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**THE INDONESIAN MAOISTS: DOCTRINES  
AND PERSPECTIVES**

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**THE INDONESIAN MAOISTS: DOCTRINES  
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JUSTUS M. VAN DER KROEF

In the aftermath of the abortive coup attempt of September 30, 1965 (usually called Gestapu by acronym-minded Indonesians, from *Gerakan Tiga Puluh September* or "Thirty September Movement"), which occurred mainly in Djakarta and Central Java, and in which elements of the Indonesian armed forces led by "progressive" officers as well as some national and provincial leaders and units of youth and women's front groups of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) were involved, there emerged a distinctive group of Maoist-oriented Indonesian Communists. Perhaps two hundred of the group reside outside Indonesia, principally in Tirana and Peking; these non-residents include students, former consular and diplomatic personnel (like former Indonesian ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Djawoto), journalists and other professionals. In Indonesia itself, where the PKI has been formally banned since 1966, there are several scores of additional underground supporters, some of whom have seen active guerilla service in the Maoist-oriented, predominantly Chinese "North Kalimantan People's Guerilla Forces" (NKPGF) that operates in the interior of the Malaysian state of Sarawak near the border of Indonesian West Kalimantan (Borneo).<sup>1</sup> Over the years, Peking has harbored a "Delegation of the Central Committee" of the PKI, headed by Jusuf Adjirorop, a pre-Gestapu Politburo member of the PKI, and as Sino-Indonesian diplomatic relations remain suspended (though not formally broken), Chinese media continue to give space to official pronouncements of the PKI's based "Delegation." Such pronouncements, not surprisingly, urge party members (as the most recent PKI anniversary message has it) to "truly master the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought" and denounce the "splittist activities of the Soviet social-imperialists."<sup>2</sup>

Numerically, the Indonesian Maoists, to a large degree an expatriate group at that, would hardly seem to merit much consideration. Moreover, in Moscow, India and Sri Lanka there

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1. See the biographical sketches of NKPGF members in the *Sarawak Tribune* (Kuching) March, 10, 1975.

2. "Continue to Hold Aloft the Banner of Revolution and Strive to Realize National Liberation," *Peking Review*, May 30, 1975, pp. 17-18.

are several scores of pro-Soviet PKI exiles and/or sympathizers, who have published their particular version of Gestapu and of the misfortunes that have befallen their party.<sup>3</sup> However, while Indonesia's Suharto government has thus far been reluctant to join the accelerating momentum now evident among other Southeast Asian nations in seeking a new *modus vivendi* with Peking, that momentum itself and the place of the People's Republic of China (PRC) generally in the new post-Vietnam war constellation of Asian internal relations, as well as the persisting domestic opposition in Indonesia from the various shades of the presently contained, underground, dormant and intimidated Indonesian Left (eventually again to be reckoned with, surely, in Indonesian politics) suggest that the views of Indonesian Maoists need to be better understood. Analyzing their publications, and insofar as identifiable, their distinctive tactics during the past decade, indicates perhaps three nodal areas of Indonesian Maoist concern. The first is the historic course of the Indonesian state and the role of the PKI in it, and particularly in relation to the Gestapu incident. Second, there is the condition of Indonesia today under the Suharto regime, and that regime's foreign relations. Finally, there are the present tasks of the PKI both organizationally and tactically, in furthering the nation along the Maoists' self-perceived revolutionary road.

### I.

Four major periods of "white terror" (i.e., anti-Communist persecution) in a country that remains essentially locked in semi-feudal conditions, aggravated by imperialistic domination — such is the Indonesian Maoist's perception of his national history in the past half-century.

The first "white terror" was that of the Dutch colonial rulers of Indonesia; in November 1926, at the time of the PKI's first

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3. For the views of the pro-Soviet PKI group see *To Brothers at Home and Comrades Abroad Fighting Against Imperialism, For Independence, Peace, Democracy and Socialism For a Sound Indonesian Revolution* (Tribune Publications, Columbo, 1967); "Lessons from the Set-Back in Indonesia," *Political Affairs* (CPUSA Theoretical Journal) March, 1968, pp. 49-61; "Urgent Tasks of the Communist Movement in Indonesia," *Information Bulletin* (Prague), 1969, no. 7 (143), pp. 23-42; Thomas Sinuradja, "The Struggle for Unity. A Few Lessons from the History of the CP of Indonesia," *World Marxist Review*, September, 1973, pp. 35-37.

armed rebellion against them, the Dutch rulers crushed this first Indonesian "national armed uprising." Then, in 1948, in the midst of the Indonesian Revolution against the Dutch, a "reactionary" Indonesian government headed by premier Muhammad Hatta and acting "in collusion with the US imperialists," launched a second "barbarous white terror" against the party. This occurred, it might be added, after a handful of lesser party leaders had staged an abortive coup in the East Java city of Madiun. The coup attempt illustrated the party's doctrinal and tactical errors during the Indonesian Revolution, the Maoists hold. Shattered, though not formally outlawed, after Madiun, the party had to experience a third "white terror" of arrest and persecution in 1951 during the period when a now independent Indonesian Republic was governed by a cabinet headed by the conservative Muslim premier Sukiman. (This third "white terror" came after ill-considered Communist labor agitation and strike action in and around Djakarta.) However, these blows, too, the national party survived, according to this Maoist version of Indonesian history, just as regional PKI organizations were able to overcome, in subsequent years, various localized forms of "white terror", unleashed by "demestic reactionaries" such as militant Muslim extremists in West Java and anti-Sukarno and anti-Communist military commanders and political leaders who proclaimed a secessionist counter-government in parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi (Celebes) in 1958. Yet the PKI could not be annihilated, and, during the fifties and sixties, was able to develop in a "period of relatively peaceful struggle" in a country that had remained "long enough" both "semi-independent and semi-feudal." This comparatively "peaceful" period of PKI growth, it might be added, coincided with the last and most authoritarian phase of President Sukarno's "Guided Democracy" rule over Indonesia. But it was also a period, as Indonesian Maoist history now holds, when "modern revisionism," specifically the policy of achieving socialism peacefully, and other forms of "petty bourgeois subjectivism" became dominant in the PKI. And thus the stage was set for the disaster that was to overtake the party with and in the aftermath of the 1965 Gestapu affair, when "right wing forces" headed by a "clique of generals" unleashed a fourth "white terror" (or, as some Maoist accounts have it, the third "white terror" since Indonesians proclaimed their independence on August 17, 1945) against the PKI, establishing for the moment a temporarily "superior position in comparison with the people's forces." But the struggle goes on, and the PKI will undoubtedly ultimately succeed in bringing the

Indonesian people to a time when there will be no "oppression by imperialism and feudal vestiges."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most striking feature in this Indonesian Maoists' version of their nation's recent history is not just that the march of events is made to pivot primarily on certain distinctive periods in which the PKI was persecuted or impeded by an anti-Communist "white terror." Rather, it is the deepening emphasis over the years, in the Maoists' literature on that history, that the party basically misunderstood the nature and aftermath of the Indonesian Revolution against the Dutch (the "August 1945 Revolution," as it is commonly called) so that the succession of "white terrors" experienced by the party since the 1948 Madiun rebellion acquire a kind of historical inevitability. In a collection of five principal statements published by the Indonesian Maoists in September 1971, this progression in emphasis is particularly apparent.<sup>5</sup> In the first statement, a May 1966 party anniversary message, presumably issued in Djokjakarta, Central Java by the party's Politburo, little more is said about PKI errors save a passing reference to the fact that during a "relatively peaceful" period of party struggle (presumably in the later fifties and sixties) the emergence of "revisionism" was facilitated. The second statement in the same collection, issued by the Politburo on August 17, 1966, the twenty-first anniversary of the outbreak of the Indonesian Revolution, offers a new doctrinal focus, however, namely the alleged "failure" of the August 1945 revolution, and the errors in the PKI party line in relation to it. This failure of the August 1945 Revolution is described initially in terms of the dissimilar political interests of the social classes in Indonesia participating in the anti-colonial struggle. The August 1945 Revolution, occurring in a period of the decline of capitalism, was therefore not "an old-type bourgeois democratic revolution," according to this August 17, 1966 statement, but, since its motive force was the proletariat and the peasantry, the revolution was part of the "anti-imperialist" and "world Proletarian socialist

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4. The above description and citations are drawn from "Let Us Keep the Flames of 1945 August Revolution Ablaze — Punish and Smash the Traitors," *Indonesian Tribune* (Tirana) vol. 8, 1974, no. 3, pp. 3-4, and "Hold Aloft the Reputation and Honour of the Communist" (May 23, 1966 PKI Politburo Message) pp. 3-12 in *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line to Lead the People's Democratic Revolution in Indonesia. Five Important Documents of the Political Bureau of the CC PKI* (published by the Delegation of the CC PKI, Tirana, 1971). *Indonesian Tribune* is the Indonesian Maoists' bi-monthly and principal journal.

5. *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line . . .*, *op. cit.*

revolution" now sweeping the world. Nevertheless, the "exploiting" classes, particularly the national bourgeoisie, checked the further progress of the August 1945 Revolution once that revolution had satisfied the bourgeoisie's own interests, as meanwhile the PKI suffering from "serious weakness in theory" and lack of understanding of the "concrete conditions" not only failed to lead consistently the armed struggle against the Dutch, but also "did not develop guerilla warfare that was integrated with the democratic movement of the peasants." Indeed, the PKI, according to the Maoist view, underplayed such strength as it had in order to be able to cooperate with the "Right wing Socialists" led by premier Sutan Sjahrir and with the national bourgeoisie, thus failing to reach its own "objective goal."<sup>6</sup>

This general perception of the August 1945 Revolution as a potentially promising proletarian uprising that eventually went off the rails because it came under the control of the national Indonesian bourgeoisie and "Right wing Socialist" elements with which the PKI erroneously attempted to cooperate, has been given its fullest refinement to date in the Indonesian Maoists' literature in the third document included in their abovementioned collection of five principal party statements. This third document is the so-called *otokritik* (self-criticism) of the party's Politburo, issued presumably from somewhere in "Central Java" in September 1966.<sup>7</sup> The *otokritik*, the original authorship of which has been attributed to Sudisman, a prominent Politburo member who was subsequently arrested and executed, is an open attack on the theories of PKI chairman D.N. Aidit, who, from the early fifties until the 1965 debacle of Gestapu, led the PKI to the greatest expansion and influence in its history. Aidit was also killed in Gestapu's aftermath.

Elaborating on the theme of the "embourgeoisement" of the August 1945 Revolution, and on the failure of the party to realize the Indonesian Revolution's "proletarian" goals, the *otokritik* proceeds to extend the failure of the August 1945 Revolution to the settlement with the Dutch that ended the revolution and in fact to the entire first decade and a half of Indonesia's formal national independence (1950-65) as well. The major accent in the *otokritik*,

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6. Cf. especially "Take the Road of Revolution to Realize the Tasks Which Should Have Been Accomplished by the 1945 August Revolution," pp. 27-84, in *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*

7. The *otokritik's* title is the same as the title of the collection of five important statements in which it appears: *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-9.

however, falls not just on the machinations of the vacillating national bourgeoisie and its "reactionary" allies, but more especially on a cardinal doctrinal error, attributed to Aidit, which doomed the party to disaster and which also had already been mentioned, but very briefly, in the August 17, 1966 statement cited above. That doctrinal error is the "theory of two aspects in the state power" of the Indonesian Republic. According to this theory, there was a "people" (or "pro-people") aspect, and an "anti-people" aspect in the political dynamics of the Indonesian Republic during the 1950-65 period. Aidit and the PKI leadership are accused in the *otokritik* of merging the party's line and its interests wholly with this so-called "people aspect," even though the "people aspect" of state power was, according to the Maoist view today, in fact at that time dominated by the untrustworthy national bourgeoisie with which the PKI and the proletariat had allied itself just as they had done through much of the August 1945 Revolution. Content to do battle against "the Right wing forces or the diehards," i.e., the "anti-people" aspect of state power, under a party leadership mired in "opportunism" and one that erroneously believed that the "people aspect" of the state power had now become ascendant under the progressive policies of President Sukarno, the PKI was essentially emasculated through this cooperation not only with the national bourgeoisie but in effect, also through its identification with Sukarno. As the *otokritik* puts it:

The Party leadership went so far as to accept without any struggle the recognition of Bung Karno (i.e. Sukarno) as the Great Leader of the Revolution and the leader of the "people aspect" in the state power of the Republic of Indonesia. In the articles and speeches of the party leaders it was frequently said that the struggle of the PKI was based not only on Marxism-Leninist, but also on the "teachings of Bung Karno" that the PKI made rapid progress because it realised Bung Karno's idea of Nasakom unity (i.e. the unity of nationalist, religious and Communist political forces in Indonesia). Even the people's democratic system in Indonesia was said to be in conformity with Bung Karno's main ideas . . . Thus the Party leadership did not educate the working class and the rest of the working people on the necessity to place the leadership of the revolution in the hands of the proletariat and their Party, namely the PKI.<sup>8</sup>

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8. *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line, op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.



In briefly considering this interpretation of Aidit's two-aspects concept, one is struck first of all by the irony of the fact that the citations in the *otokritik* to that part of Aidit's writings in which Aidit expounds his two-aspect theory must, at least at one time, have been acceptable to Maoist purists in People's China itself, for these citations are to a collection of Aidit's writings which consists largely of addresses given to various audiences in the People's Republic of China during Aidit's visit there in September, 1963.<sup>9</sup> For example, Aidit's elaboration of his two-aspects theory which the Indonesian Maoists now find so displeasing, appears, nota bene, in a lecture by Aidit on the subject of the historic course of the Indonesian revolution and on the tasks of the PKI related to it, delivered to the Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on September 2, 1963.<sup>10</sup> To cap the irony, this particular report, along with Aidit's addresses to a mass rally in Peking on September 4, 1963, and one to the Kwantung Provincial Committee Party School in Canton on September 25, 1963, in all of which he authoritatively expounds the concept of the "people" (or "Popular") and "antipeople" ("anti-popular") aspect of state power in Indonesia (the latter representing the "interests of imperialism, the compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists"), appear in an English language translation published by the Foreign Languages Press of Peking.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover the *otokritik* does less than justice to Aidit's own ambiguities in his exposition of the two-aspects theory. For example, in his September 2, 1963, report to the Chinese Central Committee's Higher Party School, Aidit declares that "today" the people or "popular" aspect of state power has become "the main aspect and plays a leading role in the state power" of the Indonesian Republic, while two days later, in his Peking mass rally speech, Aidit asserts that the "anti-popular aspect" of

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9. D.N. Aidit, *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi* (Jajasan Pembaruan, Djakarta, 1964). Included also are two addresses given in Pyongyang on September 11 and 12, 1963.

10. Compare, e.g., Aidit's *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37, with *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-132.

11. D.N. Aidit, *The Indonesian Revolution and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of Indonesia* (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1964). Interestingly, the *otokritik* does not cite the English title of this Peking edition of Aidit's addresses but instead uses an English translation of the Indonesian title *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi*, i.e., "Raise High the Banner of Revolution" (see *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-208, notes 11, 14, 18, 21, 28, 31, 33).

imperialists compradors, landlords, and so on, not only have been attempting to frustrate the "progressive policies" but "up to the present this aspect still occupies a dominant position," and hence, the PKI's task is to struggle in such ways as to enable the "popular aspect" to grow so that it can, in fact, achieve a dominant position.<sup>12</sup>

Then, too, the *otokritik*, and the position of the Indonesian Maoists generally, by implication distort Aidit's appreciation of the value of armed struggle and guerilla war. In the Maoists' writings, Aidit is made out to be the architect of the "revisionist" line of achieving power by parliamentary means. Yet it was Aidit, in his mass rally speech at Peking on September 4, 1963, who declared that "The August Revolution also taught us that armed struggle is the most important struggle in the revolution," and on the same occasion sketched the tactics which would "ensure the victory of guerilla warfare in an island country like Indonesia."<sup>13</sup>

The *otokritik* also stresses the significance in the course of the August 1945 Revolution of a new party policy resolution, entitled *Djalan Baru untuk Republik Indonesia* ("The New Road for the Indonesian Republic"), formulated by the veteran Indonesian Communist leader Musso when he returned to Indonesia in 1948. Ironically, again, considering the Maoists' praise for Musso today, Musso had spent his time mostly in the USSR since he had left Indonesia nearly twenty-five years previously. The *Djalan Baru* resolution, with its stress on achieving for the PKI a position of leadership in the Indonesian revolution and in the national front, and on seeing that revolution as a "national" or "bourgeois democratic" one with prominent accommodation to be given to both bourgeois capitalist and peasant interests, has been described as "Maoist in nature, if not consciously" "in its inspiration," at least "sufficiently similar to the Chinese line."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, it would be difficult to eliminate Moscow's hand in Musso's return or in his proposed new tactic. As it was, Musso's approach, though formally adopted by the PKI's Politburo in

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12. D.N. Aidit, *The Indonesian Revolution and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 and 85, and Aidit, *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 and 68-69.

13. D.N. Aidit, *The Indonesian Revolution and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66 and 69, and D.N. Aidit, *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi* *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56-57.

14. Ruth T. McVey, *The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution* (Modern Indonesia Project, Interim Reports Series, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), p. 66.

August 1948, came to naught because of the precipitate Communist rebellion in Madiun a few weeks later (which Musso almost certainly opposed.) The point is that the *otokritik*, by creating the impression that the PKI under Aidit somehow strayed from the norms set earlier by the *Djalan Baru* resolution, patently ignores again not only the continuation of many *Djalan Baru* concepts in party ideology and tactics later employed by Aidit in the 1950's (e.g., the supportive roles of peasantry and bourgeoisie in the revolutionary struggle, and the concept of "bourgeois democratic revolution"), but also the explicit approval given by Aidit of Musso's ideas and of the *Djalan Baru* resolution itself, which, becoming the basis of the PKI's "new policy," according to Aidit, "made possible the development of a new upward momentum in the Indonesian Revolution."<sup>15</sup>

The position of the *otokritik* then, and of the Maoists generally, on the alleged extended "failures" of the August Revolution into the 1950's and early 1960's as a result of a party line adverse to militancy, confrontation and armed struggle, and presumably too "opportunisticly" accommodating to bourgeois leadership and to President Sukarno, does some violence to the historical record, certainly insofar as Aidit was concerned. It was, after all, Aidit who anticipated criticism that collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the "pro-people" dynamics of the state might work to the party's and Indonesia's ultimate disadvantage. For in his Peking rally speech of September 4, 1963 (a speech deemed sufficiently pure doctrinally to be disseminated in English translation by Peking's Foreign Languages Press, it may be reiterated), Aidit said<sup>16</sup>:

"Some comrades have asked: Are these progressive political and economic plans not tricks used by the bourgeoisie to deceive the working people? This is not a strange question. But the point is that these progressive plans have come about through the growth of the progressive forces which have taken an active part in drawing them up . . . all the progressive plans and measures adopted by the present government are primarily the result of the struggle of Indonesia's progressive forces. The fact that the whole nation

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15. See, e.g., Aidit's essay, "Lahirnja PKI dan Perkembangannja," pp. 423-426, in Aidit's collected works, *Pilihan Tulisan* (Jajasan Pembaruan Djakarta, 1959), vol. 1.

16. D.N. Aidit, *The Indonesian Revolution and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, *op. cit.*, p. 86, and D.N. Aidit *Kibarkan Tinggi Pandji Revolusi*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

has accepted the plan of the working class and its party reflects the working class leadership in the revolution”.

The culmination of the PKI's allegedly erroneous line under Aidit, in the Indonesian Maoists' perception today, was the party's participation in the Gestapu coup attempt. This participation resulted from overconfidence in the party's strength (a "leftist tendency," according to the *otokritik*), and from an "exaggeration of the results of the people's struggle," which led the PKI leadership in the course of 1965 to believe, according to the party's forty-fifth anniversary thesis, in a "ripening revolutionary situation" in the country.<sup>17</sup> Whether the Maoist perception is the right one, and the PKI, in fact, had become overconfident in its strength as a result of Sukarno's seemingly ever more militant foreign policies as domestic economic chaos deepened, may well long be argued. The point to note here, however, is that the Indonesian Maoists (and indeed their pro-Soviet opponents in the Indonesian Communist movement as well) concede direct PKI involvement in the attempted Gestapu coup. The readiness with which Indonesian Communists of whatever hue admit such involvement seems at variance from the position of some Western academic commentators on the Gestapu affair who appear to seek to minimize PKI involvement as much as possible, or else assert that the party was somehow duped into participation in the attempted coup.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the *otokritik* asserts, for example, that as a result of their overconfident "adventurism," the PKI leaders "easily involved themselves" in the Gestapu conspiracy.<sup>19</sup> The presumed author of the *otokritik*, former Politburo member Sudisman, according to his trial record published in a Communist journal, excluded the PKI as such from culpability for the coup attempt; yet he added that in respect of Gestapu "all actions were executed by individuals who happened to be members of the PKI," and that, moreover, the aims of the coup planners and "the objectives of the 30th September movement were correct."<sup>20</sup>

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17. *Tesis 45 Tahun PKI, 23 Mei 1920-23 Mei 1965* (Jajasan Pembaruan, Djakarta 1965) p. 15. Parts of this thesis are cited in *Build the PKI Along Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

18. For various views of Gestapu see by J.M. van der Kroef, "Interpretations of the 1965 Indonesian Coup: A Review of the Literature," *Pacific Affairs*, Winter 1970-71, pp. 557-577, and "Origins of the 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Probabilities and Alternatives," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, September 1972, pp. 277-298.

19. *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

20. "Sudisman Against Treason," *Tricontinental*, July-August, 1968, no. 7, pp. 18-19. *Tricontinental* is self-described as the "theoretical organ of the Executive

*Inter alia*, one notes also that in the most authoritative self-evaluation that has thus far been published by the PKI-Moscow faction one reads that the coup attempt aimed at establishing “a state power that would be a harbinger of a people’s democracy,” and a spokesman of that faction, writing in the main international organ of Moscow-oriented Communist parties, has reiterated that the aim of the Gestapu movement was to bring together Indonesian nationalists, Muslims and Communists in a “Revolutionary Council” which would be “a preliminary to People’s Democracy.”<sup>21</sup>

While, even so, the extent of PKI participation in the coup (as distinct from the PKI having participated at all) is likely to remain controversial in various quarters, for the Indonesian Maoists, as for their “revisionist,” Moscow-oriented opponents, Gestapu marked the inevitable climax of doctrinal errors and self-compromising tactics which, in the Maoist perception, the PKI pursued for better than a decade and a half, and which, in turn, stemmed also from the failure of Indonesia’s August 1945 Revolution.

Since the publication of the September 1966 *otokritik*, authoritative statements of the Indonesian Maoists have reasserted the failure of the August 1945, Revolution, and of the PKI erroneous line in the next decade and a half under Aidit’s leadership, as something given — a defined doctrinal position no longer in need of further explanation, but only in need of constant affirmation in policy pronouncements. Thus, in the words of one Indonesian delegate to an Albanian trade union congress in 1967, the Indonesian workers and people, having failed to “take the correct road in their revolution,” i.e., “they took the peaceful road,” now must suffer “the bitter consequences,” and will have to undergo “untold hardships,” for experience has shown that “taking the peaceful road is tantamount to taking the road to suicide” and defeat.<sup>22</sup> During the 1951-65 period, one reads in a 1970 editorial in the Indonesian Maoists’ main journal, that the

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Secretariat of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America,” headquartered in Havana. Sudisman’s statement, according to a note by Tricontinental’s editors, came to them “thanks to honorable people” who were present at Sudisman’s trial.

21. *To Brothers at Home and Comrades Abroad*, *op. cit.* (see note 3) p. 38; Suchahyo, “The ‘New Order’ in Indonesia,” *World Marxist Review*, 1967 vol. 10, no. 10, p. 47.

22. Setiati Surasto, “The Peaceful Road is the Suicidal Road,” *Indonesian Tribune*, April-May 1970.

PKI leadership pursued a path of "Right opportunism," while, simultaneously, "revisionist" influence made itself felt in their party. This "opportunist-revisionist" tactic did immense harm to the PKI, as well as to the course of the unfinished Indonesian Revolution. The emergence of the Suharto "fascist regime" today, is, again, viewed as directly linked to the erroneous party line of the previous decade and a half.<sup>23</sup> In another editorial, in 1974, the party's failure in the August 1945 Revolution and beyond is considered in terms of control of state power. In other words, the people, having seized in the revolution the "old state machinery," which did not meet the requirements of the revolution, nevertheless "never challenged" that machinery's "continued use," and so did not replace it with an entirely new state power mechanism that could serve the people's own revolutionary ends. Consequently, the "reactionaries" were able to play the role of a "Trojan horse" and to undermine the Indonesian nation's revolutionary course.<sup>24</sup> Such short categorical characterisations of Indonesia's first twenty years of national revolution and independence (1945-65) are being repeatedly made in the Indonesian Maoist literature, sometimes with an occasional embellishment of historic detail, but always with an eye to providing an ideological rationale for the party's present predicament in Suharto's Indonesia, and for the presumably new tactics which must be developed in order to remedy Indonesia's present condition. Before considering these new tactics, the plight of Indonesians and their country in the present Suharto era, as the Maoists see it, must be briefly noted.

## II.

"Fascist general Suharto ascended to power by way of a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat — one which was backed by US imperialism and directly masterminded by the CIA. No wonder that the fascist regime he has set up in Indonesia has been praised to the skies by world imperialism!" — so one reads in the lead article of a recent publication of the "Indonesian Students' Association in Albania." In the Maoists' dialectic vision, the Suharto regime, as the present antithetical climax in Indonesia's presumably ongoing revolution, is held to be exemplified by a whole catalogue of deeply nefarious policies. There is, for example, the allegedly continuing "selling out" by the Suharto government

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23. Editorial, "Long Live The Communist Party of Indonesia," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 4, 1970, no. 2 p. 4.

24. Editorial, "Let Us Keep the Flames of the 1945 August Revolution Ablaze — Punish and Smash the Traitors!" *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 3, p. 5.

of Indonesia's natural resources to the "imperialism" of foreign investors, particularly to the US. It is, however, not just the flow of foreign investment (now nearly \$4 billion) to Indonesia, or the ever growing number of foreign enterprises in the country ("While prior to Suharto's seizure of power in 1965 there were only three oil companies operating in Indonesia, there are now 48, with US and Japanese firms topping the list"), that arouse the Maoists' ire. It is more especially also the opportunities presumably being provided to nepotistic, rapacious, "Indonesian bureaucrat capitalists," who, acting as fronts for foreign capital interests, continue to enrich themselves. Thus, while President Suharto himself has no business interests, "his wife Tien Suharto . . . is a go-between for foreign oil companies and the tourist business" acquiring "no small" commissions for her services. There is, according to the Indonesian Maoists, also Mme. Tien Suharto's "close criminal relationship" with General Ibnu Sutowo, the former director-general of Indonesia's embattled, state-owned oil company Pertamina, who has become "a financial prop for the survival of fascist rule" and who, along with other Indonesian generals, is accused of participating in various business enterprises with foreign concerns, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

In the Maoist perception, the economy of Suharto's Indonesia has become the pawn of "imperialist" investment interests, and the regime's national Five Year Development Plans merely serve to widen the exploitative opportunities to these foreign monied interests. Inevitably, in this view, the "rush of foreign capital" to Indonesia has been accompanied by the immiseration of the Indonesian masses, characterized, among others, by the bankruptcy of "large numbers" of domestic enterprises and a growing mass unemployment for which supporting data are cited in the Maoists' literature drawn from the Indonesian press itself.<sup>26</sup> Indonesian Maoist accounts are especially critical of the huge loans and other aid extended by the so called Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia, or IGGI, a consortium composed of Indonesia's major creditors and investors, among them the US, Japan, and a number of Western European countries, as well as international banking institutions like the World, Bank, the IMF

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25. Preceding quotations from *Api* (API Pemuda Indonesai), Tirana, October 1972, pp. 1-2.

26. See, e.g., the "Delegation" of the PKI's Central Committee statement on the occasion of the party's forty-ninth anniversary (May 23, 1969) in *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3 (1969), no. 2, p. 42 and "Indonesia's Economy Further Deteriorates," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, no. 4, p. 43.

and the Asia Development bank. The nearly \$8 billion pumped by the IGGI into Indonesia since 1967 to stabilize and rehabilitate the Indonesian economy after the Sukarno period, is criticized by the Maoists, among other reasons, because of (1) the staggering, even if long term, debt burden imposed on Indonesia because of the IGGI assistance, thus tying its resources ever closer to the capitalist bloc of nations and their economic policies, (2) the "open door policy with regard to foreign capital" required of the Suharto regime because of the IGGI arrangement (already in September, 1972 a total of \$1.8 billion in foreign investment projects had been approved, according to the Indonesian Maoists, and since then that figure has grown), (3) the "dumping" of foreign commodities "in immense quantities" on the Indonesian market, ranging from cars to tooth-picks, (4) the special "tax holidays" granted by Suharto to foreign investors, which, because of unfair advantage, have pressed hard on national enterprises and which have led to "steadily increasing" bankruptcies among them, (5) the requirement that projects built with IGGI aid utilize the services of technicians and equipment purchased from the creditor country, (6) that the food aid received from the US must be paid for at prices usually higher than the world market price, and so on.<sup>27</sup>

In a recent review of the Indonesian economy, the *Indonesian Tribune* charged that under the Suharto regime rice prices had skyrocketed<sup>28</sup> (e.g., by 20% in November, 1974 alone), but that the increase had primarily benefited the "parasites' profiteering interests" which are being protected by the present Indonesian government. The general weakness of the Indonesian economy, including the combined effects of recession and inflation in the Western countries, is viewed by the Indonesian Maoists as a primary reason for the new warmth in Soviet-Indonesian relations. The attempts by Indonesia to secure increased Soviet assistance will, however, but perpetuate the present "semi-colonial and semi-feudal" character of Indonesian society. The reason for this is that no important structural and policy changes have occurred in the Suharto regime's policies. Thus the Soviets, to the extent that they are assisting Indonesia, are not only perpetuating the allegedly reactionary character of the present Indonesian

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27. "The Suharto Regime and the IGGI Aid," *Indonesian Tribune*, Vol. 6, 1972, No. 4, pp. 10-14. On August 16, 1975 Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik said that Indonesia had received more than \$3.7 billion in soft-term loans thus far, and that nearly \$2 billion in further soft-term loans had been promised.

28. "Behind Adam Malik's Visit to Moscow," pp. 19-21, and "Indonesian Situation in 1974 Reviewed," p. 25, in *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1975.



government, but, also, the new Soviet aid program to Indonesia is likely to lead to “fiercer superpower contention” between American and Soviet competing interests. The Indonesian Maoists also believe that under the circumstances the Soviet Union will collaborate with the Indonesian government against “the Indonesian revolutionary movement.” As a Third World country Indonesia cannot possibly have any real interest in perpetuating its own relationship with the Soviet Union. This is the message which the Indonesian Maoists seek to articulate. The USSR thus becomes but a participant in the current historic phase of continuing colonial and feudal domination of the Indonesian people. While the principal burden for all this rests upon the US, it is clearly the Indonesian Maoists’ intention to link Russian policy toward Indonesia, and by implication in Southeast Asia as a whole to American interests and designs.

Above all in the implementation of economic aid policies “US imperialism,” according to the Indonesian Maoists, has seen to it that it has its Indonesian “trusted flunkeys” — a group of US trained or sympathizing economists and public administrators — jocularly referred to as the “Berkley Mafia” — in key positions, so as to be able to keep Indonesia in America’s “neo-colonial clutches.”<sup>29</sup> The effects of foreign economic influence, allegedly, have been particularly harrowing for the mass of Indonesians. For example, the “pillaging” of fish resources of the Indonesian seas, particularly by Japanese (who are also accused of “pillaging” the nation’s oil resources) has destroyed the livelihood of Indonesian fishermen; the “merciless rapine” of Indonesia’s forest resources by foreign timber firms (US, French and Japanese) who have been given “three million hectares” in forest land concessions, according to the Maoists, gravely threatens small holders’ agriculture; and the impact of foreign capital, in any case, has not benefited the peasantry, as vast imports of rice remain necessary (e.g., in 1970 680,000 tons had to be imported) and frequent food shortages and even famine keep breaking out.<sup>30</sup> National-capital owned enterprises, e.g., textile mills and the cigarette industry, unable to compete with foreign enterprises backed by corrupt officials and adverse business controls, increasingly face “ruina-

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29. “On Suharto’s Fascist Regime’s Total Dependence on Imperialist ‘Aids,’” *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 6, 1972, no. 1, pp. 13-17.

30 “Foreign Capital Brings the Indonesian People to Rack and Ruin,” *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 5, 1971, no. 1, pp. 33-34.

tion," and in turn aggravate the "massive unemployment" in the country.<sup>31</sup> All the Suharto government's policies have done little to stop the ruinous rate of inflation, which according to one Indonesian Maoist analysis, is exemplified by the fact that in the beginning of 1967 the price of rice was 10 Rupiah per kilogram and by 1973 it had risen to 150 Rupiah, as, meanwhile, according to official Indonesian sources cited in the Maoist publication, the cost of living index rose in Indonesia by more than 20% during the 1972-73 period.<sup>32</sup>

Given its tactical and doctrinal position, the PKI's Maoist wing naturally has paid particular attention to the allegedly worsening plight of the Indonesian peasantry over the years. The Suharto regime is charged with permitting Indonesian landlords "under the protection of the gun and bayonet" to "snatch back" lands previously distributed to the peasant smallholders under agrarian and land reform measures in vogue prior to 1965. Thus, while in 1962-63, before Suharto assumed power, the average area of land owned by the individual peasant was 0.75 hectare, in 1972 that area had shrunk to only 0.25 hectare, and an estimated 7 million hectares of peasant land may be considered as having been "grabbed by the regime of Suharto." Then, too, foreign assistance projects in agriculture, such as expansion of irrigation facilities and construction of dams, though requiring labor services by the smallholder, ultimately primarily benefit the landlord-landowner. The rural laborer's wages remain abysmally low (i.e., 8 US cents a day), and "large numbers of peasants" are allegedly compelled under the Suharto regime even to perform "unpaid" or "slave" labor in government rural development projects, as well as in the transport of state property and of commodities appropriated by "local fascist chieftains" engaged in smuggling and bartering.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, to complete this sketch of life in Suharto's Indonesia as perceived by the Maoists, there is the alleged trampling of political rights in the country today. The victory of the government's *Golkar* (from *Golongan Karya* of "Functional Group") party in the parliamentary election of July 3, 1971, was achieved only because, allegedly, the Suharto government could and did resort to "every conceivable means — subtle secret, as well as

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31. *Ibid.* p. 35.

32. *API* (*API Pemuda Indonesia*), 1973 (no volume or issue number), pp. 4-5.

33. Adhiguna, "Notes on Ruthless Fleecing of Indonesian Peasants," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 5, 1971, no. 3, pp. 11-12.

crude and violent" in ensuring Golkar's success at the polls. Coercion, threats and intimidation, amplified through the use of the whole public administrative apparatus of the state and by large sums of money, were routine government tactics, according to the Maoists, and the Indonesian press itself, e.g., the Djakarta daily *Pedoman*, is cited to buttress charges of "excesses" in the government's campaign and of "violations of fundamental human rights."<sup>34</sup> In a statement issued by the Maoist "Delegation" of the PKI Central Committee, the Indonesian people were urged to oppose the "farce" of the July 1971 elections and instead to espouse "revolutionary armed struggle" as the only road to national liberation.<sup>35</sup> Political repression in Indonesia, according to the Maoists, is also exemplified by the periodic banning and suspension of newspapers and by the arrests of journalists, so that the remaining legal newspapers are forced "to use Aesopian language" if they wish to criticize the government.<sup>36</sup>

Last but not least, there is the problem of political prisoners (estimated at over 300,000 in 1970 by one Maoist writer) who are subjected to "horrifying atrocities and starvation" by the Suharto regime. Indonesian Maoist sources particularly note that, also in foreign quarters, there has been concern over the plight of some 10,000 political prisoners on the island of Buru, in Eastern Indonesia. Buru has, in fact, become a "hell island," where prisoners suspected of subversion, but against whom there is not enough evidence to warrant a trial, are allegedly compelled into forced labor and subject to a gruelling work routine with little food.<sup>37</sup>

What is one to make of this catalogue of horrors? A careful consideration of the Maoists' charges, shorn of their exaggeration, ideological jargon and hyperbole, reveals a hard nubbin of truth. This is not the place to review the state of Indonesia's economy and development planning since Suharto came to power in 1966. However, one can note the range of non-Communist press and

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34. "The 'General Election' A Boomerang for Suharto," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 6, 1972, no. 3, pp. 8-10.

35. "Statement of the Delegation of PKI Central Committee. People of Indonesia Unite to Oppose Suharto Fascist Regime's 'General Election' Farce," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 5, 1971, no. 2, pp. 7-9.

36. "Is There a Free Press in Indonesia?," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 7, 1973, no. 3-4, pp. 21-22.

37. T. Amirun, "The Death-Concentration Camps of Buru Island," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 4, 1970, no. 1, pp. 13-16 and "Fascist Barbarity Coated with Cloak of 'Humanitarianism'," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 1, pp. 18-20.

other reports in recent years stressing the serious corruption in the grievous inequalities in the income and benefits flowing from Suharto's "new order."<sup>38</sup> The Indonesian press itself, in editorial comments, has noted that "the fact is that poverty is still a main characteristic feature of our people, but a small group of them live extravagantly"; that the "monthly income of the majority of the people as revealed by Minister Suatami . . . is below Rp 7000 or US \$17.00; and that "What one sees today, however, is the revival of the old corrupt mentality as manifested by the prevalence of corrupt practices, abuses of authority, extravagances by the 'elite of society,' and poverty among the majority."<sup>39</sup> One authoritative report in May 1975 on Indonesia's economy also notes next to some bright spots in long-term development projects that: "Unemployment is rampant. Incomes are woefully inadequate. The nation's wealth is unevenly distributed; a recent oil bonanza still has to create meaningful changes in the living standards of its 130 million people," and also that while the catastrophic inflation rate of 650% in 1965-66 was reduced to less than 10% in the early 1970's, today "price indices are flying high again on two digit figures."<sup>40</sup> The expropriation of the country's economic assets by "foreign business interests," while benefits to Indonesians are "confined to a small governing elite," is acknowledged by non-Indonesian commentators to be a source of concern among Indonesians, especially the students, and it is noteworthy that after intense student protests in Djakarta on January 15 and 16, 1974 against Japanese but also other foreign economic power interests, the Suharto government promulgated various measures favoring the enterprises of indigenous Indonesians.<sup>41</sup>

Then, too, the plight of the Indonesian peasant smallholder has been repeatedly stressed by non-Communist sources, although the latter observe different causes of the rural misery than are found in the Maoist literature. The decline in the size of

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38. "Corruption Angers Indonesian Students," *The New York Times*, January 22, 1974; "In Indonesia, Luxury Amid Poverty," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1974; "In Indonesia Wealth Flows In but Masses Don't Get Much of It," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 1974; "Corruption Saps the Vitality of Oil Rich Indonesia," *The Bangkok Post*, June 30, 1975.

39. Editorials, *The Djakarta Times*, November 14 and 27, 1973.

40. "Indonesia: Coping with the Past and the Present," *Insight* (Hong Kong) May 1975, p. 28.

41. *Quarterly Economic Review: The Economist Intelligence Unit, Indonesia* (London) no. 1, 1974, p. 2, and "Indonesianisation and Wider Participation of Indigenous Indonesians in Enterprises," *Monthly Review* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Djakarta), January-February, 1974, pp. 4-11.

landholdings, owing to steady population pressure, is as demonstrable as the deepening peasant poverty, and the steady growth of a rural proletariat in Java has now reached the point, in the view of one observer, where "literally thousands of landless families crisscross the Javanese countryside, following the harvest from West to East and then returning for the next season as the paddy (rice) starts to yellow on the fields agains"<sup>42</sup> — a clear worsening of what the present writer has called Java's "scavenger economy." Whatever the achievements in economic stabilization of the Suharto government, deepening rural poverty is a reality in Indonesia, and the Indonesian Maoists' tactical focus on the peasant and rural proletariat cannot be faulted.

Finally, in the area of political liberties the charges of the Maoists, despite their verbal rhodomontades, are also basically correct. The July 1971 election may not have been a "farce," but independent observers and even highly placed officials in the Suharto government itself have conceded extensive intimidation and coercion of Golkar's opponents, numerous pressures on the civil bureaucracy, and, to ensure the success of the government's party candidates, extensive use of the financial and public administrative resources of the state on behalf of the Golkar, and so on.<sup>43</sup> The condition of the press to be sure is, in reality, a good deal more free than Maoist criticism makes it out to be. Nevertheless, dailies are frequently suspended, journalists are haled before the authorities, certain newspapers known to reflect the Golkar or armed forces' position are facilitated in their circulation through government agencies, especially in the islands beyond Java, and the relative lack of press freedom in Indonesia has been the object of official concern by international journalistic and press bodies. And while the living condition of the political prisoners on Buru island has greatly improved over the years, that of those being held in other prisons (all said to be

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42. Richard William Franke, *The Green Revolution in a Javanese Village* (unpublished Ph D. thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., June 1972), p. 181. Also cited in William L. Collier et al., *Tebasan HYV's and Rural Change: An Example in Java* (Agro Economic Survey of Indonesia s. 1, November 1973 mimeo), pp. 2-3. See also William Collier, *Villagers' Employment, Sources of Income, Use of High Yielding Varieties and Farm Laborers in the Major Rice-Producing Regions of Indonesia* (Agro Economic Survey s. 1, June 1972), and D.H. Penny and S. Singarimbun, *Population and Poverty in Rural Java: Some Economic Arithmetic from Sriharjo* (Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University, May, 1973).

43. See, e.g., B.B. Hering and G.A. Willis, *The Indonesian General Election of 1971* (Centre d'Etude du Sud-Est Asiatique et de l' Extreme Orient, Brussels, 1973).

Communists or Gestapu participants or supporters) has not, and the fact remains, as an international non-Communist organisation concerned with the problem of political prisoners has noted, that in 1974 over 55,000 political prisoners were still being held in Indonesia "all detained without charge or trial since 1965."<sup>44</sup> The Suharto government, because of increasing concern from non-Communist quarters throughout the world, has shown considerable sensitivity to the problem of the prisoners, thousands of whom the government in fact admits cannot be brought to trial because of insufficient evidence, yet keeps on holding in custody presumably for "rehabilitation." Again, in focusing their criticism of the Suharto regime in terms of the prisoner issue the Indonesian Maoists are keeping a wide, including non-Communist company throughout the world.

Considered tactically, then, the Maoists have chosen their targets well in their attacks on the Suharto regime. This is not however, the same thing as saying that the method of attack, i.e., the particular verbal rationale accompanying or sustaining the attack, would find the same broad-gauge or international adhesion. Nor does it mean that the Indonesian Maoist analysis observes any objectivity or balance, since it denies that there are or excludes from consideration any positive features of the Suharto administration. It does mean, however, that Indonesian Maoists, in developing their criticism of Suharto's domestic policies, have sharply focused on generally agreed upon points of vulnerability of the present Indonesian government. The same cannot be said, however, of the Indonesian Maoist assessments of the Suharto regime's foreign policies. Compared to the relative tactical realism of their attacks in the domestic sphere, Indonesian Maoist analysis of Indonesia's current international relations appears to have totally surrendered to ideological preconceptions, ignoring the flexibility and self-searching pragmatism not just of the Djakarta government, but also that of its Southeast Asian neighbors in this post-Vietnam war and big power detente era.

Insofar as Indonesian foreign policy is concerned, the Maoist literature and policy positions appear to revolve — next to routine praise for and congratulatory statements sent to "fraternal" parties like the Chinese and Albanian parties, or to the Malaysian insurgents or the Peking-oriented wing of the Philippine Communist party — around three issues, all essentially dealing with the

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44. *Amnesty International Annual Report, 1973-74* (published by Amnesty International, London, 1974), p. 52.

role of three big powers, the USSR, the US, and PRC. References to Japan do appear, but primarily in the context of its "imperialist" economic expansion in Southeast Asia. References to the global role of Western Europe are non-existent, and there has thus far appeared relatively little (and that little is usually negative) on the growth of Southeast Asian regionalism, on a possible "neutralization" of Southeast Asia, or on the future of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, founded in 1967, and comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines).

Paramount in the Indonesian Maoist literature are the allegedly aggressive Soviet policies toward Indonesia. Although virtually all independent observers agree that in the aftermath of the Gestapu incident and the subsequent execution of suspected Communist leaders in Indonesia, Soviet-Indonesian relations became notably strained — a strain aggravated by Indonesia's huge \$990 million debt to the Soviets at about the time of the Gestapu incident<sup>45</sup> — and only in the last three years have begun to improve again, in the Indonesian Maoist perception Russian policies have, since the advent of the Suharto regime in 1966, been designed to "give a shot in the arm" to Sukarno's successors, described by Maoists as "those murderers of thousands of Indonesian patriots and innocent people."<sup>46</sup> According to this perception, the USSR has supplied arms and ammunition to the Suharto regime, attempted to enhance its own trade opportunities with the regime from its inception, and even tried to build "a somewhat anti-imperialist image of the fascist regime" of Suharto by portraying that regime as being reluctant to follow US policies. The concept of US-USSR collusion in developing aggressive policies in Asia was particularly explored in 1969 in one Indonesian Maoist publication. There it was charged that the Nixon Doctrine, insofar as Asia was concerned, meant primarily a variant of the old Dullesian line of letting "Asians fight Asians," and that it, like the Soviets' proposed collective security system for Asia, served primarily the purpose of encircling the PRC.<sup>47</sup>

Particularly recurrent in the Maoist literature has been the theme that through their "revisionist splitting" policies in the

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45. J. Panglaykim and H.W. Arndt, *The Indonesian Economy, Facing A New Era?* (Rotterdam University Press, 1966), p. 12, Table 1.

46. R. Djuwari, "Soviet Policy Toward Indonesia. More Insidious than US Policy," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 2, 1968, no. 6-7, p. 17-19.

47. "US Imperialist-Soviet Social Imperialist Plot of Aggression in Asia," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, no. 4, pp. 26-28, 41.

Indonesian "Revolutionary movement," through projecting the false image of a Chinese threat to Indonesia, and through attempts to portray the Suharto "fascist regime" as "anti-imperialist" and "neutral," the Soviets persist in helping Suharto, as, meanwhile, they also "peddle" their "revisionist prescription of suicide" to the Indonesian people that Indonesians should pursue a peaceful and parliamentary course.<sup>48</sup>

The new Sino-US detente in the Nixon era and the winding down of overt US military commitments in Indo-China, have done little or nothing to change the Indonesian Maoist perception of the US "imperialist" threat in Asia generally and in Indonesia in particular. Attacks on SEATO (the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) and on US mutual defense policies have continued over the years in the Indonesian Maoist publications, although SEATO's recent decline is noted even as the continuing similarity between US "imperialism" and Soviet "social imperialism" is underscored. ASEAN is placed in the same category as SEATO and ANZUS (the US-Australian-New Zealand mutual defense treaty) as being but another "military pact" that was "concocted" by the US, but that now is "crumbling."

According to the Indonesian Maoist perception, it is the PRC that is the principle bastion of the "peoples and nations of the whole world" against the allegedly subversive and hegemony seeking policies of the two "superpowers," the US and the USSR.<sup>49</sup> This position must obviously qualify the extent to which the Indonesian Maoists are prepared to endorse the thaw between the PRC and the US since the inception of the Nixon era. Since the PRC, de facto, is relying on the US as a "potential balancer" in the relations of the superpowers, the alleged alliance between Soviet "social imperialism" and American "imperialism" cannot be pushed too far. The way out of this dilemma at least for the Indonesian Maoists is not to attack Sino-US detente, but rather to attack the vestigial influences exercised by the US in Thailand, the Philippines and increasingly more directly in Indonesia. Both SEATO, formally to fade out of existence before the middle of 1977, and American's support, tacitly but real, of the ASEAN strategic potential serve the Indonesian Maoists as a convenient whipping post. It thus becomes possible to continue to attack the lingering American military presence in Asia while not criticizing

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48. "Soviet Social-Imperialists Exert Tremendous Efforts to Prop Up Suharto Fascist Regime," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 2, pp. 10-15.

49. *Peking Review*, July 30, 1976, p. 23.



the role which that presence plays in China's own strategic posture toward the Soviet Union. To the extent that it is possible to link the Suharto regime with the lower profile American military policy in Asia, today it serves the Indonesian Maoists interests to continue to attack Washington style "imperialism" also.

Even as the PRC was gradually moving toward qualified endorsement of the concept originally advanced by the ASEAN powers in 1971 that the Southeast Asian region be declared a "zone of peace, freedom and neutrality," free from the interference of other powers, the Indonesian Maoists were denouncing that ideal as but a "new veil" behind which US "imperialism" and its "puppets," like the Suharto government, would seek to continue their machinations.<sup>50</sup> Suharto's neutrality and non-alignment claims have been particularly excoriated in the Indonesian Maoist media "unneutral neutrality," as it is put), and while, eventually, a less openly anti-ASEAN position may well be adopted by those media, yet so long as the present freeze in Sino-Indonesian diplomatic relations between Peking and Djakarta persists (relations were suspended, though not formally broken in 1967, in the wake of rising tensions between the two countries following the Gestapu incident), Suharto's professed adherence to ASEAN policy aims of neutrality is likely to be attacked. The keynote of this Indonesian Maoist approach became again apparent in 1972, in a comment in the *Indonesian Tribune* on recent discussions between Suharto and Japanese special envoy Kiichi Aichi in Djakarta. These discussions were designed to brief the Indonesian government on the impending "normalization" of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations. The *Tribune's* comment took note of the allegedly anti-Chinese remarks made by Suharto at the time of the Aichi visit and went on to criticize the Suharto's government's "utter isolation" in world affairs ("in the same category as the Chiang Kai-shek bandit clique, Park Jung-Hee and the more die-hard Latin American dictators"), since other nations had recognized that the PRC could not be ignored, and that no international problem could be solved without her.<sup>51</sup> The *Tribune's* comment also repudiated what has, in fact, been a frequent theme in official Indonesian statements on relations with Peking, i.e., that the PRC is continuously meddling in internal Indonesian

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50. "Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 6, 1972, no. 4, p. 14.

51. "Suharto's Anti-China Policy Reveals his Regime's Utter Isolation," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 6, 1972, no. 4, p. 14.

affairs, including aiding subversives. According to the *Tribune*, the PRC has always been guided in its foreign relations by the principle of peaceful coexistence and has never interfered in the affairs of others. However, China "will faithfully uphold forever" the principle of support for liberation struggles all over the world, and hence "Suharto had better cast off his idle dream that China can be deterred from upholding this sacred principle."<sup>52</sup>

As for the US, the pattern of its dominance in Suharto's Indonesia is considered to be total, according to the Maoists; in fact, Indonesia today is a "new type colony of US imperialism." Through joint investment with the Japanese, whose "growing economic expansionism in Indonesia" cheats Indonesian business, bankrupts national monetary institutions, and dominates Indonesian marketing, the US is seen as forging strong shackles on Indonesian mining, on the development of fishing resources and sea transport, and on agriculture. All the natural resources of Indonesia, according to the Maoists, are being handed over by Suharto to foreign capital, "particularly that of US imperialism."<sup>53</sup> America is also committing "cultural aggression in Indonesia"; e.g. the Asia Society, a "Rockefeller owned private firm," is charged with shipping Indonesian art treasures to New York with the connivance of "Suharto and his fascist Minister of Culture," as meanwhile the CIA is hiring "many reactionary men of letters"; "reactionary" shadow-play artists are allegedly under orders from Suharto to present plays that defend "feudal oppression and exploitation." Higher education in Indonesia "has practically been affiliated to the American universities," and many of Suharto's officials are "all the offspring of American education."<sup>54</sup>

Militarily and in international relations Suharto is accused by the Maoists of putting his armed forces "at the service of the 'Nixon Doctrine,'" an apparent *quid pro quo* for the flow of US military equipment and supplies to the Indonesian services. Characteristic of Suharto's subservience, according to the Maoist view, is that "within days after US imperialism carried out aggression against Cambodia" (an apparent reference to the fall of the government of Norodom Sihanouk in March 1970) the

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52. *Ibid.*

53. "Indonesia — A New Type of Colony of U.S. Imperialism," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, no. 1. pp. 20-25, and "Growing Japanese Economic Expansionism in Indonesia," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 1, p. 13-17.

54. Arita, "US Imperialist Cultural Aggression in Indonesia," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 4, 1970, no. 1, pp. 22-23.

Suharto government recognized the new Lon Nol government "and secretly sent a shipload of arms to Phnompenh." Subsequently, it is charged, Indonesia began giving military training to Lon Nol's military. Then, too, "acting upon the instructions of US imperialism," Indonesia is vigorously attempting to transform ASEAN into an Asian version of SEATO.<sup>55</sup> At the mid-1974 Caracas conference of the United Nation on the Law of the Sea, Suharto officials by stressing the so-called *acrhipelago* principle (*wawasan nusantara*), whereby all the seas and waterways between the Indonesian islands are considered as falling within Indonesian territorial control, in fact attempted to safeguard the seabed and fishing interests already "pawned to and parceled out by foreign monopolies."<sup>56</sup>

This overdrawn and highly schematized picture of Indonesia's current diplomacy ignores all the complexities of Indonesia's regional position, for example, its mediation efforts between Malaysia and the Philippines in the dispute over Sabah, or in the South Philippine Muslim uprising. It overlooks Djakarta's often uneasy relationship with Japan, or the seemingly perpetual sanguinity of Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik that a normalization of Sino-Indonesian relations is but a matter of time, or, again, Indonesia's relations with the Middle Eastern and West European countries where China itself has friendly interests. Ignoring all these, then, in their foreign policy analyses, suggests that the Indonesian Maoists probably do not perceive the same significant tactical opportunities in the pragmatic pattern of the Suharto regimes international policies as in its domestic affairs. The Maoists are apparently preoccupied with changing Indonesia's "state power" through domestic tactics. With these tactics, that is, with the party's present tasks and the road it seeks to follow in changing Indonesia's government and society we may now be briefly concerned.

### III.

"The way out" for Indonesia of its present problems, according to the earlier mentioned September 1966 *otokritik* of the Indonesian Maoists, is to raise and follow "three banners." The first banner is the building of a truly Marxist-Leninist party that is free from modern "revisionism," opportunism, and "subjecti-

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55. "Suharto Puts his Army at the Service of the 'Nixon Doctrine'," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 5, 1971, no. 2, pp. 24-26.

56. "The Caracas Conference and Suharto's Hypocrisy," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 3, p. 17.

vism." The second is espousal of "the armed people's struggle," the heart of which is the armed struggle of the peasantry in the context of and antifeudal revolution that is led by the "working class." Third, there is the need to build the "revolutionary united front," which is founded on the alliance between peasants and workers and, again, is led by the working class.<sup>57</sup>

In a number of subsequent statements the Indonesian Maoists have elaborated these three major tactics. In November 1967, for example, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Maoist PKI published a new program for the party. This new program emphasizes that "only through people's war" can the Indonesian people achieve their "liberation," and hence Indonesians must arm themselves and build a "people's armed force". The standard Maoist prescription of using a rural revolutionary base against the counter revolutionary cities is also offered here, and with the peasantry as the core of their forces the proposed Indonesian people's army" is directed to win victories "locality by locality" in the countryside, encircle the towns, and ultimately "liberate" the latter. The building of the "backward Indonesian villages" into "advanced" revolutionary base areas, according to this 1967 party program, is not only an urgent task for every Communist, but also for "every son and daughter of the Indonesian people" aspiring to free the nation. Building the united front means, therefore, also utilizing the potential of "all revolutionary classes and groups," not just the workers and the peasants but also the petty bourgeoisie (described as a "reliable ally" of the working class) and the "vacillating" national bourgeoisie.<sup>58</sup>

Again, in a statement by the "delegation" of Maoist PKI Central Committee, on the occasion of the party's fiftieth anniversary in 1970, the peasantry is extolled as the "most trusted" ally of the proletariat, and the PKI's past record in appreciating this role of the peasantry is decried. According to this statement it is "true" that during the 1951-65 period the PKI "formulated" that the peasantry was the main force of the Revolution, and that the "working class" had to establish an alliance with it. However, it is alleged, despite this formulation, that the PKI in practice did not encourage the peasants to develop

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57. *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

58. "The Programme of the Communist Party of Indonesia for People's Democracy in Indonesia (November 1967)," pp. 235-280, in *Build the PKI Along the Marxist-Leninist Line*, *op. cit.*

their armed struggle, establish revolutionary bases in the country, or struggle for political power. Therefore, today, the PKI must give new leadership to the rural masses, and only by relying on the peasantry, particularly on the working and poor peasants, can the PKI and the proletariat lead the peasants "in a protracted guerilla struggle."<sup>59</sup> Apropos the above critique, one might perhaps observe in passing that D.N. Aidit, the PKI's major executive and theoretician during most of the now criticized 1951-65 period, acknowledged the peasantry, especially the poor peasants, to be "the biggest force driving the revolution onward," and urged the peasants to undertake militant "unilateral actions" (*aski sefihak*), including the forceable seizing of land from landlords in 1964. Nevertheless, admittedly, there is controversy as to whether subsequently Aidit wholly conformed to the Sukarno regime's pressures for moderation, or, indeed, had, or had not, embarked on a final drive to seize power in Indonesia.<sup>60</sup>

In keeping with the Maoists' doctrinal emphasis on the necessity of violent struggle, relatively obscure clashes have been singled out in the Indonesian Maoist media as landmarks in the developing "people's war" in the country and thus as models to be emulated for future action. An attack on the small Indonesian military air base at Singkawang, West Kalimantan (Borneo) province on July 17, 1967, by about fifty Communist insurgents, some Indonesians and others from Sarawak's previously mentioned "North Kalimantan People's Guerilla Forces," is now described as the "successful first shot against the fascist military regime" of Suharto. From this the armed struggle is said to have spread to other islands of Indonesia. Describing the nature of this supposedly developing "people's" struggle, one Indonesian Maoist account said that<sup>61</sup>:

"The base of operations for the people's armed forces usually lies in the mountainous districts. In many villages guerilla detachments and self-defense corps have been organised.

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59. "People of Indonesia Unite Under the Leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia Surmount Every Difficulty and Continue to March Forward Courageously Along the Road of Armed Revolution," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 4, 1970, no. 2, pp. 6-13.

60. Cf. D.N. Aidit's essay, "Masjarakat Indonesia dan Revolusi Indonesia," pp. 292-293, in his Collected Works, *Pilihan Tulisan*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2. On the controversy over the PKI's militancy, see J.M. van der Kroef, "Origins of the 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Probabilities and Alternatives," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, September 1972, pp. 277-298.

61. "Singkawang — Brilliant Episode in the Armed Struggle of the Indonesian People," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, no. 3, pp. 3-6.

Young men and women from among the masses of farm laborers and poor peasants form the bulk of these forces. In some villages guerilla detachments consisting solely of women fighters have been formed . . . . In villages around Tjileduk, West Java, the masses of peasants burning with class hatred, have executed a number of exceptionally notorious landlords. In other places of West Java, at about the same time, the peasants organised themselves and launched the struggle to win back their lands which were grabbed by reactionary authorities and landlords."

The foregoing account was published in 1968. The Tjileduk incident and some like it did, in fact, take place in various localities in Java. But today the "brilliant" example of the Singkawang episode is being emulated only by about 200 badly disorganised Maoist insurgents operating mostly in Sarawak's interior and frontier zones, while in Indonesian West Kalimantan or in other Indonesian islands, the "people's war" is at present largely a rhetorical conceit.

Despite the insurgents' obvious inability to confront effectively the Suharto government's currently extensive police powers and security apparatus, the Maoist "Delegation" of the PKI's Central Committee unceasingly emphasizes the dangers in following the "peaceful" road, the "Parliamentary road." Such a "parliamentary" path it ascribes, not surprisingly, to the Moscow-oriented PKI undergrounds and exiles, accusing them of seeking to attain a new legal status for the party in the context of a future "national democratic" government. One such accusation has had a particular reference to a 1969 policy statement of the Pro-Moscow group called "Urgent Tasks of the Communist Movement in Indonesia," which, in turn, included an attack on the Maoists' 1966 *otokritik*. In the "Urgent Tasks" document of the Moscow oriented PKI group "new tactics" are called for, to be based on the principle that "it would be premature to launch armed action before the completion of the painstaking revolutionary work of a preparatory nature" and before the emergence of a "clearcut revolutionary crisis." To be sure, "military cadres" must also be assembled, and secret weapons caches must be prepared for eventual "armed action," but all this must be done along with "political work among the masses," for without a "mass political arm" an armed rising would not be effective. The rehabilitation and restoration of the PKI among the masses, in particular, is thus an essential first step. The basic strategy for Communists to

follow, according to the "Urgent Tasks" statement, is to work in favor of a change in the "balance of political forces" in favor of the working people, "so that an anti-imperialist democratic national government" can be established.<sup>62</sup>

The significance of "national democracy" (and its offshoots and variations like "new democracy" and "people's democracy") as a tactic used by Communist parties, including the Chinese, toward completion of an eventual "socialist" revolution need not here be emphasized.<sup>63</sup> There is little question that in other parts of Southeast Asia today, e.g., in the Philippines and Thailand, the pro-Moscow Communist underground is also seeking to legitimize itself in a new nationalistic context in the region where there is diminished direct American influence and looming Soviet power, by stressing its "peaceful" and parliamentary approach and its identification with "left" or "progressive" intellectual circles, and with other groups which for economic and political reasons are similarly critical of the prevailing regime, thus contributing to and hopefully benefiting from an eventual liberalization of that regime.<sup>64</sup> Such an approach remains anathema to the Indonesian Maoists, however. The advocacy of the "parliamentary road" and of the "national democratic" tactic not only sidetracks the revolution of Indonesia itself, in the Maoist view, but further enables the Soviet "social imperialists" to continue their economic collaboration with the Suharto regime and with US imperialism generally. The power that is sought by the PKI, in the "Urgent Tasks" document according to the Indonesian Maoists, is therefore merely the perpetuation of bourgeoisie power.<sup>65</sup> "National democracy" as a tactical concept thus seems conceptually linked by the Indonesian Maoists to the period of "revisionism" in the PKI, when the party was led by Aidit in the 1950's and early 1960's, and when the PKI's alleged accommodation of "bourgeois" interests led to its Gestapu debacle.

Even so, in the building of the "revolutionary united front," as required by the *otokritik's* "third banner" directive, the Indonesian Maoists have an appreciative eye for new revolutionary

62. "Urgent Tasks of the Communist Movement in Indonesia," *Information Bulletin*, 1969, no. 7 (143), pp. 23-42.

63. See Justus M. van der Kroef, "On National Democracy," *Survey* (London), April 1963, pp. 134-145, and "The Communist Concept of National Democracy," *Studies on the Soviet Union*, vol. 4, 1964, no. 2, pp. 39-63.

64. See, e.g., Justus M. van der Kroef, "Philippine Communist Theory and Strategy. A New Departure?," *Pacific Affairs*, Summer 1975, pp. 181-198.

65. "Expose Modern Revisionists' New Plot to Split the PKI," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 4, 1970, pp. 35-37.

social potentials. Even before the violent, largely student-led demonstrations in Djakarta in mid-January 1974, during the visit of Japanese Premier Kakuei Tanaka, Indonesian Maoist statements had underscored the economic plight of Indonesian students ("swelling ranks of the diploma-holding unemployed"), as at the same time the cost of advanced education in Indonesia allegedly was said to be placing it beyond the reach of all but the wealthier parents.<sup>66</sup> After the January 1974 incident, which Maoist media described as reflecting the "discontent of the broad masses of the people" toward the Suharto regime's policies of submission of the Indonesian economy to US and Japanese imperialism, special emphasis was placed on the role of the "masses of students and youth," who, along with the rest of the Indonesian people, would surely "sum up their experiences," discredit unworthy leaders, and strongly commit themselves to the cause of liberation.<sup>67</sup> While, on the one hand, this emphasis on the important role of students and youth in Indonesia is in keeping with similar stress on the importance of the revolutionary activism of youth to be found in current Communist party directives in the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand, on the other hand the volatile nature of youth action (after all students during 1965-67 spearheaded the downfall of President Sukarno under whose policies the PKI reached its greatest expansion and influence in its history) must give some pause — never more so than to theorists familiar with the "summing up" of the Chinese party and its experiences in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution".

Ultimately, therefore, the building of a disciplined party, "armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought," indeed a party whose members are committed to studying "assiduously" Mao Tse-Tung Thought as "the acme of Marxism-Leninism in the present era," remains the most important and "first banner" which the Indonesian Communists can raise. The correct ideological training of such a party, its strict but smoothly functioning hierarchy, the need for all party members to reject firmly all appeals of "revisionism" and opportunism that may sway them from their revolutionary course — these, at bottom, are the indispensable conditions of the Indonesian Communist movement's revival today, as the Maoists see it. The Indonesian

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66. Karman, "Student Resistance Against the Fascist Regime," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 6, 1972, no. 2, pp. 12-14.

67. "People of Indonesia Unite to Win Democracy and Liberty!," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 8, 1974, no. 2, p. 5.



environment today offers a challenge and a promise to the party in this respect, for what is happening in the nation (one reads in another analysis) is an "extremely interesting" struggle "between well-fed and ill-fed dogs, between big dogs and small dogs."<sup>68</sup> While to outsiders a perception of Indonesia's internal problems is perhaps not best expressed in terms of a canine conflict, existing contradictions in the country are viewed by the Maoists as "useful," and as affording an opportunity "to further promote" the armed struggle to overthrow the Suharto government.

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68. "The Indonesian Marxist-Leninists Rebuild Their Party with the Chinese Communist Party as the Model," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, pp. 11-18, and "A Fight Between Well-Fed Dogs and Ill-Fed Dogs," *Indonesian Tribune*, vol. 3, 1969, p. 42.

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