

Indonesia's Communist chief is the second most powerful man in the country

A Simple Man In Pursuit Of Power

By NEIL SHEEHAN

JAKARTA.

PRESIDENT SUKARNO has a habit, when amusing himself on Saturday evenings at his weekend palace in Bogor, of ordering Cabinet ministers and pretty girls to sing a Sumatran roundelay in which each singer in turn composes his own verse.

On a recent Saturday evening the ministers and the girls, some slightly embarrassed but knowing the President's propensity for women, sang risqué verses. Then a man with a sad, Arab face, wearing a baggy navy-blue suit, stepped up to the microphone and sang: "You can flirt with all the girls you want, but don't forget to crush Malaysia."

The singer was Dipa Nusantara Aidit, chairman of the Indonesian Communist party, and the injection of politics into an otherwise social occasion was typical of him. For Aidit is a simple man who never forgets that the pursuit of power is the object of his life.

The leader of the third largest Communist party in the world after the Soviet Union and Communist China does not fit the Western stereotype of an Asian Communist. His personality and features lack the dourness and jesuitical fervor of his Vietnamese and Chinese counterparts.

He is almost invariably polite and has an excellent sense of humor. His

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curly, jet-black hair, as long as an aspiring beatnik poet's, is always falling down into his face and having to be brushed brusquely back into place. Only the sudden hardening of his large, mournful eyes and the quick spring of his body in the chair as he answers a challenging question indicate that this man is capable of ruthlessness.

When a visitor asks why he became a Communist, Aidit's answers are perhaps a bit too pat, but they have a certain ring of honesty. Sitting in the reception room of Communist party headquarters in Jakarta, with the grim visage of Lenin staring down at him from the pink-painted walls, he traces his receptivity to Marxist ideas back to his childhood on the tin-mining island of Billiton off the coast of Borneo. It was uneventful except for an experience common to many revolutionary leaders of modern Asia—the development of a deep resentment of the Western white man. In Aidit's case it happened to be the Dutch colonists.

"I went to the tin mines. I went 200 meters below, so there I learned what is the working class," he said in his not very fluent English. "How they work, how they enjoy life, what are their difficulties.

"My friends there got only a third of a guilder a day, with 15 kilograms of rice monthly. The Dutch capitalists got thousands of guilders monthly, with three months' leave abroad paid by the company. It was like paradise on that island for the Dutch where my friends had to work 200 or



D. N. Aidit, head of the Partai Komunis Indonesia, calls on President Sukarno—"He does not fit the stereotype of the Asian Communist."

more meters below ground for their wages."

He also remembers, he says, the resentment of his father, a minor official in the Dutch colonial forestry service. "My father—he finished elementary school—became a forestry worker; a Dutchman from Holland didn't finish elementary school but became head of the forestry officials. My father said to me, 'I can do everything the Dutchman can do better—if not they can shoot me—but he's ahead of me because he's a Dutchman'."

THE two other Communist leaders with whom Aidit shares his power, Mohammed H. Lukman, the party's first deputy chairman and reputedly its principal strategist, and Njoto (pronounced nee-yo-tow; like many Indonesians, he has no first name),

second deputy chairman and chief theoretician, have no difficulty explaining why they became Communists. Their fathers both joined the party shortly after it was formed in 1920 and they have considered themselves Communists since their youth.

Unlike Aidit, a Sumatran of Arab descent who was born in a village near the city of Medan in North Sumatra, Lukman and Njoto are Javanese. Lukman is a reserved and self-effacing man, friendly but lacking Aidit's easy sense of humor. He was born at Tegal in Central Java and spent nine years of his youth with his family in a Dutch concentration camp at Boven Digul deep in the interior of West Irian (former Dutch New Guinea). His father was imprisoned there for participating in the abortive Communist revolt of 1926.

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self-taught intellectual whose home is lined with books and paintings, was born in the plantation town of Jember in East Java. He grew up in the port city of Surabaya, one of the original Communist strongholds on Java. "I have been," he said, "a professional revolutionary since I was 14 years old."

THE political achievement of these three men, in the 14 years they have led the Communist party, has been enormous. When they first seized control of the Politbureau in January, 1951, the party was broken and chaotic, its membership a scant 3,000 to 5,000. Its leaders had either been killed in the aftermath of the 1948 rebellion at Madiun in Central Java, an inept and hastily organized attempt by the Communists to overthrow the infant Indonesian Republic, or discredited by the revolt's failure. Today, like the proverbial phoenix, the Partai Komunis Indonesia (P.K.I.) has risen from the ashes to become the most powerful force in this country after President Sukarno.

The party membership now numbers 3 million, enough to make Aidit and his colleagues recently decide to reduce recruiting in order to preserve the quality of the cadres. Another 22 million sympathizers have been enlisted in front organizations of workers, peasants, youths, students, women and artists. The party's organizational network reaches into thousands of villages on Java and extends throughout the outer islands of the archipelago. Its activities affect most aspects of Indonesian life.

Either covertly or openly, Communists have infiltrated the bureaucracy, the schools, other political parties, the lower ranks of the police, army and navy and the officer ranks of the air force, the newspapers and even the churches and the mosques. Surachman, the secretary general of the Nationalist party, is so far left that he would have no trouble fitting into a seat on the central committee of the P.K.I. if he ever decides to change his assignment. Air Vice Marshal Omar Dhani, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, is such an obvious Communist sympathizer that no one would be surprised if he announced some day that he had decided to join the party.

President Sukarno, who refers to the party as "my friend and my brother," has taken Communists into his Cabinet. Just a year ago Njoto was given an important position

as a minister of state attached to the Cabinet Presidium, a body which helps to formulate and execute policy. Oei Tjo Tat, another influential minister of state in the Presidium, as well as the Ministers of Labor, Justice, Agriculture, Mining, and Electricity and Energy have not yet displayed their party membership cards but are expected to do so eventually. At least two other ministers are known Communist sympathizers.

Although Aidit and Lukman have held the formal rank of minister without portfolio since 1962, they do not have any Cabinet functions. Aidit is a vice chairman of the Provisional People's Consultative Congress and Lukman is a vice chairman of the Parliament, Indonesia's two rubber-stamp legislative bodies. Both men are also members of several of the consultative and advisory bodies Sukarno has created in recent years.

In comparison with the other faction-ridden and corrupt political parties, the P.K.I. is a model of unity, discipline and strength. It is the only party in Indonesia with a national program which is competently executed. Its cadres are well-trained, hard-working and politically and psychologically motivated. They have also displayed a virtue most unusual



TWOSOME—At a party at the President's weekend palace at

in Indonesia—morality in matters of women and money.

The abortive Madiun revolt may have created the opportunity for Aidit, Lukman and Njoto to thrust to the fore—much as the ill-fated urban rebellions in the late nineteen-twenties and early thirties helped clear the way for Mao Tse-tung and his confederates to assume the leadership of the Communist party of China but it does not explain their remarkable success since then. That explanation can, perhaps, be found partly in the fact that all three are deeply imbued with a sense of their own history and society. They have developed an intimate knowledge of, and intuition about, the strengths, weaknesses and desires of the Indonesian people and particularly the Javanese, who form about 50 per cent of this country's population.

Aidit, Lukman and Njoto are of the second generation of Indonesia's political leaders, as contrasted to the older generation exemplified by Sukarno. Aidit is 43, Lukman 45 and Njoto 40 years old. They grew up in the rough-and-tumble days of the Japanese occupation and the revolution against the Dutch. Unlike the Communist leaders who preceded them, they did not spend long years of their lives in exile. They were schooled in the intrigues and upheavals of Indonesian politics rather than the theoretics of a Kremlin classroom.

THE first element in their strategy has been the vigorous adoption of an extreme nationalist position aimed at disproving that Communists take their orders from Moscow or



Bogor, Sukarno, left, and Communist chief Aidit, at the microphones, take turns singing for a group of Russian visitors.

Peking and at maintaining Indonesia in a perpetual state of turbulence conducive to Communist growth. "It is the responsibility of each member of the party," Aidit told his followers in early 1953, "not only to be a good Communist but also a good nationalist."

With this dictum as a guide, Aidit and his colleagues have carefully nurtured the jingoism which runs deep in Indonesian character. As early as 1952, when the anti-Communist parties here were urging that Holland be persuaded to relinquish West Irian to Indonesia through peaceful negotiations, the Communists were demanding violent measures to force the Dutch to hand over the territory. As Sukarno moved from seizures of Dutch businesses in 1957 to a break in diplomatic relations and finally the launching of paratroops in West Irian in 1962, the Communists cheered him on and ordered tens of thousands of their followers to volunteer to fight.

In January, 1961, nearly two and a half years before Sukarno embarked on his confrontation with neighboring Malaysia, Aidit had already denounced the proposed federation as a "neocolonialist scheme" designed to perpetuate British colonialism in Southeast Asia.

In the race to out-patriot the patriots, the P.K.I. has also been extremely conspicuous in demands for the nationalization of all foreign capital here. Since the bulk of foreign investment in Indonesia was owned by Dutch, British and United States interests, its seizure served to facilitate Communist purposes by shattering the economy and drastically reducing the influence of

Western powers in this country.

THE second major element in the strategy of Aidit and his colleagues has been the pursuit of basically peaceful means for the achievement of internal Communist aims. There has been no attempt to repeat the fiasco of Madiun or to develop guerrilla warfare on the Vietnamese or Chinese pattern. The P.K.I. leadership has been acutely conscious of the passivity of the Indonesian masses and the fact that Indonesia is not contiguous with a Communist country which could serve as a sanctuary for guerrillas. Aidit and his colleagues know that any such "adventurism" would only bring sudden Government repression and the destruction of the party.

Instead, by professing basic loyalty to the state, the P.K.I. has purchased the right to political activity aimed at some day capturing control of the governmental apparatus.

Under what is called its National United Front Policy, the P.K.I. leadership has sought to shift Indonesia's internal balance of power gradually to the left by a continual process of mobilizing mass support through front organizations, agitation and political maneuvering.

Throughout Indonesia's era of parliamentary democracy in the nineteen-fifties, the P.K.I. played this game brilliantly, cooperating with the non-Communists and the opportunists to isolate and destroy the really anti-Communist political forces in the country. The party allied itself with Sukarno and the leftists and jingoists within the Nationalist party against Mohammed

Hatta, the former vice president, the anti-Communist Socialist party and the Masjumi, the largest Moslem party.

The result was that by 1960, when Sukarno dissolved the Parliament and banned the Socialist and Masjumi parties, the P.K.I. had helped achieve a major change in Indonesia's internal power structure. (The previous year Sukarno had proclaimed Guided Democracy, his euphemism for personal rule. Hatta was out of office living in the seclusion where he remains today.)

Over the years since, as the political spectrum has shifted under Sukarno's rule, the P.K.I. has continued to employ the same tactics with telling effect. It has supported Sukarno and the left-wing nationalists against the now anti-Communist group consisting of the army, the entrenched bureaucrats, the right-wing elements in the Nationalist party and the remaining Moslem parties. Indonesia has veered sharply to the left, with the P.K.I. daily acquiring more power and influence.

THE third major element in the strategy of Aidit and his colleagues has been their alliance with Sukarno, a relationship which has grown in intimacy since it was first formed in 1955. They have analyzed, with perhaps more acuity than any other political party here, the complex personality of Indonesia's President. The older Communist leaders attacked Sukarno as a "Fascist" and a "Japanese collaborator," but Aidit and his colleagues quickly sensed that the profound Marxist coloration of Sukarno's thought, his vanity and extreme nationalism and the destructiveness inherent in his compulsive love of turmoil for its own sake made him a natural ally. "Sukarno," Njoto smilingly told a recent visitor, "has always had an affinity for us because he thinks like a Marxist."

Whatever differences exist between Sukarno's vague Marxist-nationalist ideology and their own, the Communists have brushed them aside as unimportant. They have embraced all of Sukarno's ideological pronouncements without exception. One of these is the Pantja Sila, the five principles of the Indonesian state, the first principle of which is belief in God, usually a most un-Communist idea. "No Communist party," a non-Communist Indonesian Cabinet minister jokingly noted recently, "is more revisionist than the Indonesian one."

Communist appeals to Sukarno's vanity are unending. All newspapers here are ritualistic in their praise of the "President - Supreme Commander-Great Leader of the Revolution Bung Karno (Broth-

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er Karno)," but the Communist papers always manage to be just a little more lavish than the others. The title, "Much Beloved," habitually used after Sukarno's name in public address, was invented by the Communists. Whenever Sukarno speaks, the P.K.I. automatically turns out huge crowds which, for long intervals before and after his speech, flatter his already immense ego by shouting, "Long live Bung Karno."

When the Government does take some action which the Communists dislike, they are careful never to criticize Sukarno himself but only his Ministers. The impression is always given that Sukarno is personally blameless and is simply being misled by incompetent or self-seeking advisers.

THE P.K.I. leadership has made a sustained effort to identify Sukarno as closely as possible with the party in order to give an aura of legitimacy to Communist aims and programs and to exploit the President's personal popularity with the Indonesian people as a means of increasing Communist mass support. No Communist action is ever taken here, whether it be a mob seizure of land, a demand for a break in diplomatic relations with the United States or the confiscation of Beatles records in Jakarta, without justifying it with a quotation from one of Sukarno's innumerable speeches. "Anyone who wants to become a disciple of Bung Karno," Lukman said in a speech in July, "must also become a good friend of the Communists."

Without saying so, the P.K.I. has attempted to create the impression among the Indonesian masses that the real leader of the party is not Dipa Nusantara Aidit, but President Sukarno himself. This technique is sometimes carried to rather absurd lengths. Aidit now claims that "my first teacher of Marxism was Sukarno," when Sukarno taught at a political school sponsored by the Japanese occupation forces which Aidit attended. What Aidit blithely glosses over is the fact that the school did not open until 1944, while Aidit, by his own admission, joined the Communist party in 1943.

AS far-fetched as it sometimes becomes, the campaign to convince Indonesians that what the Communists want Sukarno wants seems to have succeeded. It has made it increasingly difficult for the other political parties here to criticize Communist aims or actions without seeming to criticize the President himself. There is also no doubt that Sukarno is now deliberately favoring the P.K.I. because it appears to be the one organization in Indonesia which most closely reflects his own

plans for the country. Sukarno, in any case, does not tolerate anti-Communism and considers it subversive. (In the past fortnight, the Nationalist party, at his urging, dismissed seven of its right-wing and moderate leaders.)

The alliance with Sukarno has been particularly fruitful for the P.K.I. in its efforts to neutralize the country's 350,000-man army. The army is not anti-Communist from ideological conviction and its officers certainly cannot be considered pro-Western. They oppose the Communists, as they have opposed other political parties in the past, simply because P.K.I. ascendancy would probably mean the end of their political power and privileged economic position. The military has achieved its status in life; now it wants to go on accumulating larger bank accounts, bigger houses, flashier cars and prettier girls.

ONE of the unusual aspects of the Communist movement in Indonesia has been the ability of Aidit, Lukman and Njoto to work together for 14 years without any open split over questions of ideology or strategy. There have been indications that Aidit, previously considered a pro-Moscow man, was forced to enter the Chinese camp in the Sino-Soviet dispute in mid-1963 because Njoto and Lukman outmaneuvered him in the central committee.

Evidence on this internal struggle is extremely sketchy, however, and whatever adjust-



HEADQUARTERS—In the Jakarta slums, the entrance to a Communist party district office.

ment was made took place smoothly and with no overt signs of conflict.

Some Western students of the P.K.I. believe the struggle did result in a curbing of Aidit's ability to take independent action and an increase of Lukman's and Njoto's power. When asked how the decision-making machinery of the party works, all three men contend that day-to-day decisions on strategy and policy are made jointly by themselves or by an unofficial executive committee of the Politbureau, which consists of the ruling triumvirate; Sudisman, 45 years old, who heads the party secretariat, and Dr. Sakirman, 53, the party's leading economist. "If we do not agree," Lukman said, "then we postpone the decision."

THE extent of the influence Peking exerts over the P.K.I. as a result of the party's decision to take China's side in the Sino-Soviet dispute is difficult to evaluate. There seems to be little doubt that China does exert considerable influence over the party because Peking indirectly holds the P.K.I.'s purse strings.

It is an open secret that most of the party's operating funds are extorted from the large and wealthy Chinese business community here. As far as anyone can determine, the businessmen themselves are not Communist sympathizers. They contribute the money on orders from the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta, which controls them through the Chinese business and fraternal associations in Indonesia. The P.K.I. also guarantees the businessmen some protection from labor troubles and political interference.

This unique source of funds has made the P.K.I. by far the richest party in Indonesia. The money has enabled the party to maintain tens of thousands of full-time cadres, something no other political organization here can afford. The funds have also allowed the P.K.I. to enhance its political power and mass appeal by organizing innumerable demonstrations and national conferences of its front organizations or to fill the Jakarta stadium with 100,000 shouting, chanting followers on major occasions. It is another open secret in Indonesia that the Communists always pay their demonstrators a small sum each and even feed and house them in some instances.

The P.K.I. is also constructing a large, new headquarters in downtown Jakarta and its 45th anniversary celebrations last May 23 were the most lavish ever staged by a political party here. Since the P.K.I. has never demonstrated any ability to collect much money from its own rank and file, these activities would be drastically affected if Peking were suddenly to cut off the funds.

66The P.K.I. is the third largest Communist party in the world today after Soviet Russia's and Red China's.99

It appears doubtful, however, that the P.K.I. would become a prisoner of Peking if it some day were to ascend to power in this country. Aidit, Lukman and Njoto seem to be working primarily for their own ends and not Mao Tse-tung's.

THE signs of the influence Aidit and his colleagues already exert on Indonesian politics are many. Since the beginning of this year Aidit has been receiving ambassadors at Communist party headquarters as if he were a foreign minister. The most frequent callers are the Soviet and Chinese Ambassadors, but the Japanese Ambassador found it necessary to visit him when Japan was attempting to mediate Indonesia's dispute with Malaysia three months ago; even Mike Forrestal, a former White House adviser who was here in February on a reporting tour of Southeast Asia for President Johnson, paid Aidit a visit. Other barometers of Aidit's influence are the increasing amount of time he spends at the Presidential Palace these days and the multitude of lectures he gives before meetings of non-Communist groups.

As recently as 1960, Aidit, Lukman and Njoto were arrested by the army and interrogated for several days for

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an attack on the Government's failure to solve Indonesia's economic problems. It is a measure of what has happened since that the army would not dare to repeat the incident today, for Sukarno would not allow it and the army no longer has the power to defy the President. At party meetings Aidit is fond of recounting the P.K.I.'s success to cheer his followers. "In 1920," he told a recent meeting, "the P.K.I. was seven men around an oil lamp, but today we are making the imperialists tremble."

ALTHOUGH their rise to prominence has changed the lives of Aidit, Lukman and Njoto, it does not seem to have essentially altered their personalities. They remain lean and dynamic men, much more confident than in the past, but still basically cautious and aware that the final goal of power has yet to be attained.

They continue to live simply and have scorned the attributes of success—harems and the accumulation of personal fortunes — which have corrupted the other Indonesian political leaders of their generation. In the vast moral filth of this country, there is something strikingly clean and Spartan about the personal lives of these men. The legend of their incorruptibility, accurate as far as anyone can determine, is carefully cultivated.

Aidit's suits are as baggy as ever and he still wears cheap clip-on ties to diplomatic receptions. When he speaks to Communist meetings he affects a more proletarian manner—khaki slacks and a loose white sports shirt. Although he owns a silver cigarette case and a lighter, he claims that he never buys cigarettes and relies on gifts from admirers. His favorites are the British brands, such as State Express 555, but he will puff away contentedly on the vilest Indonesian varieties. He usually drinks only water or plain soda pop because he believes that tea and the sweet pop Indonesians like tend to make him sweat in the tropical heat. He eats whatever happens to be available.

"Some comrades don't like to eat certain things," he said, "but I say as a revolutionary man you have to eat everything. If there's good food at a Chinese reception, fine, I eat it; if at other times I have only rice and maize, I eat it."

He keeps physically trim by swimming whenever possible and by gymnastic exercises in his home. He has not abandoned the sense of caution developed in the old days and reportedly does not sleep every night in the house but rotates between it and at least three other houses in the city owned by the party.

His one sign of opulence is a black, 1964 Dodge Dart, chauffeur-driven, but he does not own the car. It was assigned to him by President Sukarno because of his ministerial rank. When a visitor asked, "Why do you ride around in an American car and not something neutral like a Scandinavian one?" he laughed and replied, "That's not important, I take whatever car is convenient."

Lukman and Njoto lead similar lives. Like Aidit they are respectable family men with five or six children each. They

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and Aidit also have no close friends outside the party because as Njoto explained, "We don't have time for that; we are too busy."

Their work has become so demanding that they now frequently do without an Indonesian's favorite pleasure—the afternoon siesta. "Sometimes," Lukman said, "we have time to rest in the afternoon, but sometimes we do not."

ALTHOUGH Aidit and his colleagues are the principal enemies of the United States in Indonesia, they are also probably the only men here who frankly admire American efficiency and have attempted to inculcate its spirit into their cadres. "You have to be efficient if you want to get anything done," Njoto said, "we imitate you that way."

For all their un-Indonesian briskness and energy, Aidit and his colleagues do not seem about to risk the gains they have made so far by making a precipitate leap for power. When asked how they reconcile their gradualist strategy with the traditional Marxist doctrine that at some point a Communist party must attempt to seize power, Aidit and Njoto avoid answering and Lukman says, "It cannot be calculated."

A visitor gains the impression talking to these men that they simply hope to keep Indonesia moving along its present leftward course in the belief that one day, if the present trend continues, the country will irreversibly slip into Communism.