



Bung Karno at Bay

DENIS WARNER

DJAKARTA
TOWERING above Djakarta is the solid-gold-capped National Monument created by President Sukarno for the everlasting glory of his rule. Banteng bulls rampant guard its corners, and, until recently, hundreds of craftsmen were busy with their hammers and chisels on the stonework. Since it was well known that a soothsayer of note had predicted that Sukarno would rule as long as work on the monument continued, the task promised to be as permanent as the stone itself. Today the hammers are silent and the chisels have been put away. In the land that Sukarno beggared there is nothing left in the public purse for building monuments.

Belatedly, but nevertheless surely, the Sukarno era is also coming to an end. Sukarno is still fighting to regain his lost powers; but now, for the first time after his seventeen years of malfeasance that led Indonesia into a futile conflict with its neighbor Malaysia, plunged it into bankruptcy, and all but succeeded in carrying it into full militant alliance with Communist China, it is possible to write with assurance that only the exact manner and timing of his going remain to be decided. Like a man running up on the down esca-

lator, Sukarno was swept very close to the bottom after the abortive coup d'état of September 30, 1965. There have been occasions since then when he seemed close to the top again. As he regained his old poise and confidence, and with them the loyalty of millions to whom the Bung could do no wrong, he placed himself with all of his old arrogance and élan against the new revolution, seemingly certain that the myth of his indispensability would prevail over the reality of his guilt. By accepting a purely constitutional role with some show of humility, it is conceivable that Sukarno could have remained in office at least until the elections in 1968. But such behavior is not in the nature of the man. Furthermore, he erred in confusing General Suharto's caution and respect for the constitutional processes with weakness—a mistake that others made, too.

AS THE months passed and Sukarno appeared to be consolidating his position and openly challenging the new order, even some of Suharto's friends began to worry. A junior minister who returned from abroad in November could scarcely credit the change in Sukarno's status. "The man has achieved the impossible,"

he said. "He has made a comeback."

Supporters of Adam Malik, the courageous and outspoken Foreign Minister and one of Sukarno's most vigorous critics, urged him to be more cautious when he returned from a visit to the Soviet Union. During Malik's absence, Sukarno had engineered the revival of the old national-Communist Murba Party, naming Malik, a former member, to the committee. It was a shrewd move, designed both to discredit Malik, who, lacking a political base of his own, depends largely on his own character and capacity, and to provide the machinery through which a Communist element might ultimately be restored to NASAKOM, Sukarno's formula for welding nationalist, religious, and Communist groups together.

"What is Malik going to do about Murba?" I asked one of his aides.

"He's got to take it quietly, or he will find himself in conflict with the big Bung," he replied. "And the way things are now, the big Bung will win."

KAMI and KAPPI, the student action fronts that played a vital part in breaking the grip of Sukarno and ex-Foreign Minister Subandrio on the government, were bloodied by a violent encounter with troops

outside Sukarno's Merdeka Palace last October 2. They found themselves hedged in by their former army allies and lacking in ideas not only for the prosecution of their own private plans to topple Sukarno but also for longer-term hopes of making an effective contribution toward the country's economic and social recovery.

"There are two possible explanations for Suharto's attitude," said a mature graduates' action-front leader. "He may think he has cornered and defused the Bung, rendering him harmless. That is dangerous, but not nearly so dangerous as the second possibility—that he sees Sukarno as a genuinely great leader whose bad advisers of the past have now been replaced with good men, thus assuring that everything will turn out all right."

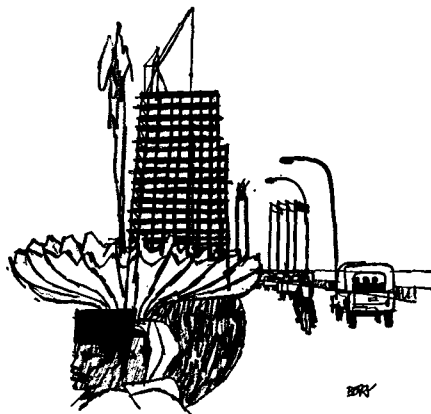
Two Kinds of Justice

As events unfolded, it became apparent that there was indeed an element of this in Suharto's attitude. Added to his personal reluctance to curb the presidential tongue and to call Sukarno to account for his past policies and actions, however, was a genuine fear of the consequences. The assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam was, he believed, a salutary reminder of what might flow from the use of unconstitutional methods. Moreover, Suharto realized that for many of the Generation of 1945, the men who had fought for independence, Sukarno was still the charismatic leader. Demonstrably, the Generation of 1966, or at least its west Javanese components, did not share these views, but in densely populated east and central Java, Suharto's own birthplace and the home of about half of Indonesia's 107 million people, Bung Karno was still something of a god. No one could be certain that his removal would not precipitate civil war or even the disintegration of the republic.

Shabby revelations at the trial of Jusuf Muda Dhalam, former Minister of the Central Bank, showed up Sukarno as a philanderer who dipped his fingers into the public purse for the benefit of his cronies. But there was worse to come. Dr. Subandrio, who had for long been the architect

of Sukarno's policies, and Omar Dhani, hand-picked by the President to lead the air force, joined Jusuf Muda Dhalam in the cells of those condemned to death. But Sukarno, although he was exposed as having been privy to secret deals with Peking to provide arms for Communist militia, to the clandestine training of the men and women who butchered five generals during the coup, and to hobnobbing with the coup leaders after the generals' death, went free. "Is it just to try a minister, who was only a presidential aide, without trying his master, the Premier?" asked the defense counsel in his final and unsuccessful plea for Omar Dhani.

West Java's answer to this was a resounding "No." For the first time there were signs of serious misgiv-



ings in east and central Java, although most people here continued to interpret the trials as further evidence of the wickedness of the evil men in Djakarta intent on harming their beloved Bung.

FORTIFIED by such reassurances of continued support, less and less repentant, and more than ever determined to stand firm against the New Order, Sukarno now incited and threatened. "Say, you fellow Marhaenists [common people]! Do not just sit back and watch your country being taken over by these lackeys of the imperialists," he told an enthusiastic meeting of the PNI, the Indonesian Nationalist Party, with which he has long had sentimental links. "Fight them back, or you will be smashed, too."

The speech marked something of a watershed in the Sukarno-Suharto

relationship. Before it, Suharto and others who felt that Sukarno could be retained as a symbol of unity had been able to point to an impressive array of economic and political changes, all made in spite of Sukarno's obstructionist tactics. Against his expressed wish and instructions, Indonesia had gone back to the United Nations, ended "confrontation" with Malaysia, abandoned its close links with Peking, decimated the Indonesian Communist Party, outlawed Communism, rejoined the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and re-established friendly relations with the West. Sukarno had fulminated, fumed, and failed. But now, instead of serving as a symbol of Indonesian unity, he had become divisive and dangerous, a rallying point for dissidents not only among the remnant forces of the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) and the Sukarnoists of the PNI but also in the armed forces, where pro-Communist and Sukarnoist elements were still strong enough to cause trouble. Where once it had seemed to men of good will that Indonesia could not afford to do without Sukarno, now it was equally obvious that it could not afford to do with him.

'No Alternative'

Even under these circumstances, however, Suharto was not willing to give a lead. He was prepared to abandon his policy of coexistence with Sukarno, but if the President was to go, he wanted his departure to be an expression of the popular will and not a military order.

Others did not share his inhibitions. On top of the front page of the *Djakarta Times* on December 20 there were four main headlines: "Adam Malik Calls for MPRS Session to Solve Sukarno Problem"; "Omar Dhani's Trial Reveals Sukarno's Role in September Coup"; "West Java Workers Call for Elimination of Dualism"; and "Action Fronts Support Jurists' Declaration" (for a judicial investigation into Sukarno's activities). All the stories, in effect, accused Sukarno of having been a party to the 1965 coup, and demanded that he be called to account. For those readers who liked a little spice with their news, there

was a further front-page report in which Sukarno denied having raped a fourteen-year-old girl. Under the heading "No Alternative," the *Times's* editorial demanded that the MPRS (Provisional People's Consultative Assembly) be called into session to investigate Sukarno. "When we say that the political situation is tense, we do not have in mind only the students' demonstrations but the possible escalation of the tense situation into an armed clash," the paper said. "The Assembly has no choice but to convene its members."

From many quarters, from the judges' association and the jurists' association, from General A. H. Nasution, former Defense Minister and head of the Assembly since last June, and General Dharsono, who commands the Siliwangi Division, and from others closer to Suharto, came mounting demands that the President should stand trial, or that the MPRS should be called into session to impeach him, or at least to hear his "explanation" of his part in the coup.

On December 22, student action-front leaders presented the Attorney General, Major General Sugih Arto, once a Sukarno crony, with a damning documented case against Sukarno. "Truth and justice must be upheld, regardless of person or position," Sugih Arto told the delegation. On the same day, the chiefs of the armed forces and the police called formally on Sukarno to present him with a joint statement announcing that they would act against anyone who stood in the way of the new order. Sukarno replied with demands for cabinet changes and implied threats of civil war. Well aware of Suharto's insistence on a constitutional approach to his own problem, Sukarno had been busy with the political parties, holding out the promise of cabinet seats in the promised reshuffle in exchange for support to block moves to call a special session of the MPRS. During the week, further meetings between the President and the leaders of the armed forces were followed by a unified show of force, with army, navy, air force, and police mobile-brigade battalions converging on Merdeka Square in front of the palace. Sukarno has grown inured to demonstrations, but this



one may have given him pause: among the units participating were several that had been regarded as being in Sukarno's camp.

IN TYPICALLY Javanese style, the closing chapters of the story are likely to be tortuous in movement and long in the telling. But the Assembly has now been called to meet in March or April, which means that the stage has been reached where even the most cautious of his opponents believe that the end is in sight, and that it is possible for the first time to consider Indonesia's prospects when it is freed from the dangerous intrigues of the man who brought the country to ruin.

Coinciding with the upsurge of anti-Sukarnoism in Djakarta, a meeting of Indonesia's western creditors was held in Paris late in December to discuss the re-scheduling of debts totaling, with interest already due, \$1.25 billion. Australia, which is not a creditor, sat in as a sort of special pleader to urge that the problem was political rather than economic, and that if the new order failed because it could not meet the aspirations of the people, then chaos or Communism would ultimately prevail. Before the meeting began, France, which is owed \$115 million, and Italy (\$91 million) seemed more concerned with the recovery of their money than with finding ways to help Indonesia out of its economic difficulties. With strong support from the United States (\$179 million), however, the

Australians made their point. Although the formula is complicated, Indonesia will have until 1971 or 1972 to meet its western bills. Prospects for more aid are also reasonably bright, and a second meeting of western creditor nations, to be held in the Netherlands, is scheduled to discuss the extension of further credits, which an expert team from the International Monetary Fund has characterized as essential to the success of the stabilization plan.

There are conditions, of course, in this generous attitude, but by any standards the Indonesians have been prompt in showing good faith. On Christmas Eve, Parliament ratified two bills, one approving the painful belt tightening of a balanced budget and the other guaranteeing outside capital against expropriation without compensation. "We are aware that we will have to compete with other developing countries in attracting foreign capital," said the Sultan of Jogjakarta, Presidium Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs. "We are also well aware that the capital which is willing to invest in these countries is risk capital and that we have to reduce the risk burden. The government hopes to create the conditions that will make it possible for foreign capital to have the confidence that it can work undisturbed in our country."

The somewhat unexpected success in Paris followed, and was no doubt partly due to, a reasonably generous Soviet moratorium on Indonesia's \$990-million debt. Malik received

a cool reception when he visited Moscow in October. Foreign Minister Gromyko scolded him for the liquidation of the Indonesian Communist Party and commented sourly that Indonesia had not only failed to pay interest or capital but had even declined to discuss its debts. On reflection, however, the Russians changed their minds, and even the possibility of further help from that quarter is no longer ruled out.

Paying the Piper

Thus, to an extent that scarcely seemed possible six months ago, Indonesia has succeeded in winning time to recover. It has also succeeded in obtaining \$180 million in new credits, with some assurance of more to come. Welcome though these developments are, they certainly do not provide any built-in assurance of success for the economic stabilization program to which the Suharto government is now fully committed.

The problems facing the régime can scarcely be overstated. Not since the last days of the Chiang Kai-shek régime in China has inflation ever hit a country or its urban workers so badly. The cost-of-living index soared from a base of 100 in 1957 to 348 in 1960, 36,000 in 1965, and 150,000 by July, 1966. Money in circulation amounted to 12 billion rupiahs in 1955. This quadrupled in the next five years, rose to 2,714 billion by the end of 1965, and to 10,000 billion by July, 1966. The continuous increase of money in circulation was largely caused by reckless government spending. In 1961 the budget deficit amounted to 23 billion rupiahs; by 1965 it had grown to 1,500 billion. The government spent more and more and the country earned less and less. Exports, excluding oil royalties, were worth \$900 million in 1951. They had dropped to \$775 million in 1960 and to \$424 million in 1965. Though the figures are not yet available, it is certain that they were down again last year. As exports declined, foreign-exchange earnings also declined, but imports, financed by foreign credits, continued to increase until the inevitable day of reckoning came and Indonesia could no longer pay its bills.

Recognizing that inflation is the primary problem, the government

is attempting to increase revenue and to cut expenditure. The National Monument is not the only wasteful expenditure that has been stopped. Work has ended on almost all projects requiring rupiah financing. Tax collection has been intensified and government subsidies have been eliminated in most industries and public utilities. The flow of money from the printing presses has been so drastically curtailed that both the private sector and government departments are complaining bitterly that they have no rupiahs.

Also on the government's list of priorities are the production of food, especially rice, which has become a major import item; the rehabilitation of economic services; and increased exports. In normal circumstances these aspirations would be modest enough, but Indonesia is grievously handicapped in all fields by obsolete and worn-out machinery, by a chronic lack of spare parts, by transport bottlenecks caused by years of neglect on the roads and railroads, by a lack of technical and managerial skills, and by one of the highest birth rates in the world.

IN AN ADDRESS in New York last October, the Sultan of Jogjakarta posed a vital question: "Are the democratic forces in Indonesia at this stage strong enough to put Indonesia's house in order, to give new impulses to an economy that has ground to a standstill, and to create the conditions in which gradually democratic life will be possible?"

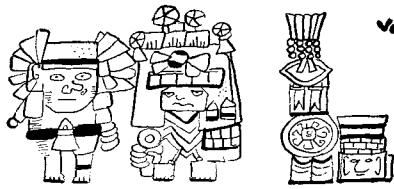
In many ways, the political material available matches the poverty of the economy. To look to the political parties for leadership is to look for the nonexistent. The PNI remains heavily dependent on Sukarno. The Nahdatul Ulama, a conservative Moslem organization strong in east and central Java, enjoyed a good status in the old order and claims a right to a place in the new. Its leaders are rich in self-interest but do not appeal as national leaders. The Masjumi and Socialist Parties, both of which were dissolved by Sukarno, have not yet been revived, nor have their leaders, now released from jail, succeeded in making any political comeback.

Apart from the idealism of the students, who have not yet found a

way to channel their energies and enthusiasm into genuine political activity, there is nothing about the political situation to suggest that leadership or national inspiration will be found here. Suharto is genuinely anxious that the régime should not become a military dictatorship. He is highly receptive to expert civilian advice and has turned to former Socialist and Masjumi Party members as problem solvers. Yet, almost against his will, the government is subject to a sort of creeping militarism. The Sultan of Jogjakarta and Adam Malik, with Suharto the key members of the Presidium, are technicians, not political leaders, and key positions everywhere, including the diplomatic service, are going to military men. Under the circumstances, there seems little likelihood that this situation can be reversed until Sukarno and all his residual support and influence have disappeared from Indonesian society.

The danger is not so much that Indonesia will become a military dictatorship as that in a society where corruption in some form or other has become ingrained and, for many, a necessity of life, the abuses of the old order are apt to be repeated in the new, thereby perpetuating instability and opposition to the government. Already the charges are heard that the new régime rivals the old in its corruption. One Indonesian, and he is by no means a Sukarno supporter, offered to drive me around Djakarta to show me the luxury homes of the new crop of generals. There are reports of sealed army trucks running rubber from Padang on the west coast of Sumatra to the port of Palembang for private export to Singapore. "We know it's going on but no one dares ask any questions," my informant told me.

If the government produces results and the Indonesian people see signs that the hardships they are now enduring will lead to better days, such things are likely to remain peripheral. On the other hand, if the stringencies of the present situation continue indefinitely, as they may, the army, which has never been excessively popular, will increasingly become the target of the people's frustration.



The Mexican-Americans Make Themselves Heard

MARVIN ALISKY

A REGIONAL CONFERENCE of the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission sent Mexican-American leaders from throughout the Southwest to Albuquerque last March 28 to discuss the employment problems of their communities. The meeting had scarcely begun when a young attorney prominent in the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) stood up, threw his copy of the program on the floor, motioned to his friends, and headed out the door of the conference hall. An official of the American G.I. Forum, another Mexican-American organization concerned with public issues, rounded up some of his friends and they too walked out. Within five minutes, an exodus of Mexican-Americans was emptying the large auditorium.

"Wait, wait, gentlemen," an "Anglo" commission aide pleaded. "Let's talk over your grievances." George Roybal, executive director of the Department of Labor's Service-Employment-Redevelopment program for Spanish-speaking citizens, answered: "That's what these people came here for. And nothing in this stiff and formal program indicates that that's what they'd be allowed to do."

These leaders had not been consulted about moderators for panels, ground rules for discussions, or—most serious of all—basic topics of the agenda. "The chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., didn't even come to Albuquerque," said UCLA Professor Leo Grebler, the director of Mexican-American studies being financed by the Ford

Foundation. "Only one of the four other commissioners attended, and these were the five men who called the conference in the first place."

The Albuquerque walkout has become so well known among Mexican-Americans that they are surprised that others are still not familiar with this important event in their increasing involvement in U.S. political action. "In March, Mexican-Americans, by walking out, tried to tell the Federal government something. But the message wasn't fully received," Roybal said recently. "So look at the reaction of Mexican-American voters last November."

A Revolt at the Polls

The November elections, despite the lack of a Presidential race, found citizens of Latin-American origin at the polls in record numbers. And, almost unmentioned in post-election analyses, the Mexican-American backlash against minimal governmental action to improve slum conditions helped to defeat Democratic candidates—though the winning Republicans are apt to get less done in the war against poverty than the Democrats.

"Even a spot check of Spanish-speaking voter precincts in Los Angeles, San Antonio, El Paso, and Albuquerque shows a sharp change in long-time voting patterns," Robert Ornelas, director of Mexican-American manpower programs for the Department of Defense, said in Phoenix at a meeting of two hundred Mexican-American leaders from throughout Arizona two weeks after the elections. The young and hand-

some Ornelas, typical of the new breed of Mexican-American leader, speaks candidly and backs his observations with definite figures and specific examples of the need for Federal and state governmental help for a long-neglected minority in the Southwest. He contrasts sharply with the old-style Mexican-American politician, whose generalities and quiet behavior endeared him to party officials as a reliable source of bloc votes.

Most of the leaders at the Phoenix meeting agreed that voting in the California gubernatorial and Texas senatorial contests held meaning for the Democrats. In California and Texas in 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, and 1964, precincts with predominantly Spanish surnames led among all those considered safely Democratic (ninety-five per cent or more). But in 1966, some thirty-five Mexican-American precincts in Los Angeles, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Austin, El Paso, Albuquerque, and Phoenix showed an average defection to Republican candidates of thirty-five per cent from the 1964 vote.

Many believe that the 1966 voting was a direct way of fighting the indifference of some conservative Democrats. The defeated Texas senatorial candidate, Waggoner Carr, symbolized Texans "who seem unaware of poor housing and poor job opportunities for Spanish-speaking citizens," one LULAC aide said.

An important local issue affected the vote in the Arizona race for governor, which was lost by the incumbent Democrat, Sam Goddard. Vigorous demands for better public and private housing have been made by prominent Mexican-American spokesmen in Arizona. They have decried conditions in south Phoenix and south Tucson, where Mexican-Americans live in shanties with no indoor plumbing and unsafe wiring. Yet Phoenix remains one of the few cities in the United States without a housing code requiring minimum building standards. Goddard could do nothing directly about the municipal housing standards. Nevertheless, thousands of Mexican-Americans in Arizona for the first time voted for a Republican, Jack Williams, even though he too will not be able to use his office to improve municipal policies. "They were vot-