BACKGROUND TO INDONESIA

1. THE COUNTRY AND POPULATION

The Republic of Indonesia is an archipelago of some 3,000 islands, the principal ones being Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi or Celebes and Kalimantan or Borneo, and West Irian, the Western half of New Guinea. It straddles the equator in a broad band, 3,400 miles from west to east and 1,000 miles from north to south, between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. The country's population, now over 112 million, is divided among a large number of ethnic groups, perhaps 18 major groups but more than 300 in all, with widely differing cultural patterns, religious beliefs and distinct languages. The population is disproportionately concentrated on the island of Java (about 78 million). About 55 million are ethnic Javanese, about 20 million Sundanese (from West Java). There are also some $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Chinese.

Indonesia's national crest bears the phrase "Unity in Diversity". The diversity is indeed great. Java is densely populated, the outer islands sparsely. Java is a net consumer of the country's foreign exchange, which is produced mainly in Sumatra (oil, rubber, tin), Kalimantan (oil, rubber) and Sulawesi (copra, nickel). Java's Islamization was relatively superficial, leaving many of its people more influenced by the older Hindu and Buddhist beliefs and practices than by Islam, whereas the outer islands are more thorough-goingly Muslim - except for some Christian pockets like Tapanuli in North Sumatra, Minahasa in North Sulawesi, Ambon, Flores and Timor.

But the forces which make for unity are also great. Almost all Indonesians are racially Malays, almost all are rice growers, almost all live in areas which shared in the cultural effects of the old empires, like the Buddhist empire of Sriwidjaja (7th to 13th centuries, based on South Sumatra) and the Hindu one of Modjopahit (13th to 15th centuries, based on East Java). Moreover, though linguistic variety is great, it has been found remarkably easy to gain support for the national language, Indonesian, which has been developed from Malay, the lingua france of trade in the archipelago for many centuries.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After approximately a thousand years of Hindu cultural influence (sometimes wrongly described as "colonisation") Islam began to make a significant impact in the archipelago during the 13th century. The portuguese established forts and trading posts in the area in the 16th century. In the 17th, the Dutch established a monopoly over much of the trade centred on Java and the Moluccas, the 'Spice Islands', and became more and more entangled in the political affairs of Java. In the 18th century Dutch interest shifted gradually from trade to the production and export of tropical plantation crops. From the middle of the 19th century, greatly expanded Dutch plantation and commercial activity in the Indies was accompanied by extension of Dutch administrative authority. Only in the first decade of the 20th century was anti-Dutch resistance overcome in the Outer Islands, completing political unification of the territory which has since become the Republic of Indonesia.

During the Dutch period a group of Chinese immigrants arrived. Encouraged by the Dutch to assume entrepreneurial roles which they themselves could not fill (and preferred not to have filled by Indonesians), the Chinese came to occupy a crucial position in the commercial life of the Indies, a position which has been

fiercely resented in the independent republic.

The early decades of the 20th century saw the rise of a nationalist movement, and the use of increasingly severe techniques of repression by the Dutch. Soekarno and Hatta, for example, first President and Vice President of the republic, each spent close to 10 years in prison or exile. There was very little development towards representative government.

Indonesia was occupied by the Japanese during World War 11. The Japanese exploited the country harshly, causing impoverishment and social disruption. But they also strengthened the Indonesian nationalists, particularly by allowing some

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tens of thousands of them to have military training. Indonesian independence was proclaimed by Soekarno and Hatta on 17th August 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender. It took four years of fighting as well as negotiation with the Dutch, before this independence was recognised in 1949, with what was left of the territory of the original republic, along with 15 Dutch-sponsored states, incorporated in a federal republic. However the Republic was morally dominant in the federation. A year later the federation dissolved and a new unitary republic emerged.

Division among the nationalists, clearly visible before the war, continued to hamper the republic even during the physical struggle with the Dutch. After 1949 it was manifest in the multi-party system, and the frequent rise and fall of multi-party cabinets, which combined to give Western-style parliamentary democracy a bad name. The holding of national elections (1955) did not restore faith in parliamentary democracy and the outbreak of a major rebellion in Sumatra and Sulawesi in early 1958 dealt it its final blow. In 1959 President Soekarno decreed the reintroduction of the 1945 constitution, which he described as implementation of his ideas of Guided Democracy and which justified a great increase in his personal power. The years following saw the suppression of two major (and fairly pro-Western) political parties, the small but influential Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) and the Masjumi, one of the two mass-based Islamic parties, and the arrest of their principal leaders. The Communist Party (PKI) on the other hand, experienced a dramatic rise in influence, growing to be the largest Communist Party outside the Communist bloc, but it came into increasingly sharp conflict with President Soekarno's partner-in-power, the Indonesian army.

Under Guided Democracy, the economy declined disastrously with the pace of inflation rising almost every year, and administration became corrupt and demoralized. But in international affairs Indonesia achieved a number of successes. In 1962 it won the struggle for control over West Irian (West New Guinea) and for several years it played a major role among Asian and African states, in the name of President Soekarno's doctrine of the New Emerging Forces. But its attempt to 'confront' and 'crush' Malaysia (1963-66) was a failure. Depriving itself of Western aid by its anti-Malaysian activities, and obtaining next to none from the USSR, Indonesia was increasingly isolated, except for close relations with China. Although in this period, Indonesia could not be described as totalitarian, there was strongly felt pressure for ideological conformity, and ideology dominated Indonesian politics.

The increasing polarization of pro- and anti- Communists came to a head in the attempted coup of Lieut.-Col. Untung on 1st October 1965, whose defeat was followed by a radical change in the constellation of power and massive reprisals against the Communist Party. Between 300,000 and 1,000,000 people alleged to have been involved with the PKI or the coup attempt were killed in the following nine months (mainly in Java, Bali and North Sumatra) and approximately 250,000 arrested. In the aftermeth of the coup, Soekarno's power declined and was eventually lost. Many elements of his ideology were repudiated. Reversal of the Peking-leaning foreign policy, and action against the Peking-aligned PKI, provided a pretext for waves of violence against Chinese in Indonesia.

The government of General Soeharto, in office since March 1966, has made economic and political stabilization its central concerns, and it has had significant success in both respects. Thanks partly to credits from various Western countries and Japan, but also to drastic budget cuts, tightened credit and other belt-tightening measures, it has brought down the rate of inflation markedly, though this was still well over 100% for the year 1967. Indonesia's economic ills are not however of a kind to respond quickly to doctoring of any kind, and so there has been much disillusionment among Soeharto's supporters, particularly the students and intellectuals who formed the vanguard of the "New Order" movement.

- 3. PRESENT SITUATION
 - (a) Form of Government The structure of the present Indonesian government is based upon the 1945

Constitution, reimposed in 1959 to replace the 'liberal' parliamentary Provisional Constitution of 1950. The 1945 Constitution vests extensive powers in the President, with few limitations upon him. General Soeharto became Acting President in March 1967, taking over all the functions and prerogatives of the former President Soekarno, and was elected president, by the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly or MPRS, in March 1968, for a five-year term.

The People's Consultative Assembly (or its provisional equivalent, the MPRS) is constitutionally the highest organ of state, a kind of super-parliament, which appoints the President and to which the President is responsible. Its membership is made up of members of Parliament (DPR) plus representatives of regions and functional groups, currently over 800 in all; members have so far been appointed by the government, not elected. The MPRS is required to meet only once every five years, and sets the broad outline of state policy, but has met about once a year. Parliament must meet at least once a year, and in practice is in session for about half the year.

Parliament was weakened as an institution in 1960 when President Soekarno replaced the House elected in 1955 by an appointed one. Re-introduction of the 1945 constitution reduced its powers and these were further reduced by the practice of government by decree and regulation. Under the Suharto-led New Order government, appointment of members has been continued (Communists and Communist sympathising elements were purged from the representative bodies, and replaced mainly by representatives of the military and non-party action front groups), and so has the practice of government by decree. However, the authority of the MPRS and the need for parliamentary approval of government measures have been stressed. Elections scheduled in 1966 to be held by 1968, were put off in March 1968 until 1971.

(b) Political Parties

The elections of 1955 revealed the ascendancy of four parties: the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), ideologically close to Soekarno, the Communist Party (PKI), the conservative Islamic party Nahdatul Ulama, and the Masjumi Party, a reformist Islamic party. Elections showed too that the first three of these parties drew their support disproportionately from the ethnic Javanese areas - Central and East Java - while the Masjumi more than any other party, represented the non-Javanese areas, i.e. West Java and the outer inlends. Under a 1960 law relating to political parties, the Masjumi (together with the Socialist Party) was banned, and ten parties were recognised. One of these, the Murba Party, was suspended in 1965, but given back its right to a legal existence during 1966.

Two principal factors governing the post-1965 scene are the elimination of Soekarno (now virtually a prisoner) and the smashing up of the Communist Party. In this situation, the Masjumi Party has sought to re-emerge as a legal party. The New Order government has however been unwilling to permit this. It has given its approval to the formation of a new Islamic party, the PMI, which apparently continues many strands of the Masjumi tradition, but it has insisted that it should not be led by the old leading figures of the Masjumi.

The government maintains that it is committed to constitutionality and democratic procedures; it is severely inhibited, however, by the problems of excluding supporters of Soekarno from influence in Parliament and government. Continued support for Soekarno comes mainly from the Javanese heartland provinces of Central and East Java, where the PNI and NU are strongest (as was the PKI). Both the NU and PNI are resisting some policies of the Soeharto government. The PNI is alleged to be infiltrated by, and sheltering, PKI supporters; it has been put under strong pressure to rid itself of pro-Soekarno and pro-Communist elements within its membership, and to make a clean break with its old, Soekarno-derived, quasi-Marxist ideology.

In general, the political parties have not been allowed to share in the distribution of seats in the representative bodies when these were purged of Communists and Communist sympathisers, and more recently when they were enlarged.

The new Muslim party FMI is represented in parliament by sitting members originally representing non-party groups. In the recent (February 1968) reshuffle and enlargement of parliamentary representation, parties were 'asked' to replace up to a quarter of their representatives with people more 'loyal' to the government. At present, nine political parties are represented in parliament, holding a total of 247 seats in a house of 414.

(c) The Military

When Soekarno introduced Guided Democracy in 1959, he did so with the support of the Armed Forces leadership; Soekarno and the military shared power, with the military strongly penetuating cabinet, bureaucracy, regional government and state enterprises. The New Order regime has increased the strength of the military component in the power structure, for example greatly increasing the number of military men in cabinet, department head, gubernatorial and ambassadorial positions, and the representation of the armed forces in representative bodies. The military is now decidedly dominant in government.

Within the armed forces, particularly among high officers, there is considerable division, reflecting the conflicts in the broader society. The army is divided along divisional and generational lines and between staff and field officers, and there are important divisions between it and the Navy, the Air Force and the Police. A newspaper published by the Marine Corps remains the most outspoken critic of the government from a mutedly pro-Soekarno position.

The Army has a strength of about 350,000 men, the Navy about 40,000 and the Air Force 30,000.

4. FREEDOM OF INCORMATION AND EXPRESSION

(a) Assembly and Speech

The events which followed October 1965 and led to the transfer of powers by President Soekarno, were dominated largely by the demonstrations of 'action groups', particularly student groups which, in the situation of the time and with the support of key groups of the military, were able to campaign for the overthrow of Soekarro and his supporters. But these action groups, now more or less disillusioned with the performance of the increasingly military-dominated government, now find that they must fight for their freedom to hold public meetings and demonstrations. Regulation of public expression remains a matter for regional authorities, largely the regional Army Command.

The PKI and its affiliates remain banned, and it is illegal to propagate Marxism.

(b) The Press

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Under Guided Democracy, Indonesia had what was openly called a 'guided press'. Control was exercised by licensing newspapers, allocating subsidised newsprint supplies and maintaining only one, state-controlled, newsagency, Antara. It was necessary for newspapers to conform closely to the ideological tenets of Guided Democracy, and editors were compelled to swear loyalty oaths.

Since October 1965, the Communist and pro-Communist press has been completely banned; the earlier control mechanisms remain largely intact, although subsidies have been eliminated except to the Army newspapers and Antara's monopoly of the agency field broken. There appears however to be greater divergence from government views permitted in the large number of newspapers making up the essentially pro-New Order press; and the government has continued to tolerate the fairly openly pro-Soekarno newspaper published by the Marines, and the more guardedly critical views of the papers put out by the PNI. Foreign journalists (nor-Communists) have considerable freedom. A United Press correspondent who publicly criticized censorship practices was expelled in April 1968, but his protest was successful in bringing the government to abandon the censorship of

cables going overseas. Radio and television services are controlled by the government.

5. MINORITIES AND DISCRIMINATION

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The problem of minorities and discrimination is closely bound up with the overall post-1965, anti-Communist climate. Within the 'ethnic Indonesian' population there has been rivalry, indeed bitter conflict between communities. For example, deep and long-standing division between orthodox and merely nominal Moslems in Central and East Java, underlay the political conflict which erupted into violence following the October coup. But there has not been systematic discrimination against particular ethnic or religious groups. The first of the Pantja Sila (Five Principles), with which the 1945 Constitution is prefaced, calls for the state to be based on Belief in One Deity and for freedom of worship, (The other principles are Nationalism, Humanity, People's Sovereignty and Social Justice). In the post-coup situation, this has been interpreted by Moslem extremists as proscribing atheism, which is almost equated with Communism. Religious persecution is therefore directed not against religious sects or minorities, but against noncelievers. It has become necessary to shun not only Communism, but also Marxism, and to profess a religion. Examinations in religion are compulsory in most schools and universities.

The wain problem of discrimination concerns the Chinese and this too is largely inseparable from the overall post-1965 situation, although anti-Chinese feeling and violence goes back hundreds of years. The 22 million or so Indonesian Chinese include about 13 million Indonesian citizens and about 250,000 with Chinese (mainland) papers. The remainder are usually considered stateless. Since October 1965, anti-Chinese pressures have been widespread and frequent and there nas been violent persecution on numerous occasions. Longstanding dislike and mistrust of the Chinese because of their hold over Indonesia's trade and commerce and their 'exclusiveness' has been able to find unrestrained public expression as a result of the reversal in foreign policy and the removal of Soekarno and the PKI to whom the Chinese had looked for protection. A shrill interchange of diplomatic abuse between the Indonesian and Chinese governments during 1966 and 1967 over treatment of Chinese in Indonesia and attacks on the Chinese embassy and consulates, led in October 1967 to the 'suspension' of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Neither government, however, seems anxious to initiate or be pushed into a total diplomatic break.

In practice, the distinction between Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent and other Chinese is frequently ignored (though the former have been unged to assimilate and adopt Indonesian names). In many communities to appear Chinese is to suffer discrimination and insult. The use of the Chinese language in public is prohibited. Chinese-language schools have all been closed. Businessmen suffer a good deal of extortion and police protection must normally be bought.

In some provinces the expulsion of Chinese has created serious refugee problems. In Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, some 10,000 Chinese were forced into camps after having been expelled from the neighbouring province of Atjoh, in April-May 1966. Some 4000 of these were 'repatriated' to China on a ship provided reluctantly by the Chinese government, but the rest languish in makeshift camps (old tobacco sheds, etc.), where overcrowding is great and food scarce. Until the 'anaponsion' of Sino-Indonesian diplomatic relations in October 1967 it was assumed that these remaining 6000 ex-Atjeh Chinese would eventually be taken to China, but since that time the Chinese ship has made no more trips. It is not clear what the Indonesian government now sees as their future.

More recently, more than 50,000 Chinese, mainly peasants, were evicted from their homes in Bengkajang area of West Borneo. Dayak tribesmen were permitted to rampage through this area in October and November 1967, forcing all Chinese residents to flee to coastal towns, and killing several hundred who were reluctant to move or part with their belongings. Army spokesmen have argued that the action of the Dayaks has brought advantages to the Army in its operations against the Communist-led guerillas (Guerilla Force of the People of Sarawak, or PGRS) operating on the border between West Borneo and Sarawak. Most of the 50,000 expellees are still living in refugee camps near the towns of Pontianak and

Singkawang. Many have that as exervation The government plans to result them in other parts of West Kalinswich, but so far only tiny sums of money have been made evailable for this purpose. Taiwan has contributed some rice and drugs for their maintenance.

Official policy towards the Chinese is governed in good part by economic considerations. Most top leaders of the central government are aware of the disastrous effects which lisruptions of the Chinese trading network have had on the Indonesian economy generally, and a number of them have been active in behindthe-scenes efforts to restrain anti-Chinese sentiments. But there are great limitations to their capacity to exercise restraint in a situation where much power lies with the traditionally most strongly anti-Chinese groups (particularly well represented in Maskin political groups.)

S. THE FULE OF LAW

(a) The Legal System

Under the 1945 Consultation, judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court and "such subordinate ocurts as may be established by Law." Two lower levels of courts exist with much the same structure as under Dutch rule. Criminal Law is codified and based on European penal law. Traditional customary law is gradually being subordinated to the national code. The prevailing Private Law Act and Commercial Law Act, both of 1847, originated in the French Code Civile and Code du Commerce through Lutch adaptations. There are also Islamic religious courts which function mainly in the field of family law.

The judiciary has played almost no part in the Indonesian constitutional processes, except in conducting criminal cases with a political background. Very few cases involving interpretation of the Constitution have been dealt with by the course. In general, political considerations still limit the rule of law to a dismaying degree.

(b) Post October 1965 Political Trials

Several scores of people alleged to have been involved in the planning or execution of the October 1st 1965 Coup, or to have supported it, have been or are being dealt with by special military tribunals, the central Mahmillub or the regional Mahmildams. Those tried by these to date include very senior members of Scekarmo's government and high office-holders or key figures in the PKI. The central tribunal began by trying Lt. Col. Untung, the titular leader of the October coup, and Njono of the FKI Central Committee, then went on with the cases of Ir. Subandrio, First Deputy Premier under Soekarno, Omar Dhani, former Air Force Lead, brigadier-General Supadjo, Sudisman of the Communist Party's Politbureau, and the mysterious head of the FKI's Special Bureau, Sjam. There have been periodic demands for Soekarno to be tried in the same way. Death sentences appear to be the normal outcome of both central and regional court trials, but, so far as is known, only four have been carried out so far.

(c) Political Prisoners

Prisoners taken after the coup and the outlawing of the Communist Party are being held in a great number of gaols and prison camps throughout the country (disused factories, schools, newly built sheds, etc.), over 50 in Java and a smaller number elsewhere. According to figures given by the Attorney-General, Major-General Sugih Arto, in July 1967, 250,000 had been arrested since the coup while 55,000 were under detention at that time. The latter figure is thought to be much too low. Herbert Feith writing in the <u>New Republic</u> (April 13th, 1968) after a visit to 11 camps, estimated the total numbers of political prisoners to be 80,000.

People held in the prisons are divided into three categories: Of the 55,000 referred to by the Attorney-General in July 1967, about 4,700 were said to be in Category A, "hard-core" Communists awaiting trial. Another 6,010 were said to be in Category B, less dangerous men scheduled to be exiled. 16,000, classified as Category C, were scheduled to be released as soon as local social and political

conditions permitted this. The remainder were said to be still awaiting classification. Releasing was proceeding during much of 1967 but there was also some rearresting and some new arresting. Almost certainly thousands have died of sheer malnutrition, and reports persist that there is shooting of prisoners in some camps. In early 1967 it was reported that in Jogjakarta alone, 60 people a week had been killed in the previous six months. (London Times, 20th March 1967)

8. PRISONS AND REFUGEE CAMPS

(a) Political Prisons and Prison Camps

Conditions in prisons and camps vary a great deal. In some 'white collar' gaols in the capital, where most of the prisoners who were formerly politicians, bureaucrats, writers, and university teachers are held, occasional contacts with visitors are allowed and the prisoners are treated with respect. The amount of food provided is badly inadequate even for these men, but many of them receive food from their families. The situation is reported to be very much worse in smaller towns and where prisoners are poor and without connections. In some, prisoners are put out on to road and other construction work, in which case their minimal food needs are met out of public works and other budgets. In other cases, however, they receive only what is provided for them as prisoners, often less than 200 grams of rice per person per day and nothing else. Many of the prisons are old and poorly equipped as well as overcrowded, while many of them are makeshift camps; sanitation and medical care are radically inadequate. The poverty of the government is a factor here, at least as important as deliberate neglect. Another is the almost total lack of public discussion of conditions in the camps.

Further reading:

J. D. Legge, <u>Indonesia</u> (Prentice Hall paperback, 1964) is the best introduction to Indonesian history.

Ruth T. McVey, ed., <u>Indonesia</u> (Yale University and Human Relations Area Files, 1963) is the best general scholarly book on the country, with very good chapters on history, society, politics, the economy, agriculture, literature, drama, etc.

Two lively introductions to Indonesian politics are Bruce Grant, <u>Indonesia</u> (Penguin edition, 1966) and <u>The Autobiography of President Soekarno as told to</u> <u>Cindy Adams</u> (Bobbs Merrill, 1965).

For contrasting views of the October 1965 coup see John Hughes, <u>Indonesian</u> <u>Upheaval</u> (1967) and J.M. van der Kroef "Gestapu in Indonesia" <u>Orbis</u> August 1966 (both pro-Soeharto versions) and Lucien Rey, "Dossier of the Indonesian Drama" <u>New Left Review</u>, March-April 1966 and W.F. Wertheim, "Indonesia Before and After the Untung Coup" Pacific Affairs Spring-Summer 1966 (on the other side).

On the politics of the New Order see R. K. Paget, "The Military in Indonesian Politics: The Burden of Power" <u>Pacific Affairs</u>, Winter 1967 - 68; G. J. Pauker, "Indonesia in 1967: The Age of Reason?" <u>Asian Survey</u>, February 1968; and F. P.

Bunnell, "Indonesia's Quasi-Military Regime" Current History February 1967.

Good current reporting, political as well as economic, is provided in the <u>Far</u> <u>Eastern Economic Review</u> (Hongkong weekly). For more analytical surveys of economic developments see the <u>Three - Monthly Survey on Indonesia</u> of the Economist Intelligence Unit, and the <u>Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies</u> (Australian National University, Canberra, three issues per year).

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July 1968

Amnesty International, Research Department, Turnagain Lane, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE: JANUARY 1969

Amnesty appreciates the serious political and social problems which might result from a general amnesty for all "Gestagu/FKI" prisoners, and rather than make unrealistic suggestions, prefers to ungo the Indonesian authorities to ensure:

- 1. That all prisoners scheduled to be released are in fact released, and not debained by the officers in charge of them, who are in some cases profiting from prison labour.
- 2. That all prisoners scheduled to be tried are brought before the courts as soon as possible. So far, less than 40 (out of 4,700) have been tried.
- 3. That death centences for political offences be committed.
 - 4. That the supply of food to the political prisoners be increased, and included facilities improved.

Amnesty has so far adopted only about 15 cases. This is largely because of the difficulty of obtaining detailed information about individual prisoners. Some others who might be suitable for adoption, at least as investigation cases, are members of Sukarno's government who have already been tried and semiconced to death or to long terms of imprisonment. But to take up such cases as that of Subandrio would schieve very little and might well antagonise the government and prejudice our efforts on behalf of other prisoners.

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