided economy and self-reliance but still left considerable space for private businesses.

*Dewan Pertimbangan Asung*: Supreme Advisory Council. Sukarno's highest advisory council, constituted in 1959.

*Djalan Baru*: The New Way. Self-critical document and new programme of action for the PKI in 1948. Later used as a platform by Aidit and co. when they took over the reins of power in the party in 1950-51.

FAO: UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

*Front Demokrasi Rakjat*: A united front within the left after the fall of the popular-front government in January 1948.

*Gadai*: Mortgaging of land. (See Appendix II.)

Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*): Indonesian Women's Movement, close to the PKI, formerly known as *Gerwis*.

GOLKAR *Golongan Karya*: Today's governing "party". A corporation of functional groups based mainly in the state civilian and military bureaucracy.

*Gotong royong*: Mutual co-operation. (See Appendix II.) *Gotong royong* government: coalition government.

*Harian Rakjat*: The PKI's central daily newspaper.

IGGI: The Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia, an international consortium of aid-giving countries and banking groups.

*Ijon*: Usury. (See Appendix II.)

IMF: International Monetary Fund.

IPPI (*Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia*): The PKI-influenced organization for secondary-school pupils.

*Irian Jaya*: West Irian, Western New Guinea, called *Irian Barat* under Sukarno and *West Papua* by today's independence movement in the province.

ISDV (*Indische Social Democratische Vereenigen*): Social-democratic party that in 1914 grew out of the early trade unions in Indonesia. In 1920 it was

transformed into the PKI.

*Kabupaten*: A second-level administrative unit: the district, below the province. (E.g. Province: West Java, district: Bogor). Cf. *Kecamatan*.

*KBKI (Kesatuan Buruh Kerakjatan Indonesia)*: A confederation of trade unions linked to the nationalist PNI.

*Kecamatan*: Sub-district. (Cf. *kabupaten*, above.) Below the *kecamatan*s are villages, *desa*; towns, *kampung*; hamlets and neighbourhoods, *tetangga*.

*Kedokan*: Form of sharecropping or contract labour. (See Appendix II.)

*Konsepsi*: Significant speech by Sukarno in February 1957, in which he advocated a broad coalition government (*gorong royong* government) and hinted at the imminent "guided democracy".

*KPM (Koninklijke Pakevaart Maatschappij)*: The Dutch company which handled nearly all trade and communication between the Indonesian islands prior to 1957.

*Kyai*: Religious teacher of Islam.

*Lebaran*: The feast at the close of the Muslim month of fasting, Ramadan.

*LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat)*: People's Cultural Institute, an organization of cultural workers close to the PKI.

*Manipol* or *Manipol-usdek*: Sukarno's speech on Independence Day, 17 August 1959, which was later developed to become a national political manifesto, by *Dewan Pertimbangan Asung* (see above). *Usdek* is an acronym condensed from the cornerstones of the state's ideology: the 1945 constitution with central and strong presidential powers, Indonesian socialism, guided democracy and Indonesian identity.

*Masjumi (Madjelis Sjuro Muslimin Indonesia)*: Political party and umbrella organization for several Muslim organizations. After the NU (see below) broke away from Masjumi, it was regarded as modernistic and the NU as orthodox; at the same time, Masjumi was often less pragmatic than the NU.

*(Partai) Murba*: During the late 40s a left-wing nationalist party, thereafter less leftist; *Murba*: simple, ordinary.

*NASAKOM*: Sukarno's acronym for the three main movements collaborating to form the base of national unity: *Nas* for the nationalists, *Agama* for the Muslims, and *Kom* for the communists.

*NEFO (New Emerging Forces)*: Sukarno's name for the anti-imperialist forces in the world, especially in developing countries. Cf. *OLDEFO*.

*NU (Nahdatul Ulama)*: Orthodox Muslim political party, but relatively pragmatic in many questions.

*OLDEFO*: Old established forces. Cf. *NEFO*.

*OPPI (Organisasi Persatuan Pekerdja Indonesia)*: joint organization for all Indonesian workers. An attempt by anti-communists to establish a single state-controlled trade union confederation in the early 60s.

*Pamong praja*: The regional and colonial administrators of the Ministry of Interior, most closely resembling bailiffs.

*Pancasila*: The five principles which Sukarno adopted as his point of departure when declaring Indonesia to be independent and when he dissociated himself from the idea of an Islamic state. The five principles were: nationalism, internationalism, democracy, social justice and faith in one God.

*Partai Socialis*: The old socialist party, PS. In early 1948 it split and the right built the PSI (see below). Most of the others later joined the PKI.

*Pemuda Rakjat*: Popular Youth, PKI's youth league.



*Penebas*: An "entrepreneur" who buys standing crops and gets his own workers to do the harvesting (see Appendix II).

*Perbepsi (Persatuan Baksa Pedjuang Seluruh Indonesia)*: Organization of war veterans from the liberation war, close to the PKI. Enveloped by a central organization controlled by the army, 1957-59.

*Pertamina*: The state-owned oil company of Indonesia.

*Perti (Pergerakan Tarbiyah Islamiah)*: Muslim political party, regionally strong in Central Sumatra, but weak nationally.

*Pertani (Persatuan Tani Nasional Indonesia)*: Peasant organization linked to the nationalist PNI (see below).

*Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia)*: Paramilitary left-oriented youth league during the Indonesian Revolution. Reconstituted in 1950 as Pemuda Rakjat (see above).

*PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia)*: the Communist Party of Indonesia; established in 1920.

*PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia)*: The National Party of Indonesia; founded in 1927. After the Declaration of Independence on 17 August 1945, the new PNI was constituted, 1946-71.

*Prijaji*: See above, *abangan*.

*PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia)*: The Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic; the rebel government proclaimed on the outer islands in 1958.

*PSI (Partai Sosialis Indonesia)*: The Socialist Party of Indonesia, formed in 1948 after it had broken away from the considerably more radical PS (see above). Banned 1960-61, but informally the well-placed cadres were able to continue working.

*PSII (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia)*: Muslim party with its main support in West Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra.

*Raya*: Sanskrit for king; domestic ruler.

*RTI (Rukun Tani Indonesia)*: Communist-influenced peasant organization which was absorbed by the BTI in 1953. (See above.)

*Sajap Kiri*: Front of the left "from above", 1946-48, with communist participation. Followed by *Front Demokrasi Rakjat* (see above).

*SAKTI (Sarekat Tani Indonesia)*: Indonesian peasant organization in which the communists had some influence. In 1951 SAKTI joined BTI.

*Santri*: An articulate Muslim cultural stream in Java. Compared to the *prijaji-abangan* (see above), they are more open to private commercial ventures. *Santri*: religious (Muslim) student.

*Sarbusri (Sarekat Buru Perkebunan Indonesia)*: Trade union of plantation workers affiliated to SOBSI (see below).

*Sarekat Islam*: The Islamic movement; the first major anti-colonial mass movement in Indonesia, formed in 1912.

*Sewa*: to lease. (See Appendix II).

*SOBSI (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia)*: Central Organization of Indonesian Workers. The largest confederation of trade unions under Sukarno, close to the PKI.

*SOKSI (Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis)*: "Yellow" confederation of trade unions for state employees, initiated by state company management and others in the early sixties. Temporarily stopped in 1964.

*Suara Tani*: The main organ of the BTI (see above).

*Tanah bengkok*: Land belonging to the village and used by the village headman and his men instead of payment; virtually a grant.

*Tebasan*: The sale of standing crops to a *penebas* (see above). (See further Appendix II.)

UN: United Nations.

## Appendix II

### Key to some land tenure agreements in Javanese Agriculture

The objective of this appendix is to unburden the text of the book of several investigations on different land tenure agreements which are referred to, and at the same time to offer the reader a brief outline of these agreements. The list is not exhaustive, but adequate as reference material in this book. There is no reliable information concerning the spread of the various agreements, especially those of the fifties and sixties. The best studies have been carried out during the seventies. For analytical commentary, I refer the reader to Chapters 12 and 17.

*Gadai (mendak/mbacok)*: Mortgage of the land for longer or shorter periods. Very common. According to the land reform law, those who have had their land mortgaged for more than seven years should get it back, even if the debt has not been paid, which could, of course, be avoided. The formal owner often remains, working the land as a sharecropper, for instance, during the time the land is mortgaged.

*Sewa*: The wealthy lease land from the poor and pay for it in advance. The land rent is less if the rich tenant pays it well in advance. Several tenants can pay in advance and form a queue. *Sewa* appears to be spreading. Sometimes the formal owner stays on, as a sharecropper, for instance.

*Baskup*: The poor lease out their land for payment in kind, which is decided ahead of time, e.g. 2-2½ tons of rice per hectare per annum. According to studies of some villages in East Java, *baskup* is very common nowadays. (Siahaan, 1979.) I do not know how widespread it used to be.

Up to the 1970s share-cropping was the most common form of leasing. Now *gadai* and *sewa*, as well as *tebasan* (see below), are more common than before. In addition the sharecropper's contract is getting worse. Hüskén has shown that sharecropping can easily survive increased commercialization and more capitalization of production. In all the cases outlined below, the sharecropper does all the work.

*Maro*: 50-50 sharing of both input and output. From the gross output the costs of the input are subtracted, then the net harvest is equally divided. This type of contract was prescribed in the land reform law on crop-sharing. During the fifties and early sixties the tiller was able to sign more advantageous contracts. Naturally the despised 50-50 division of the gross harvest also occurred. Here the sharecropper had to stand the costs of the entire input alone. This made it unattractive to use more effective and more expensive inputs, and there was no incentive to raise production.

*Merrelu*: The owner provides seeds and fertilizer and takes two-thirds of the

output, leaving only one-third for the tiller.

*Mrapat*: The owner provides all the input and takes three-quarters of the harvest. The tiller retains one-quarter.

*Maro miring*: As *Mrapat*, but the owner takes three-fifths, the tiller two-fifths.

*Maralima*: Four-fifths to the owner, one-fifth to the tiller.

*Sromo* must be added to this list. In those areas where the negotiating position of sharecroppers is particularly weak, the tiller must often pay *key money* in advance, to have the chance of sharecropping.

*Negedok* (*ceblokan, kedokan*) are on the border between sharecropping and contract labour, being the lowest form of sharecropping or an advanced form of contract labour. The owner enters a contract with "workers" that they should perform a specific job on his land, in return for the right to a certain proportion of the coming harvest, e.g. one-quarter or one-fifth of what the worker harvests, or the more common one-sixth. The owner thus has control over all the work in the fields both before and during the harvest. In addition he has a very favourable loan from the "workers" in the form of their pay, which varies with the result of the harvest.

Long ago *negedok* was a way for the owner to ensure he had labour power. Nowadays it is more concerned with getting rid of a large portion of the workforce which has traditional right to share the harvesting in return for a proportion of the harvest.

The owner can use the *negedok* system to rationalize the work both before and after the harvest and pay his fellow workers more than the larger number traditionally would be entitled to, at the same time as he retains a larger proportion of the surplus.

*Negedok* can also take the form of exchange of work. Less wealthy farmers help one another, at the same time as they exclude the more or less landless harvesters.

Mortgaging (*gadai*) and leasing (*sewa*) are not always easily distinguishable from selling the harvest, usury, etc.

*Ijon*: The classical form of usury. The basic principle is that the harvest is used as security for a loan or is sold while it is still green (*ijo*). The owner and tiller still see to it that the land is cultivated and the crops delivered. Payment of the loan can be in kind or even through work. *Ijon* was and is regarded as "dirty" and is very difficult to investigate. Indications are, however, that *ijon* is very common and will survive as long as no modern system of loans and credits is introduced which can provide loans to peasants who are far from being credit-worthy. (If this were to happen, presumably most petty farmers would be bankrupt and the land concentrated by a banking institution, or the question of a land reform, which makes it possible to concentrate land and form co-operatives, must be put on the agenda.)

*Tebasan*: The larger landowners' variation on *kedokan* (see above). *Tebasan* means that the owner sells his standing crops to a *penebas*, a kind of agricultural entrepreneur, who allows his agricultural workers to do the work of harvesting the crops.

Formerly *tebasan* was a way of guaranteeing labour power to the landowner. Now it is more a way of getting rid of the "hordes of voluntary harvesters" who have the right to a share of what they harvest. *Tebasan* workers take care of the



harvest swiftly and efficiently using a sickle rather than an *ani-ani* (a knife which cuts each blade individually). They are also paid somewhat more than a voluntary harvester.

*Tebasan* is also concerned with landowners who are in need of cash. But this can hardly be a basic cause, since payment is sometimes made only after the crops have been harvested.

A few years ago *tebasan* was spreading rapidly. Now it would seem that some stabilization has occurred. The poor harvesters stay away even when no *panebas* has bought the standing crops. The landowner can himself organize a more effective and less labour-intensive cultivation.

In this connection *bawon* ought to be mentioned. *Bawon* refers to the share taken by the harvester and the owner or tiller. If a harvester takes six bundles of rice, for example, which she has cut on the fields, to the house of the owner or tiller, she will be given one bundle in exchange for the work of harvesting, while the owner or tiller will keep the remaining five. Traditionally everyone has the right to participate in the harvest, and to get their own *bawon*. But with the help of *tebasan* and *kedokan* this can be prevented.

Finally, a few words about *gotong royong*, joint work. Aside from spontaneously working together, three main forms can be distinguished:

- The state, and at the lowest level the village headman, offers communal work on roads, bridges, etc. This presumably has its roots in pre-colonial times, but later was turned into colonial forced labour.

- Voluntary communal labour.

- Obligations such as night watchman's duty in the fields, tilling communal land, repairing irrigation channels, etc.

*Gotong royong* is also used to refer to co-operation outside the agricultural sector, e.g. *gotong royong* government, or coalition government.

For references and further information see Aass (1977), Aisya (1980), Collier (all references), FAO (1966), Franke (1972), Hyami/Hafid (1978), Hickson (1975), Hüskén (1979), Martin-Schiller (1980), Siahaan (1979), Sinaga (1978), Siamet (1968), Sturgess and Wijaya (1979), Utami and Ihalauw (1973), Utrecht (1974), White (all references), White and Wiradi (1979), *Villages in Indonesia* (1967) and Wiradi (1978).

I have also made particular use of the following interviews: Jang Aisya M. (Yogyakarta, 4 November 1980), Will Collier (Bogor, 25 November 1980), John Ihalauw (Salatiga, 8 November 1980), Nico Kanan (Salatiga, 8 November 1980), Loehoer Widjajanto Adhinegara (Salatiga, 7 November 1980), Hotman O. Siahaan (Surabaya, 15 November 1980), Rudolf Sinaga (Bogor, 25 November 1980), K. Sudhana Astika (Denpasar, 13 November 1980), Ernst Utrecht (Amsterdam, 2 October 1980) and Ben White (The Hague, 29 and 30 September 1980).

## Appendix III

### The course of events — a short chronology

This short chronology is meant as a complement to Chapter 4, "The PKI, the Communist Tradition and the Course of Events in Indonesia". It gives the reader who is unsure of developments between 1945-65 a chance of orienting him or herself in time, while reading the book. Thus I have only included some of the most important events.

- 1912 *Sarekat Islam* is formed, the first major anti-colonial movement in Indonesia.
- 1914 ISDV, the Social Democratic Party, is formed.
- 1920 The PKI is formed.
- 1926 Communist-inspired attempted revolt in West Java.
- 1927 Communist-inspired attempted revolt in West Sumatra.  
The PKI is crushed.  
The nationalists, led by Sukarno, start acquiring hegemony over the anti-colonial struggle.
- 1942 Japan occupies Indonesia.
- 1945 The Japanese leave.  
British troops arrive.  
The Republic of Indonesia is proclaimed on 17 August.  
Sukarno initially becomes a strong president, Hatta vice-president.  
The armed struggle against the British and the returning Dutchmen.  
The resurrection of the PKI.  
Parliamentary form of government.  
Coalition government led by the socialist Sjahrir.
- 1946 The armed struggle and the revolution continue.  
British troops leave.  
The Dutch are temporarily forced to accept the republic in Java, Madura and Sumatra.  
Tan Malaka heads tough opposition.
- 1947 Republic under increasing pressure from Dutch troops.  
Popular-front type of government under the socialist, Amir Sjarifuddin, an unofficial communist.
- 1948 Dutch on the offensive.  
Sjarifuddin's government falls (January).  
Vice-president Hatta forms new government.  
Socialists split: the radicals join the communists in tough opposition.  
Extensive strikes.  
Musso arrives, the PKI undertakes new analyses and changes its strategy, *Djalan Baru*, with the intention of taking the lead of the "betrayed national and democratic revolution" (August).  
The government answer is repression and threats of demobilizing the armed forces of the left.  
The Madiun revolt (September).  
*Darul Islam* revolt for an Islamic state starts in West Java.
- 1949 Communists beaten and split.  
Round-table agreement with Holland in The Hague.  
The Netherlands recognizes the United States of Indonesia, but retains *Irian Jaya*.

- Vice-president Hatta forms a new government (December).
- 1950 Proclamation of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia.  
Aidit "quartet" starts taking over the PKI to pursue the new way, *Djalan Baru*, of 1948.  
Widespread strikes.  
Natsir builds a new government led by Masjumi and the PSI (September).
- 1951 Aidit "quartet" take over power in the PKI (January).  
Opposition to Natsir unites in coalition organ BPP.  
But new conservative government formed under Sukiman, with the strongest parties being Masjumi and the PNI.  
Continued widespread strikes.  
Anti-communist witch-hunt: the PKI leadership goes underground.  
Anti-strike law.
- 1952 New PKI analyses and strategy.  
Sukiman government falls because of collaboration with the US.  
PKI gives critical support to new PNI government led by Wilopo.  
Communists curb the strike wave.  
Demands from *Irian Jaya* gain in importance.  
NU breaks away from Masjumi.  
Attempted coup d'état with socialist involvement (October).  
Nasution fired as commander-in-chief of the army.  
During the year, according to the PKI's own figures, membership rises from 7,000 to 125,000.
- 1953 The PKI starts getting involved in peasant questions and continues its campaign to enrol new members.  
The Wilopo cabinet falls, after a conflict with squatters on North Sumatra. Ali Sastroamidjojo forms a new and more radical nationalist government (July).  
The PKI and Sukarno move closer together.
- 1954 Failed attempt to start creating an independent national economy with the help of trade regulations.  
Growing opposition in the outer islands.  
The PKI holds its fifth congress (March) and lays down the new analyses and new strategy to be adopted.
- 1955 The birth of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Bandung Conference.  
The cabinet, Sukarno and the PKI increasingly nationalistic.  
PKI talks about the struggle for a coalition government before the time for a popular democratic government.  
The army fails to submit to the government, which falls.  
Vice-president Hatta gives Harakap of Masjumi the task of forming a new government (August). The PNI in the opposition.  
Parliamentary elections (September). (to constituent assembly in December).  
The four major parties: PNI 22%. Masjumi 21%. NU 18% and the PKI 16% (figures approximate).  
Nasution reappointed commander-in-chief of the army.
- 1956 Indonesia revokes the union with the Netherlands.  
New nationalist led government under Ali Sastroamidjojo (March).  
Indonesia revokes debt agreement with the Netherlands.



- Revolts in the outer islands and tough confrontation within the army. An attempted coup led by one phalanx under Lubis. Nasution leads the other and draws closer to the politicians and the nationalists. Sukarno critical of "splitting parliamentary democracy". The PKI supports Sukarno, looks for collaboration with the NU and reports membership has risen to one million. Hatta resigns the vice-presidency.
- 1957 Sukarno's *Konsepsi* speech (February) in which he advocates a broad coalition government including the PKI, and hints at the need for guided democracy. Revolts on the outer islands become more serious. The government resigns (March). State of emergency. Sukarno appoints a nationalist, Djuanda, to head the government. The PKI supports Sukarno and the state of Emergency. The PKI wins most votes in the local elections in Java (27%). The UN does not recognize Indonesian demands for *Irian Jaya*. Nationalist and communist trade unions occupy Dutch companies (December). The army continues and takes over.
- 1958 The rebels in the outer islands unite and put forward an ultimatum (February) and then form the PRRI, the Republic of Indonesia's Revolutionary Government. They are supported by CIA, among others. The army, under Nasution's leadership, crushes the PRRI. The PKI directs itself to the struggle against the rebels and the compradors. At the turn of the year, the appropriated Dutch companies are nationalized and turned over to the state, but control is retained by the army.
- 1959 New Parliamentary elections are postponed. Sukarno suggests a return to strong presidency (April). The PKI holds a major peasant conference (April) to advance the peasant struggle. The army and Sukarno introduce guided democracy (June-July). New government formed under Sukarno with strong military representation. The PKI excluded. Sukarno holds his *Manipol* speech (17 August). The PKI holds its sixth congress (thanks to Sukarno who defied the army) and reaffirms its support of Sukarno and of guided democracy. The PKI also declares itself to be in favour of a state-guided national economy (cf. non-capitalist development) and that its membership is now 1½ million. The communists gain representation in Sukarno's newly-formed Planning Council and Supreme Advisory Council. The government's economic policies hit the masses hard, particularly the workers.
- 1960 Sukarno and the Supreme Advisory Council place great priority on a land reform. The PKI and SOBSI are very critical of the government. Communists talk of bureaucratic capitalism. Repression of the communists.

Parliament is dissolved, and later replaced by a new parliament in which the so-called functional groups are heavily represented, in addition to the political parties which have been approved.

The PSI and Masjumi are banned.

The army and the Minister of Labour try launching the idea of a unitary trade union confederation and form OPPI. In 1961 SOKSI is formed.

The central committee of the PKI decide to subordinate the class struggle to the national struggle (December).

- 1961 Belgian companies occupied during the Congo crisis.

Eight-year plan is presented as basis of guided economy, but remains on paper.

The struggle for *Irian Jaya* intensifies.

Extensive economic and military aid from the Soviet Union.

The PKI makes a recovery by linking its political demands with the *Irian Jaya* issue.

- 1962 All rebel movements, even *Darul Islam*, are defeated.

The Kennedy solution means that Indonesia wins *Irian Jaya*.

The PKI holds an extraordinary seventh congress to adapt the regulations and the organization of the party to Sukarno's demands, but mainly to gather support for a new strategy and tactics now that *Irian Jaya* has been won.

Indonesia declares itself to be against the new state of Malaysia.

- 1963 The PKI continues winning support.

*Irian Jaya* is handed over to Indonesia.

The State of Emergency is lifted (May).

Sukarno declares there is a new economic policy, *Dekon*, under state leadership (March).

The government proclaims instead a programme of economic stabilization and liberalization in co-operation with the IMF, among others (26 May regulations).

The 26 May regulations meet heavy opposition, not only from the PKI.

Prime Minister Djuanda dies and is replaced by Subandrio, a more radical nationalist.

Confrontation policy with Malaysia.

British companies are taken over.

Hesitation in Moscow; Sukarno and the PKI draws closer to Peking.

The 26 May regulations collapse because of confrontation.

Self-reliance is the watchword.

The central committee of the PKI proclaim an offensive policy directed towards the peasant struggle and linked to the confrontation with Malaysia (December).

- 1964 Further occupations and confrontation with British companies.

The peasant struggle intensifies and lead to unilateral actions (*aksi sepihak*), with tough conflicts and contradictions also between those faithful to Sukarno.

BPS, which organized anti-communist nationalists etc., is banned.

Conference at Bogor to iron out differences, not least in the rural areas (December).

- 1965 Contradictions continue in the rural areas with Muslim fanatics on the offensive.

*Murba* is banned.

When Malaysia is voted in as a UN member, Indonesia leaves.

The PKI intensifies its campaign against US interests and so-called bureaucratic capitalists.

The PKI fails to mobilize masses of peasants on a long march to the 45th anniversary celebrations of the party in Jakarta (May).

Later reports membership of 3.5 million.

The PKI demands a popular militia and the "nasakomization" of the armed forces.

Rumours of a right-wing coup and of left-wing officers planning a counter-coup.

Economic crisis deepens.

Sukarno ill, but recovers rapidly.

30 September Movement tries to forestall rumoured right-wing generals' coup: arrests and kills six leading generals, including the commander-in-chief of the army. Nasution escapes. Deputy army chief Suharto is not arrested.

Suharto and Nasution manage to crush the 30 September Movement.

The PKI accused of being behind the plot.

Mass arrests and massacres.

Sukarno is unable to stop Suharto-Nasution.

The PKI leadership is paralysed, the mass movement taken by surprise.

Aidit is murdered.

1966 Mass arrests and massacres continue.

Sukarno forced to hand over more and more power to Suharto, who also out-manoeuvres Nasution.

The hunted PKI leadership is split. Secretary-General Sudisman has the time to indulge in Maoist self-criticism before he, too, is arrested.

1967 Sukarno is deposed as president.

1968 Those communists who try to organize a Maoist guerilla war are crushed.

1970 Sukarno dies.

1974 The only serious coup attempt against Sukarno is led by General Sumitro.



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## **Interviews, etc. referred to in the text**

### **Anonymous references**

The information given is of such a nature that to cite interviewees is undesirable.

Numbered interviews: 01, 02, 8, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31, 35, 38, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 66, 67, 71, 72, 73 (letter). More details can be found in the end notes to each chapter. Several discussions were also held with authors and cultural workers who were leaders in the cultural struggle under Sukarno.

### **Other interviews, etc.**

Alex Alatas, former secretary of the previous vice-president, Adam Malik.

Jang, Aisya Muttalib, Centre for Rural and Regional Studies and Research, Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta; now with the United Nations, Jakarta.

Prof. H. W. Arndt, Department of Economics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

Prof. William Collier, 1980 Bogor Agricultural University Agricultural Development Council Inc. and Agro Economic Survey and Rural Dynamic Study.

Dr Harold Crouch, Jabatan Sains Politik, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor.

Dr Dorodjatun, Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta.

Ahem Eningpradja, former Minister of Labour.

Prof. Herbert Feith, Department of Politics, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria.

Dr Hadisasastro, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta.

J.H. Hardi, former deputy Prime Minister (1957-59) (PNI).

Ron Hatley, Bendigo College of Advanced Education, Victoria.

Prof. John Ihalaui, Universitas Kristen Sataya Warana, Salatiga.

M. Isnaeni, former first chairman, PNI.

Nico Kanan, Lembaga Penelitian Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Kristen Sataya Warana, Salatiga.

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Dr Michael van Langenberg, University of Sydney.

Prof. John D. Legge, Department of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria.

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Mochtar Lubis, Authoritative economic journalist, author, artist, Jakarta.

Prof. J.A.C. Mackie, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

The late Adam Malik, former vice-president of the Republic of Indonesia,



- former member of the Murba Party, former Minister of Trade, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, etc.
- Prof. Moebyato, Fakultas Ekonomi and Centre for Rural and Regional Studies and Research, Universitas Gajah Mada, Yogyakarta.
- Gen. Nasution, former Minister of Defence, chief of the army and the armed forces.
- Dr Bill O'Malley, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.
- Dr Onghokham Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta.
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- Dr J. Pangalaykim, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta.
- Dr Jan Pluvier, Instituut voor moderne geschiedenis van Zuid Oost Asie, University of Amsterdam.
- Dr Richard Robison, School of Human Communication, Murdoch University, Western Australia. (Letter.)
- Hans Rodén, in 1980 with the International Monetary Fund, Jakarta.
- Sadjarwo, former Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Affairs.
- Prof. Sarbini, former head of Central Bureau for Statistics. Now economic journalist and editor.
- Prof. Sartono Kartodirdjo, Centre for Rural and Regional Studies and Research, Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta.
- Adi Sasono, head of the Lembaga Studi Pengangunan (Institute for Development Studies), Jakarta.
- Hotman Oleh Siahaan, Fakultas Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya.
- The late Siauw Giok Tjhan, former leader of the Indonesian Chinese, Baperki.
- Dr Rudolf Sianga, in 1980 head of Rural Dynamics Study, Bogor.
- Prof. Iman Soetiknjo, Universitas Gajah Mada, Yogyakarta, who conducted preparatory studies for the land reform during the late 50s and early 60s.
- Dr Ketut Sudhana Astika, Department of Anthropology, Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali.
- Dr I. Tadjasukmana, former Minister of Labour.
- Dr Ernst Utrecht, Trans National Institute, Amsterdam, and Trans National Research Project, University of Sydney, former member of the Supreme Advisory Council under Sukarno, former member of left of the PNI.
- Prof. Emeritus W.F. Wertheim, University of Amsterdam.
- Dr Benjamin White, Institute of Social Studies, the Hague, former consultant to the Agro Economic Survey, Rural Dynamics Study, Bogor.



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# DILEMMAS OF THIRD WORLD COMMUNISM

The Destruction of the PKI in Indonesia

OLLE TÖRNQUIST



**Dilemmas of Third World Communism** is a study of the Indonesian Communist Party that aims to answer more general questions about the difficulties, and even defeats, encountered by so many left-wing movements in the Third World. Dr. Tornquist argues that one fundamental reason for the Indonesian military's successful destruction of the world's third largest communist party in 1965 lay in the failure of the Party itself to analyse the nature of the post-colonial capitalist society that was emerging. The Party was unable, as a result, to develop effective long-term strategies at the political level.

This book analyses, for each stage in the PKI's history, the range of theoretical issues confronting the Party, including the land question, the role of the bourgeoisie, the consequences of nationalisation, and the problem of democracy. The author argues that the Party relied unthinkingly on the analyses prevalent within Marxism generally, and did not perceive how these issues were altered by the specific forms post-colonial capitalism was taking in the Third World. The consequent theoretical misconceptions resulted in fundamental errors of strategy, that in the end led the Party to disaster.

The lessons drawn in this analysis of the PKI's defeat are relevant to many Third World revolutionary movements, but particularly to those in countries with large peasant populations, semi-capitalist agrarian relations, and ruling classes using the state to promote accumulation under these conditions. Consequently, the analysis is also of importance to international solidarity movements.

**Dr Olle Törnquist** is a Research Fellow and Lecturer at the University of Uppsala, where he has worked for several years in Development Studies. The field research for the present study was conducted in Indonesia and an earlier version of the book published in Sweden.

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