

FILLING IN THE GAPS

Remembering the 1965 Killings in Indonesia

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Abstract

After more than fifty years, Indonesia remains muted in its acknowledgement of the killings and disappearances of nearly one million suspected leftists in the anti-Communist pogroms of 1965. While the downfall of Indonesian strongman Suharto had opened up a larger space for democracy, the Indonesian state remains reticent in facing accusations of mass human rights violations that have taken place during his rule. Although many former dissidents and political detainees have come forward with their stories in an effort to “straighten history,” they continue to face harassment from right wing groups as well as the state’s intelligence apparatus. Nevertheless, with the advent of the Internet, human rights activists as well as historical “revisionists” have begun to use the cyber sphere as way to fill in the “gaps” in terms of Indonesia’s narrative concerning the killings of 1965. This paper investigates the dynamics behind the use of this medium in transmitting this dark episode to a younger generation of Indonesians. It looks specifically at *Ingat 1965*, a website that utilizes “private memory” as a way to “resist” as well as reinvent the narrative, which has so long been dominated by the state. This paper also includes an investigation into how Indonesia is beginning to deal with its past.

Keywords

1965 killings; history; human rights; Indonesia; internet; new media; memory generations

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INTRODUCTION

During the tumultuous months of September and October of 1965, a failed coup attempt in Indonesia brought about the deaths and disappearances of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of suspected leftists in one of Southeast Asia's most notorious "open secret." These pogroms then brought about the New Order regime and its system of social control, which continues to reverberate throughout Indonesian society even until today. Part of this system of social control revolves around an elaborate national myth that the Communist Party of Indonesia (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* or the PKI) and organizations associated with it were culpable in this coup plot against the state. According to this narrative, the Indonesian body politic faced an imminent danger from Communism, which necessitated the subsequent incarceration and killings of almost a million people. However, even after the fall of President Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has continued with an enforced form of "silence" which sanctifies the centrality of the state at the expense of truth concerning past human rights violations. Even as former dissidents and ex-political prisoners have come forward with their personal accounts, stories, and experiences, they continue to live in fear of harassment from the both the state as well as right-wing fringe groups. Nonetheless, human rights activists as well as historical revisionists have taken on the mantle of challenging the state's narrative.

In this paper I will analyze the contents of a cyber "memorial" named *Ingat 65* or "Remember 1965" showcasing stories written by Indonesians in their understanding of the event.¹ This paper aims to investigate how the internet's relative "openness" provides a place wherein the events of 1965 can be remembered under less restrictive conditions and, more importantly, debated. The paper will first provide a brief description of the 1965 killings. I will then provide an explanation of the strategies used in maintaining the "enforced silence" which surrounds the event. The paper will also provide an overview of attempts by victims, ex-dissidents, as well as ex-political prisoners, to tell their stories. It continues with a look at the state of the internet in Indonesia and its contribution to democratization. I will also show how this medium can also contribute to a greater understanding of the events of 1965 beyond the official state narrative. I will also consider what the internet can offer in terms of an environment which still remains inimical to open discussions of the events both during and after 1965. In this paper, I will conclude by stating that the internet and websites such as that of *Ingat 65* serve as virtual monuments of remembrance but at the same time "spaces" where the history of 1965 can be interpreted in multiple ways. Utilizing the open and "amorphous" nature of the internet, sites such as *Ingat 65*, I posit, have the capacity to provide the "materiality" needed to keep the memories surrounding the event alive in an otherwise "silenced" landscape. By doing so memory is democratized and may potentially de-center

the myths surrounding one of Southeast Asia's greatest instances of human rights violations.

IN THE BEGINNING

Between the late hours of September 30 until the early morning of October 1, 1965, seven high ranking military personnel, made up of six generals and an officer, were abducted. They were then murdered and their bodies subsequently dumped into a well near an air force base just an hour's drive southeast of central Jakarta called *Lubang Buaya* or Crocodile Hole.² Their murderers went on to make a radio announcement proclaiming themselves to be members of the September the 30th Movement (*Gerakan 30 September* or G30S) with a stated intent of protecting Indonesia's first president Sukarno from a coup attempt by right-wing soldiers. In the early morning of October 1, 1965, a young general Suharto quickly moved his troops to suppress soldiers loyal to G30S. Just as they abruptly declared their intentions, their counter coup was over. When the bodies of the murdered officers were found and exhumed, General Suharto swore vengeance and initiated a "purge," which would last for almost a year all over Indonesia. At the same time the "smiling" general also orchestrated a hate campaign against the communists, accusing them of being complicit in the murder of the army officers at *Lubang Buaya*.³ Before 1965, the PKI was the world's third largest communist party after its Chinese and Soviet counterparts. Since the mid-1940s the PKI had uneasily shared the Indonesian political landscape with nationalists, religious groups, as well as the armed forces under Sukarno's model of "Guided Democracy." Its political power was perceived as a threat not only to the forces Sukarno had so precariously balanced during the Guided Democracy years but also to the avowedly anti-communist nations of the US and Great Britain. Within the context of the Cold War, Indonesia turning "red" would only serve to further strengthen the West's "domino theory" paranoia and thus the "neutralization" of the PKI and communism was seen as a necessity.⁴

Holding power and having Sukarno as a patron, the PKI were only barely tolerated, but once the events of September 30, 1965 were set in motion, the fate of the party and its associated wings, as well as its members, were sealed. The purge would devour anyone with even the slightest association to the party. This would include farmers, writers, politicians, factory workers, and ethnic Chinese. The largest number of those incarcerated and "disappeared" were from the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Bali. The last batch of political prisoners and detainees, which numbered in the millions, were only released toward the end of the 1970s.

Following the events of 1965, General Suharto went on to become the second president of Indonesia who held on to the reins of power for thirty over years until his downfall was brought about by the *reformasi* or reform movement in 1998. It was during this period of three decades that Suharto earned himself the reputation of being Southeast Asia's foremost strongman, having survived through deft political maneuvering while utilizing a slew of authoritarian measures to maintain control. The longevity of his New Order regime was also due in part to a combination of state-sanctioned violence with an almost totalitarian form of ideology based on the demonization and hatred of the PKI. In essence, the foundations of Suharto's New Order regime were built on the lives of those incarcerated, tortured, and murdered following the fateful events of September 30, 1965.

According to Indonesianist Ariel Heryanto, Suharto's New Order regime projected onto to the Indonesian populace a "simulacra" or a "reality/disreality" through various mediums and myriad forms of indoctrination. The media was heavily censored and publications were vetted in case they should carry ideas, which could threaten the Indonesian state. Books on communism were banned and the PKI condemned to a kind of *damnatio memoriae*, where mention of its name as well as history would bring about the state's wrath. In fact, the works of Indonesian author Ananta Pramoedya Toer, a Nobel Prize for Literature nominee and a well-known leftist figure, were banned well into the late 1990s.⁵ The New Order regime also constructed a series of elaborate structures and museums which showcased the alleged "evil" perpetrated by the PKI. Infamous amongst these structures was the Sacred Pancasila Monument opened in 1972 to commemorate the military officers murdered.⁶ Beneath the gigantic bronze statues erected in their memory lies a plaque, which details the manner in which members of the PKI's women's wing Gerwani or *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, ostensibly murdered the generals. According to New Order lore, the military officers had their eyes gouged out, tortured, and finally murdered in a blood soaked orgy and their bodies then dumped into a well.⁷ This imagery, designed to highlight the "insolence" of the PKI, was further bolstered by a film entitled *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* produced in the early 1980s by famed Indonesian director Arifin C. Noer.⁸ Its viewing was mandatory for more than twenty over years up until 1998, and school children had to endure the violent scenes depicting the torture of the military personnel as well as one particularly inflammatory scene where PKI supporters were shown stepping on a copy of the sacred al-Quran. In a Muslim-majority nation, the portrayal of the PKI as Quran-stomping fanatics was precisely engineered to incite hatred and deep suspicion against the party. This state-sanctioned form of demonization utilized by the New Order regime not only made an "other" of former PKI members but also forbade any group or individual from agitating for democracy, free speech, and human rights. During the period of Suharto's administration, his New Order government was actively engaged in arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial murders

of political, labor, and human rights activists, perpetuating what Ariel Heryanto refers to as state terror. In justification, the state claimed that these were actions necessary to protect Indonesia from individuals and “formless organizations” antagonistic to its development.

Coupled with the *Pancasila* or five principles, which were at the core of the New Order’s ideology, citizens could then be cohesively bound to the state and its goals.⁹ Throughout the period of Suharto’s rule, Indonesians were “conditioned by the dominance of the New Order official history and training in the regime’s version of *Pancasila* ideology, [they] believe that ‘1965’ was a climatic and desperate moment of national treachery and crisis when the only option was ‘kill or be killed’ and have little incentive to reconsider this received wisdom” (Zurbuchen 15). Thus, for many years, the New Order’s dominant discourse was what defined official “memory—relegating anything discordant with its vision to oblivion. However, in 1998, a series of violent protests rocked the core of the Suharto’s regime. Beginning with the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and with allegations of his corrupt practices, Suharto resigned in September 1998, ending his and the New Order’s thirty-year long rule (Pang).

The end of the New Order, however, did not bring about an “age” of reform. Indonesia’s democratic transition continues to be mired in *realpolitik*, hampered by existing power structures fostered by the three decades long New Order. Mary Zurbuchen states that “the country can be said to have begun a transition from authoritarianism, yet Suharto’s resignation in 1998, dramatic as it was, turned out to be neither unambiguous nor decisive in terms of the ‘reform agenda’” (15).

Today, many of Suharto’s associates continue to wield considerable power and the armed forces remain an important player in national politics. Even though there were attempts to decentralize governance in post-authoritarian Indonesia, scholars have warned that such reforms did not necessarily bring about positive outcomes. Vedi Hadiz states that, “the relationship between decentralisation, democracy and transparent and accountable governance is . . . essentially problematic and contentious” and that there continues to be vested interests in “resisting many institutional reforms or have usurped them in [a] number of creative ways” (12). This “resistance” within Indonesia’s institutions of the state to reform is perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to any meaningful exorcism of the ghosts of past human rights violations. This is something even beyond the powers of an Indonesian president as I will show in the next section.

THE APOLOGY: ABDURRAHMAN WAHID AND 1965

During the short-lived administration of Indonesia's fourth president, Abdurrahman Wahid, from 1999 until 2001, the controversial politician made an unprecedented move in apologizing to the hundreds of thousands of Indonesians affected by the events of 1965.¹⁰ In a further shock to the political establishment, Abdurrahman, a former Muslim cleric, sought to make amends by recommending that a truth commission be formed to investigate not only the events of 1965 but also of other several high-profile cases of human rights violations. While many human rights and civil society organizations lauded his pronouncements, others especially within his own Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) expressed unease over what was believed to be not only the "rehabilitation" of the PKI but also the revival of the issue that could "rekindle . . . past conflict [and] result in new tensions in society" (Fealy and McGregor 38). These tensions hark back to the period of Sukarno's period of "Guided Democracy" where nationalist groups, Muslim groups, the PKI, and the army were competing furiously for power and resources. Balancing these powerful competing forces under the rubric of NASAKOM (*nasionalisme, agama, komunisme*), Sukarno maintained that nationalism, religion, and communism could coexist in Indonesia. After September 30, 1965, Sukarno's carefully crafted power sharing arrangement fell apart. With the assistance of the army, nationalist and Muslim groups associated with Abdurrahman Wahid's NU went on a murderous spree of killing from central to eastern Java lasting several months.¹¹ Most of their victims were those with alleged links to the PKI and its associated groups. Therefore, to have a revered leader such as Abdurrahman of the fifty million strong NU apologize was to attest not only the innocence of the victims of the pogroms but also, more importantly, an admission of guilt on the role of NU.

The events of 1965 served as the master narrative for Suharto's New Order with a price paid for by the lives of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians. With the state's narrative emphasizing the supreme sacrifice made by the seven military officers and whitewashing the "neutralization" of the PKI, a seal of silence was placed over the fates of those branded as enemies of the state. Even after the downfall of Suharto, the silence remained and it was only several years later that Indonesians began to slowly sift through the many layers of Indonesia's history. Since the Suharto brand had become synonymous with a brutal dictatorship, Indonesians started to revisit those years of authoritarian rule. The New Order regime began as a singular act of violence, but it continued to employ violence also as a means to "silence" any form of dissent. The New Order regime had left behind a landscape pockmarked by "gaps" and "absences" in the stories of those brave enough to challenge the authorities during that period. Therefore, this period of the early 2000s was an attempt to fill in the empty spaces left behind by the New Order. At the same time, voices calling for justice and reparations also emerged.

In 2000, the lower house of the Indonesian legislature passed a resolution on the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Prompted by an effort on the part of civil society, the bill was finally passed in 2004, empowering the commission to encompass the events of 1965 as well as other cases of human rights violations during the New Order period. However, given the “inadequacies” cited by civil society groups, the law was then brought to Indonesia’s Constitutional Court to be reviewed.

According to these groups, the law could possibly contravene the rights of victims through the proposed commission’s power to grant amnesties, disallowing certain cases from being tried before courts, and only providing victims with compensation should perpetrators be given amnesty (*Derailed*). Six years later, the Constitutional Court did indeed find that the law contravened Indonesia’s constitution. However, instead of recommending that changes be made, the entire law was annulled. “Factions implicated in past violations welcomed the decision and the credibility of the Indonesian judiciary, notoriously prone to political interference and corruption, took another blow” (*Derailed* 30). This particular incident is part of a larger malaise where the state enforces upon itself an institutionalized form of forgetting or even denial that these crimes had happened. Similarly, Spain’s 1975 democratic transition after the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco, could only go forward after a pact of forgetting or *el pacto el olvido* was agreed upon between the former strongman’s supporters and proponents of democracy. For many years, successive Spanish administrations were hampered in dealing with the issue of past crimes committed during the three-year civil war that began in 1936, followed by Franco’s brutal rule from 1939 to 1975. However, in 2007, the Spanish government under the Socialist Workers Party promulgated a law on “historical memory” to actively revisit Spain’s dark past. This was in part due to a burgeoning new idiom influenced by human rights discourse and what civil society organizations terms as an attempt at “recovering” that period in Spain’s history (de Menezes 12).

What is even more interesting in comparing Spain’s with Indonesia’s own “recovering” process is that both countries are embroiled in controversies surrounding the politics of “disappeared bodies.” Civil society organizations in Spain have recently begun exhuming mass graves and their actions have “thrown the country into an unexpected public debate exposing conflicting political cultures, both from an ideological and generational viewpoint” (Ferrandiz and Baer). The generation born during the 1960s “were to learn that the country’s much touted democratization and modernization were founded on neglected yet unquiet graves” (Ferrandiz and Baer).

In 2001, a group of activists in Wonosobo, in the central Indonesian island of Java, also wanted to exhume and then re-bury some of the remains of alleged PKI

members who had been executed. Their plans, however, were disrupted when a group of religious fanatics and locals intervened physically, threatening those involved in the exhumations. These groups then accused the exhumation team of wanting to revive the PKI (McGregor, "Mass Graves"). As a result, civil society groups have now become more cautious in terms of any further exhumations. State and fringe right-wing groups have made sure that any such effort to "dig up the past" will not continue on the basis that it offends religious sentiment and that the PKI continues to be illegal. However, what is interesting to note is that in Wonosobo, younger activists from NU, the Muslim organization accused of being involved in the killings, had also been involved in the exhumation process. In interviews with these activists, historian Katherine McGregor posits that an "inter-generational" memory prompts them to dig deeper into Indonesia's past ("Memory Studies" 352). Much like in Spain, anthropologist Alison Ribeiro de Menezes has pointed to a "new memory paradigm" centered on "ruined bodies and ruptured genealogies" (24). Therefore, appearance of evidence of past crimes has forced Spaniards living in the present to revisit the atrocities committed during Franco's time as well as during the Civil War. What is also fascinating is that a discourse on "broken" generations, which began with a journalist searching for the remains of his grandfather, sparked a movement which saw the unravelling of the country's pact of silence.

Efforts to exhume these "ruined bodies" have proven too controversial, eliciting responses from right-wing groups and the state. Despite Indonesia's democratic transition, the shadow of the New Order continues to haunt the Indonesian political landscape. Thus, the state and society at large continue to remain antagonistic to any efforts at its own *recuperacion* or recuperation. However, a younger generation of Indonesians seems to be becoming more cognizant of this "ruptured genealogy" caused by the gap in the New Order's meta-narrative and historiography. How are Indonesians who are growing up in post-Suharto Indonesia dealing with this "rupture"? What kinds of medium are they reaching out to "fill in the gaps"? What are the kinds of stories they tell?

AN ACT OF KNOWING

In April 2016, a three-day government-sanctioned "symposium" was held in Jakarta, which some media reports claimed was a breakthrough in knocking down the 1965 "barrier."¹² Non-governmental organizations, government officials, and former political detainees attended, and topics once thought to be taboo were laid open in the media limelight.¹³ At the end of the symposium, a report was compiled and then sent to the office of the current Indonesian president, Joko Widodo. However, even then, right-wing fringe elements continued to protest against the event with

crowds venting their anger at images of the ghosts of PKI.¹⁴ For the time being, the government seems to have cooled off in pushing the matter any further.¹⁵ However, a separate initiative has been set up under the president's office to deal with past human rights abuses in a "non-judicial" way. Referred to as the "Reconciliation Committee," it is comprised of a select group from the National Human Rights Commission, other government representatives, as well as human rights victims and their families. Following this, the government has also stated that it would also form a so-called National Harmony Council (*Dewan Kerukunan Nasional*), but it was chaired by former general Wiranto, who himself had been accused of war crimes during his tenure as a commanding officer in East Timor.¹⁶ The Indonesian state continues to hold a "bi-polar" stance where certain individuals support dealing with past human rights violations, even if only in a non-judicial level, but the detractors of this move to address the violations are probably greater. Given this situation, activists from outside Indonesia have boldly taken the step of doing this on "their own."

THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

In 2015, academics and groups of Indonesians who had been exiled since 1965 in Europe organized the International People's Tribunal where the Indonesian state was literally placed on the docket.¹⁷ In this mock trial arranged to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the incident, the Indonesian state was accused of crimes against humanity with political exiles and former political prisoners playing the part of the accusers. Toward the end of the tribunal, a chosen panel of expert judges and judicial scholars passed sentence on Indonesia, finding the state guilty of engineering the 1965 massacres. Indonesian members of the tribunal would later be accused by right-wing groups of being disloyal citizens.¹⁸ In fact much of the pressure could also be indirectly attributed to two documentaries made by filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer who brought to an international audience the faces of the murderers responsible for killing suspected PKI members. Spending nearly ten years in the Indonesian island of Sumatra, Oppenheimer managed to persuade the alleged murderers to confess to the crimes they had committed, as shown in his two documentaries. Through *The Act of Killing* and its sequel, *The Look of Silence*, Oppenheimer forced Indonesians to confront a historical event which so many had simply chosen to push into a dark crevasse.¹⁹ What was particularly effective in Oppenheimer's two films was the use of personal stories, narratives, and memories which brought forth the impact 1965 had on the lives of ordinary Indonesians.²⁰ Unlike the dramatic depiction of the deaths of the seven military officers and the murderous groups responsible for their deaths through state propaganda, 1965 had a human cost which resonated across Indonesian society. This echo effect is often

found within the private realm. Throughout the period of the New Order regime, personal recollections and stories of the events of 1965 had often been kept within a “whispering range” where only close family and friends could engage in such taboo discussions. After the fall of Suharto, academic texts, books, memoirs provided a space for these “whispers” to extend beyond the private realm for those directly affected by the events of 1965.²¹ There have also been many instances where forums, seminars, and other performances have broached this topic.

Former political prisoners and their families, in the more liberal period of the early 2000s, were able to tell their stories openly for the first time, despite the continued threat posed to them by right-wing religious groups who branded them as “new style communists.”²² Oppenheimer’s two productions have also pushed the events of 1965 into the international arena, after being nominated for several awards overseas. Given the knowledge that the mass killings in Indonesia is not as “well-known” as the Cambodia genocide, Oppenheimer has placed the events of 1965 into the gaze of the international community.

All of these events have prompted a younger generation of Indonesians, adept in the ways of the digital age, to come to terms with the many gaps of Indonesian history. A website named *Ingat 65* or Remember 65 has provided them a space to share and create, a space where they are allowed to openly question and dissect not only the New Order regime but also the current Indonesian historiography. However, before going further into a discussion of the content of *Ingat 65*, I will first embark on a short description of the rise of the internet and its impact on Indonesian society.

THE INTERNET AND CREATING SPACES

The media during the Suharto period was perceived as an extension of the Indonesian state. The radio, television, cinema, newspapers, and other domestic publications were part of a superstructure put in place to ensure that the citizenry would remain compliant and accepting of the state’s ideology. According to Merlyna Lim, “the government of the Republic of Indonesia saw telecommunications and media as tools for ‘development,’ which was promoted as a central means of legitimizing the regime in power notably the New Order regime of President Suharto” (Lim 116). Ironically, it was the Indonesian state’s very pursuit of development, which heralded the end of its monopoly and control over the media. In the 1990s, the government introduced satellite communications and digital technology into its panoply of “development” projects, leading to Indonesia’s entry into the internet age: the *warnet*. An abbreviation for *warung internet*, these internet cafes were

ubiquitous in the mid-nineties up until the early twentieth century and provided ordinary Indonesians with unfettered access to news and information. More importantly, *warnets* enabled users to transcend the traditional informational boundaries demarcated by the state. Traditionally, the government was able to retain control over information as Indonesian law stipulates that the Ministry of Information must first license all media outlets before they can operate. However, due to the amorphous nature of the internet as well as confusion over which ministry should have final authority, Indonesia's virtual realm was allowed to "evolve" within an environment relatively free of government regulation or interference (Sen and Hill). This was also largely due to the state's belief that the internet was not so much a threat but rather a tool of technological progress and advancement.

Given the space the internet provided, users were not only able to circumvent government censors; there was also ample opportunity for groups to congregate and create virtual communities. As Indonesia's economy began to expand in the nineties, so did demands for increased political space. Allegations of state-level corruption increased the gulf between Suharto's regime and a citizenry desiring greater transparency. Always at the forefront of socio-political change, the calls for democratization galvanized a young generation of Indonesians comprised of students and activists who took advantage of what the internet could offer. Through list servers and chat sites, not only did the internet provide much of these younger Indonesians the space to express themselves—something the New Order had denied them—but it also allowed them to speak in a new "vernacular." The Suharto regime, according to Indonesianist Michael Bodden, could no longer provide Indonesians the "proper" language to understand their nation. He points to the popularity of "radical" forms of avant-garde performing arts and literature which exposed the painful contradictions between the New Order's emphasis on economic development and its human rights violations.

The internet became a conduit for resistance against the Suharto regime, providing a previously non-existent space for news and information from outside to flow in.²³ The media in Indonesia is now thriving due to Indonesia's democratic reform, and the internet has become an important element within the nation's vibrant, growing political space. Nonetheless, even with political liberalization, Indonesia continues to wrestle with its past. Discussions of past human rights abuses, especially the pogroms of 1965, continue to be taboo; however, there are stirrings. While the earlier generation of young activists had advocated for change through the internet, creating a "language" beyond the New Order regime's "development" narrative, Indonesia's own millennial generation are also beginning to take stock of the nation's "being." The internet has provided a "confessional-like" space not only calling into question the nature of Indonesian history but also the "damage" done by the New Order propaganda.

NEW SITES, NEW SPACES

In this section, I will begin to further analyze how the internet has provided the necessary space for the events of 1965 to be openly discussed. Here I will be providing a brief description of a confessional site entitled *Ingat 65* but, more importantly, I will also provide analysis into its content. Before I do so, I will briefly provide an overview of biographical works that have sought to undermine the New Order myth, something that *Ingat 65* is also doing but through the printed medium.

Biographies and memoirs have become a popular medium since the fall of Suharto's New Order regime especially for those who had previously been incarcerated during its rule. According to Vanessa Hearman, the height of these publications were between the period of 1999 to 2004. After years of living under the New Order's "panoptical" state, the post-Reformasi environment provided the impetus for many of its victims to "straighten" history through the publication of books on their lives and experiences. Hearman points out that the power of these memoirs and biographies lay in their capacity to "rewrite" the past in an "environment where history has been controlled and manufactured by those in power" (18). She adds that "tapping into these sources enable researchers to examine victim-based narratives of violent events and examine how, after a democratic transition, representations of the past continue to be molded by the legacy of authoritarian rule" (18). A sample of these works would include would include Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *A Mute's Soliloquy* which chronicles his experiences as a political prisoner. This is also to be read in tandem with Hersri Setiawan's *Memoar Pulau Buru (The Buru Island Memoir)*, also based on the writer's personal experiences as a prisoner of the New Order regime. Pramoedya's and Setiawan's memoirs provide a blow-by-blow account of their incarceration, but it is also interesting to note that the descendants of *eks-tapol* or former political detainees have also entered the fray.

For instance, Ribka Tjiptaning Proletariyati in her *Aku Bangga Jadi Anak PKI (I am Proud to be a PKI Child)* speaks of her life story as an antithesis to the stigmatizing effect of being a PKI child. Narrating her family's destruction at the hands of the New Order regime to how she rose up into the upper echelons in Indonesian politics, her life, as she puts, has been one of victory rather than shame. Another fascinating entry in this genre is Nani Nurrachman Sutojo's *Kenangan Tak Terucap Aku Ayah dan Tragedi 1965 (Unspoken Memories, Me, My Father and the 1965 Tragedy)*. Nani Nurrachman's story is one of a personal journey as she comes to terms with her father's death, one of the seven army officers murdered during the events of September 30. Her story is intimately tied into the national narrative, where her father General Sutojo Siswomiharjo continues to "serve the nation" in his role as a martyr immortalized at the Museum of PKI Treachery at the Lubang Buaya Memorial. Her book, however, adopts a strategy where, through personal

anecdotes and stories, she holds on to memories of her father simply as a human being. From the eyes of these “children of 65” it seems that the burden of past continues to affect them even across socio-economic and political spectrums.

These biographical works disrupt the New Order’s lionized authoritarian national narrative through an intimate and human view of the lives of those affected by the events of 1965 while also showcasing their struggle to survive those years. However, a younger generation of Indonesians are also attempting to bring the issue into the virtual realm.

Ingat 65 was brought about through the efforts of eleven young Indonesians, most of whom are journalists, attempting to “enlighten” younger Indonesians. According to the site’s chief editor Proditia Sabarini:

our hope is that young people would think about this part of history more because they are the biggest population in Indonesia. They have a say in what is going to happen in the future and so if most of the young people have their eyes open, express that they care about the past, they can get the government to do something about it and not be silent. (Sabarini, personal interview)

Founded in March 2016, the site has since accumulated thousands of hits. Sabarini adds that the *Ingat 65* is meant to be a “movement” where individual submissions would snowball, with one author inspiring another to write and contribute.

When we started out we wanted to get well known authors to write about this issue and then from there we were hoping that other younger people would also start contributing. (Sabarini, personal interview)

Proditia’s inspiration in setting up the website is itself reflective of *Ingat 65*’s method in sourcing for stories. She states,

I was inspired to do this after reading the article of a young Indonesian in discussing the issue of 1965 and also of a graphic artist whose works touch on the issue. (Sabarini, personal interview)

After writing an article reflecting on the events of 1965, Proditia was herself interviewed by another journalist who posed the question to her as to what the younger generation should do.

So I answered that the younger generation should organize themselves, use the internet but at the same time I felt I was speaking to an imaginary person but

I felt as if that imaginary person was me, so I should be doing that, and that's why me and friends got together to do this. (Sabarini, personal interview)

Sabarini adds that the site would seek one new author every week with at least four new articles every month and those who had already contributed would not be allowed to recontribute, ensuring originality in each written submission. Other comparable websites include *1965setiaphari.org*, with its contents coming from various authors but the length of its featured stories and its upload schedule are staggered. Its stories are shorter but, unlike *Ingat 65*, it also includes more “literary” entries such as poems. Another fascinating website is *genosidapolitik1965.blogspot.com*, which not only features stories but also serves as a gallery of art pieces. It is also an archive of materials on the events of 1965, curated by visual artist Andreas Iswinarto, who had previously worked as a human rights activist. Iswinarto, a self-educated artist, is part of a larger arts community referred to as *Galeri Lentera Pembebasan* or the Lantern in the Hill Gallery.

Ingat 65 began in early 2016 with its stated mission:

1. To inspire the generation born after 1965 to remember and to understand Indonesian history through their families/communities as well as personal memories
2. To provide a space for Indonesians born after 1965 to share personal stories on how this period had affected their lives
3. To collate a collection of personal stories on how 1965 has influenced family and communal life in Indonesia as an act of collective memory
4. To inspire the post-65 generation to engage in discussions with their families, friends, teachers, neighbours and colleagues on the impact of impunity in Indonesia from the perspective of 1965.
5. To create a forum for the younger generation to voice out their aspirations on what national leaders can do in terms of Indonesia's national history and how its people may gain greater consciousness in questioning its dark past. (Sabarini, “Misi Ingat65”)

At the secondary level the *Ingat 65* team is also intent on combatting Indonesia's culture of impunity. Its editorial statement reads,

forgetting the killings, torture and arrests of more than a million people in 1965 entrenches the culture of impunity in Indonesia. Impunity occurs when the perpetrators of violence escape from the arms of the law. While those in power profit from this, the impact on citizens is extremely negative. State violence, bad governance, economic inequality and environmental degradation are all part of its legacy. (Sabarini, “Mengingat 1965”)

Since the foundation of the New Order state after the events of September 1965, there have been many instances of extra-judicial killings and suppression of calls for reforms. Even towards the end of Suharto's rule, twelve activists disappeared due to their involvement in political activities against the New Order regime.²⁴ However, these cases continue to be kept in "cold storage" despite Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission pressuring the state's security apparatus to reveal the facts. As such, *Ingat 65* is an attempt not only to remember but also to understand and bring to light the unspeakable aspects of Indonesia's history.

Ingat 65 has since managed to collate more than thirty stories with contributions mostly from young Indonesians, all of which were born after 1965 and had grown up after the fall of the Suharto regime. One constant theme, which also runs throughout these stories on the website, is the sense of incredulity of being left in the dark on the events of 1965. *Ingat 65's* editorial statement adds that they are "doing this because [they] grew up without knowing about the killings and arrest of nearly half a million people in Indonesia. And when [they] found out [they] were shocked. How was it that [their] elders did not tell [them]? Maybe they were forced to be silent by someone" (Sabarini, personal interview).

RUPTURES AND SILENCES

Ingat 65 provides a fascinating look into "ruptures." For instance, Teresa Wariato, in her essay, states that history is "not just a simple formula where $1+1=2$. I am trying to solve the puzzle of what happened in the year of 1965. Yes, massacres had happened. But how many? Were there thousands, hundreds of thousands or millions and who killed them? Was it the Indonesian armed forces, Suharto or whom?" In the case of Indonesia, the "ruptures" refer to the unspeakability of the killings in 1965 and the subsequent silences which follow generations after the fact. The post-1965 generations continue to live with "ghosts" that haunt, contradictorily, through the presence and the invisibility of that period in Indonesian history. This phenomenon could best be explained by the concept of "postmemory." Utilizing it as a framework to understand the experiences of the children of holocaust survivors, Marianne Hirsch states that postmemory "describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experience of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images and behaviors among which they grew up" (106). Hirsch adds that the events of the past continue to echo in the present. But within the Indonesian context, the past travels into the present as "ruptures" and "uncomfortable silences," which forms part of the imagined historical landscape.

According to Efrial Ruliandi Silalahi, his journey across a bridge on a river as an eight-year old child elicits such a historical “rupture.”

We were travelling to celebrate the holidays. We were going home on a bus. We crossed a long bridge. The river beneath was so wide. I asked my father: Dad, what’s the name of this river? Dad answered: this river is called Snake River. Are there many snakes here? Is that why it’s given this name? My father was taken aback. He changed the topic of our conversation. I knew my father was keeping something from me.

His mother then explained that the Snake River was inhabited by a pair of white crocodiles which could take on human form and preyed on the villagers living nearby. It was only much later, after being admitted into a teachers’ college, did Efrial discover that the Snake River was an execution site for political prisoners: “It was then I understood why my parents did not tell me the truth. They knew it was a place where many political detainees were killed. Nonetheless, they had remain silent because the New Order was still in power.”

Silence was a strategy employed by many Indonesians to ensure that the authorities would not implicate them. It was an essential survival tactic meant to ensure everyone’s safety from the government’s campaign of neutralizing those that come from “unclean environments.” Parents and the generation with direct experience of the 1965 pogroms were careful to ensure that neither they nor their children would be associated with the PKI in anyway. This stigmatization could doom three generations.²⁵ Political prisoners, depending on the severity of their alleged crimes, would not only suffer from state-sanctioned forms of violence, which included denial of access to jobs within the civil service, the media, and public funded universities; they would also have to regularly report to the authorities. Their offspring would also be subject to the same restrictions. What was more frightening is the prospect of social stigmatization. Indonesian culture, like many places in Southeast Asia, puts great importance on communal relations. Being administratively branded as “unclean” marks individuals and their family, resulting in social death for them.

Zuhana Anibuddin Zuhra recounts her time in elementary school, where she had a classmate who was *anak PKI* or a PKI child.

His name was Winarno, but I would call him Nano. He was a small child who would spend his days in elementary school looking sad with his head bowed. It wasn’t his fault he was born as a child of a Class-B ex-political prisoner. The people in our village knew about his life story. It wasn’t difficult to forget, what more in a small village in East Java. Nano would serve as an example whenever the children in the village misbehaved. But he was often the quiet and studious one in class. It was as if his body had been given a

permanent tattoo and it would not disappear. The stereotype stuck and was not easily forgotten by most people. 'Don't be naughty in school. Do you want to be like Nano? He's a PKI child!'

The stigmatization of political prisoners and their families served a clear purpose of creating a distinct category and class of peoples who would serve as the convenient and clear "other."²⁶ In Cambodia, another Southeast Asian nation, a similar strategy was employed with disastrous consequences.²⁷ In Indonesia, the "other" could provide a fractious nation the much needed "glue" to maintain national unity as well, based primarily on fear and silence. However, as Zuhana herself realizes, these forms of national indoctrination raises inherent contradictions and questions. She asks, "what the government has forgotten is the possibility that when these questions appear at a young age, this will force them to look for answers when they grow up." In these ruptures and breakages itself lie an inherent need to seek answers so as to "fill in" these gaps. In an unpublished paper, I referred to this as "politics of nothingness," referring to an absence within the official narrative, which can adequately explain the need for such punitive measures.²⁸

The fear and silence from the older generation seeps down to the next like a kind of inherited "shame." What I posit is that in trying to rid themselves of this "shame," the present generation through efforts such as *Ingat 65* is inserting their own stories into this nothingness, to the fill in the part of which the previous generation was so reluctant to speak about. In a sense, these young activists from *Ingat 65* form what Tessa Morris-Suzuki would refer as an implicated generation.²⁹ According to her, "later generations though they may not have been responsible for causing historical acts of violence or oppression, are often beneficiaries of the results of those actions" (26). Thus, they become enmeshed in the New Order system and it would seem that their "lives thus continue to be shaped by the oppressive institutions built on a history of violence, and will continue to be so unless [they] act to change them" (26).

Change is to ensure that the burden of the past would not bear down on future generations. This can be shown by returning to Zuhana's story: "Aside from finding answers to questions I had as a child, I am also preparing myself for the time when my children will ask similar questions about this event so that I would not stutter and hide the truth. Its feels heavy when as child you are filled with questions and faced with absurdity." Thus, in searching for the truth, the narratives presented by Zuhana and other contributors could be seen as an attempt to seek freedom from being "implicated" in the crimes of the past.

Historian Asvi Warman Adam coined the term "straightening history" in 2004 to express the need for Indonesian history to be more plural and for its writing not

to lie exclusively within the ambit of the state. This process seems to be underway, and *Ingat 65*, among others, has been trying to “straighten out” Indonesian history as much as possible. In addition, this term has also become part of the lexicon used by former political prisoners to justify their demands for reparation, restitution, and the recovery of their good name. Terms such as justice, human rights, and even reconciliation, have provided a discursive map, allowing the *eks-tapol* to break from their “enforced silence.” In a fascinating study on a group *eks-tapol*, Andrew Conroe writes about their efforts to bring a case against the state in 2005 demanding for restitution. While the case was later rejected, Conroe states that the very action itself returned to them a sense of agency. More importantly, it communicated to their descendants their stories, from their side, unencumbered by the state’s narrative.

As such discussions on Indonesian history is certainly becoming more cacophonous, and therefore a more appropriate term should be a “branching” rather than a “straightening” of history. Doing so “narrativizes” their lives not only to regain their humanity but also to reconnect them with the next generation. As such, there needs to be more spaces such as *Ingat 65* to show that “silence” is no longer an option and that everyone has a right to their own stories.

VIOLENT VISIONS AND GHOSTS

Arifin C. Noer’s four-hour long *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* or the “Treachery of the G30S/PKI” shown every September 30th became the authoritative visual source of information on the events of 1965 for an entire generation. The film employed a great amount of gore, blood, and violence to implant violent imagery into the minds of young schoolchildren with the ultimate aim of creating hatred against the PKI. The scenes involved graphic depiction torture and grisly murders of the generals. According to Ananda Badudu, one such former student who saw the film, “[it] was so effective that [he] can still remember scene after scene of the movie even after all these years. The film made certain that the PKI were demons who came to earth—evil, malevolent without any sense of humanity . . . it never crossed [his] mind . . . to even ask why the government made the movie compulsory viewing for all Indonesians including little children who should not even be watching sadistic movies.”

It was only when Ananda began his university studies that he was able to access information beyond *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* leading to him finding “other” narratives outside of the film’s ambit. Besides the New Order regime’s silver screen

indoctrination, the state had to ensure its propaganda was doubly effective by adding to its coterie of weapons, a vast series of state-sponsored museums.³⁰

National museums are required elements within a country's larger nation-building scheme, and after the events of 1965, the site where the generals were buried was transformed into a national shrine in Jakarta. Similar shrines were also erected all across Indonesia with schoolchildren being similarly made to "worship" at these sites. This turned out to be a nightmarish experience for Sebastian Partogi visiting the memorial of one of the murdered generals. Partogi recounts the violent story told by the tour guide of how the general had died. He particularly remembers the bloodstains still visible on the floor. The visit left him unnerved as "these horrors stories were told to [them] without explanation as to what caused the events of 1965. Even in elementary school, explanations about the PKI who were supposedly behind the sadistic murders of the generals were not done in-depth. [Schoolchildren] were fed with these abstract concepts, which only gave [them] more questions when [they] became adults . . . it was as if the incident just occurred out of nowhere, without an antecedent or any clear moral narrative, only to leave [them] with a sense of fear."

Indonesians live with ghosts, specifically the ghosts of 1965. As we have seen from the writings of several contributors to *Ingat 65*, the event itself seems "absurd" without being able to stand on any kind of logical footing. It is a conundrum shrouded in a silence perpetuated by the both the government and the previous generation of Indonesians. Thus, when Nurdiyanshah Dalidjo visited several places where the suspected leftists and PKI members were massacred to seek answers, he was met only with ghosts.

Yu Lik (a local contact) also told us about spring where people had their throats cut. They had their ears cut off and then were placed together on a stick to be shown to the others in the village as a way of terrorizing the rest . . . some were thrown into a valley as well as the Brantas River which is the second longest river in Java . . . there were many bodies then which flowed down the river muddying its colour with blood . . . there are no official numbers as to how many died. Many say the numbers are between hundreds of thousands to millions.

While official numbers have been proffered by the state, the numbers are often very contentious and contested. Locals living nearby by these killing fields are often reticent to speak of the exact locations but they tend to be near rivers or caves. Very often those living close to these places consider them to be *angker* or haunted. According to Nurdiyanshah, these haunted places are often accompanied by the smell "of blood or burnt rotting flesh." Such haunted places tend to be avoided and be off limits due their "tainted" nature. Ghosts and spirits often represent a

lingering presence which remains because it is part of an “incomplete” story. The “ghosts” which inhabit such places of suffering, murder, and massacre are there precisely because of a “rupture” which cannot be explained logically. Therefore, these phantasms will remain there as long as the past is not “exorcised.”

CREATING COMMUNITY

The events of 1965 and the mass killings that followed present several problems. First, it is a silenced event with no clear indication of the numbers murdered. Second, right-wing groups and the government are unable to recognize that the killings have taken place and continue to raise the specter of the PKI to pressure victims into silence. However, *Ingat 65*'s presence as a group of younger people is now beginning to engage in the most important aspect of reconciling Indonesia with its past by questioning the New Order legacy. Among the obvious elements of this legacy are fear, “ruptures,” and absurdity. These elements alert us to the fear of families and Indonesians in either speaking out about the killings or even mentioning the term PKI. With this enforced “silence” comes a fear that if one were to speak out, there is a likely chance that one would be suspected of PKI sympathies and thus incur the wrath of the state. The immediate consequence is the requirement for citizens to be loyal to the state regardless of its actions. Any attempt at speaking out on human rights issues will often automatically earn one the moniker “PKI.” Given the mythologized nature of the events of 1965, questioning its logic is not encouraged, thus often leaving children wondering as to the truth of what truly happened. This “rupture” leads the younger generation to the only other source of information on Indonesian history: the state. However, the New Order's ability to “explain” is very limited, placing much emphasis on demonization, gore, blood, and graphic violence. Either the children grow up with an illogically intense hatred against the PKI, or they develop an innate sense of confusion towards a national history which is filled with violent propagandist imagery. What we have out of this condition is, as I mentioned earlier in the article, a “politics of nothingness.”

In present-day Indonesia, with its more open environment, the presence of the internet allows communities, whether real or virtual, to flourish. Given that, answers are not readily available and the younger generation utilizes the internet to create virtual mnemonic communities in trying to “fill in the gaps” as to their understanding of both their relationship with their parents and children as well as their nation. The “politics of nothingness” also provides a discursive place or what anthropologist Gabriel Gatti calls the “field.” He states that when the “field springs up . . . it begins to harbor life, however rare. And the life it harbors is diverse: routinized narratives, generational ways of doing, biographies, aesthetic languages” (9). Gatti

continues by saying that while the field is inherently unstable, ever changing, and filled with myriad voices, it nonetheless becomes a visible existing “thing” (9). As these fields increase in number, as more Indonesians begin to realize that there are such spaces in which they can access not necessarily as contributors but as “spectators,” it is likely that the present government will be placed under greater pressure to deal with the past. Nonetheless, before the government is able to come up with any concrete action, *Ingat 65*’s mnemonic community is already generating “new meanings” (Pickering and Keightly 91). But more importantly, the site, I posit, pushes against the continued silence of Indonesia over the events of 1965—perhaps providing the contributors an outlet for “many different forms of everyday creativity that help to give . . . lives structure and purpose, meaning and value” (Pickering and Keightly 165).

THE ROAD AHEAD

The events of 1965 and their aftermath represent a particular part of Indonesian history which cannot be “spoken of” and, at the same time, something which is also inexplicable. In the writings highlighted earlier in the article, the “inexplicability” of the events lie in the “gaps” caused not only by their taboo nature but also by their “incompleteness” due to state-sanctioned indoctrination. Therefore it can be assumed that the efforts of the young activists behind *Ingat 65* is then to bridge the “gaps” and to explain the “inexplicable” as part of a greater desire for understanding. To better place the incident into perspective, we can assume that 1965 was made to appear as a foundational and yet traumatic event within the national consciousness. And like all traumatic events, it is “unpresentable” and “escapes language” especially for those who were later on victimized and stigmatized by the state. However, “there is wide agreement that the problem of unrepresentability should not deter people from trying to tell their stories of trauma . . . because the act of providing testimony is crucially important to healing in spite of its known inadequacy in terms of recalling and retelling events” (Arthur 69). While “healing” remains an amorphous term, there is nonetheless a need to allow for these narratives to arise not only as a means for catharsis but also as a place for these experiences, stories, and insights to have a “definable space.” As such, the medium of the internet “closely reflects the fragments, shattered, volatile and often incoherent experience of trauma and the attempts to describe it. It offers a non-linear, distributed format which can contain narrative but is not itself narrative” (Arthur 69). In other words, *Ingat 65* and the medium of the internet provide a “non-linear” space in which these narratives can be “framed,” making them much more visible, and therefore challenging the taboo surrounding 1965.

However, while this frame serves as constitutive point in which to further spark discussions on 1965, it could also be taken advantage of by actors for their own agenda at the same time. During an outreach event in 2016, volunteers of *Ingat 65* set up a booth to attract a greater audience. People who approached the booth were then encouraged to take a photographs which would then be posted on social network platforms. These very same photos were however downloaded and then used by right-wing groups accusing those in the pictures of being part of a “neo-PKI” movement complete with hand signs which signified membership to the group. The idea of communism or the “latent danger” of the PKI, waiting in the shadows to “infect” unwitting Indonesians has been a major theme used to maintain a climate of fear, uncertainty, and mistrust.

Violent right-wing groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front (*Fron Pembela Islam* or FPI) and the Anti-Communist Front (*Fron Anti Komunis Indonesia* or FAKI) have been capitalizing on this “phantom,” suppressing any effort which they deem to be supporting the rebirth of the PKI. Disrupting film screenings, discussions, and even meetings of former political detainees, both FAKI and the FPI often use physical force and intimidation to generate enough “noise” to deter any efforts in revisiting the events of 1965. I posit that these groups seek to induce both silence and ultimately amnesia through violence. This was an oft-repeated pattern throughout the New Order regime, with numerous incidents of human rights violations and what continues to be “cold cases.” Even with the present Indonesian president Joko Widodo’s assurances that the state would investigate, these cases of alleged violations remain in administrative oblivion. Fearing that this impunity would continue, the founders of *Ingat 65* were intent on ending the silence that gave shelter to these purported crimes. As such *Ingat 65* becomes what Tamar Ashuri refers to as a “moral mnemonic agent” where the “individual agent recall his/her memories of wrongdoing before large audiences with the intention of drawing attention to such marginalized or even denied occurrences” (107). Drawing from research on websites which curates the narratives of “moral witnesses” or direct witnesses of the Holocaust, Ashuri states that these online platforms serve as moral mnemonic agents which makes the suffering of victims, “visible and hence difficult to marginalize or deny” (109). Given that the Holocaust was difficult for the survivors to “explicate” on, Ashuri states that these moral mnemonic agents provide a mediatory role in highlighting their stories to create, “a moral community that will ‘hear’ the cry and acknowledge the pain, and thereby usher in a new order” (109).

Unlike the Holocaust, which has been generally recognized as a crime against humanity, 1965 remains an amorphous event that the Indonesian state would prefer to remain a nonentity. Thus *Ingat 65* takes on the dual “moral” roles of encouraging witnesses to speak and at the same time creating a community/space to break the

silence surrounding the event. Its presence takes away the “agency” from right-wing groups employing New Order style violence and returns it into the hands of not just ex-political prisoners but also of a populace held hostage by phantoms, violence, and right-wing extremism. These websites then become what Amit Pinchevski refers to as an “inter-archive” which “presents new opportunities for the construction of collective memory, away from and beyond national or genealogical constraints” (256). While physical archives remains well within the state’s influence, the internet provides mnemonic communities “active involvement and personal investment, and hence imagination as much as recollection” (256). Ultimately, to break Indonesia’s cycle of fear and away from the ghosts of the past, Indonesia must learn to form communities which have the space and capacity to “imagine” it differently. It must therefore learn to “unsilence” the past. In order to do so, it has to learn speak to its phantoms for them to be exorcised.

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Notes

1. *Ingat 65* website can be found at <https://medium.com/ingat-65>.
2. For the earliest academic account on the 1965 event, please refer to Benedict Anderson and Ruth Mcvey's "A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia." Interim Reports Series. Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971. Another important comprehensive account is John Roosa's *Pretext for Mass Murder: The 30th of September Movement and Suharto's Coup D'état in Indonesia*. U of Wisconsin P, 2006.
3. Reknowned Indonesianist and historian Geoffrey Robinson offers several different perspectives as to who the exact masterminds of the event were in a recently published monograph entitled *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres 1965-6*. Princeton UP, 2018.
4. To gain a better understanding of the geopolitical nature of the 1965 event, please refer to Bradley Simpson's "International Dimensions of the 1965-68 Violence in Indonesia." *Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia 1965-68*, edited by Douglas Kammen and Katherine McGregor, National U of Singapore P, 2012, pp. 50-74. Simpson further expands on this theme by taking into consideration Indonesia's internal economic conditions in his *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesia Relations, 1960-1968*. Stanford UP, 2008.
5. Pramoedya also spent more than a decade in detention, being moved from one facility to another until he reached the penal colony of Buru Island. He was detained from the mid-1960s until the end of the 1970s. For an in-depth look into the nature of his detention and the conditions of Buru Island, please see *A Mute's Soliloquy: A Memoir*. Penguin, 2000.
6. The most in-depth treatment of the "memorialization" of this event by the New Order can be found in Katherine McGregor's *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past*. National U of Singapore P, 2007.
7. Gerwani members were accused by the state not only of torture but also of cutting off the genitals of the officers and then dancing on top of their bodies. Sociologist Saskia Wieringa's work "disassembles" this imagery of Gerwani, highlighting how the New Order's "sexual slander" sowed fear into the populace warning of what would happen should the PKI come to power and with it the unleashing of "uncontrolled female energies." For more information, please refer to Saskia Wieringa's "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2011, pp. 544-565.
8. The title of the film roughly translates to "The Treachery of the G30S/PKI" and takes inspiration from the official perspective written by state historians Nugroho Nutosusanto, Sartono Kartodirjo, and Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro. For more information, please see "Sejarah Nasional Indonesia" Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Jakarta 1975.

9. These five principles, known collectively as Pancasila, are required to be memorized by citizens and encompass elements such as belief in one God, a just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, guided democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultations, and social justice for all Indonesians.
10. It must however, be considered that Wahid made the apology as a NU leader and not so much as the president of the Republic of Indonesia. His apology, compounded by other factors, then led him to eventually step down from his post as Indonesian president in 2004.
11. For an excellent collection of academic articles on this issue, please refer to *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, edited by Robert Cribb, Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990.
12. The BBC's Indonesian service gave the symposium in-depth coverage and was largely sympathetic to the event, one of their reports noted that the symposium would bring Indonesia closer to reconciliation. For more information please, see Isyana Artharini's report, "Simposium 65 diharapkan 'membangun rekonsiliasi.'" 18 April 2016, http://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2016/04/160417_indonesia_simposium_65.
13. For more info please see the Anton Hermansyah's report for *The Jakarta Post*, "1965 Symposium Indonesia's way to face its dark past." 19 April 2016, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/04/19/1965-symposium-indonesias-way-to-face-its-dark-past.html>.
14. For more information, please see "Thousands rally in Indonesia capital against communism" by Chadni Vatvani, *Channel News Asia*, 3 June 2016, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/thousands-rally-in/2843346.html>.
15. Please see "Indonesia refuses to investigate on 1965-66 anti-communist purges despite recognition of remorse," International Centre for Peace and Human Rights, 19 Apr. 2016, <http://www.cipadh.org/en/indonesia-refuses-investigate-1965-66-anti-communist-purges-despite-recognition-of-remorse>.
16. Please see Marguerite Afra Sapiie's "Plan to set up 'harmony' council met with criticism," *Jakarta Post*, 11 Jan. 2017, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/01/11/plan-set-harmony-council-met-with-criticism.html>.
17. For more information on its activities as well as "judgements" and "opinions" please refer to this website: <http://www.tribunal1965.org>.
18. Please see Febriana Firdaus's "Aliansi Anti-Komunis Indonesia 'jemput tim IPT 1965 di Bandara," *Rappler*, 16 Nov. 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/indonesia/112911-aliansi-anti-komunis-indonesia-tim-ipt-1965>.
19. The author of this Guardian article provides an interesting insight into the reactions of the audience, mostly Indonesians being shown *The Act of Killing* for the first time. Please refer to it in Mette Bjerregaard's "What Indonesians really think about *The Act of Killing*?" *The Guardian*, 5 Mar. 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/mar/05/act-of-killing-screening-in-indonesia>.
20. For an in-depth academic discussion of the film, please refer to *Critical Asian Studies* special edition on Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing*. Please see

- “*The Act of Killing: A CAS Roundtable.*” *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2014, pp. 145-146.
21. One of the best collection of testimonies is *Tahun Yang Tak Pernah Berakhir: Memahami Pengalaman Korban*, edited by John Roosa, Ayu Ratih, and Hilmar Farid, Elsam, 2004. For a Balinese perspective on the 1965 pogroms, please see *Melawan Lupa: Narasi-Narasi Komunitas Taman 65 Bali*, edited by Agung Wardana, Roberto Hutabarat, and Wiss Hardana Putra, Taman 65 Press, 2012.
 22. For more information, please refer to “Pimpinan Komunis Gaya Baru, Anak dari Wakil CC PKI Zaman Aduit” in <http://news.okezone.com/read/2016/06/03/337/1405900/pimpinan-komunis-gaya-baru-anak-dari-wakil-cc-pki-zaman-aidit>.
 23. A change in Indonesia’s the socio-economic environment in the 1980s brought about a “consolidation” among labor groups, the middle classes, as well as students. The relationship was further strengthened in the 1990s when these groups began experimenting with terms such as human rights and reform. The lynchpin however was the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and the “reforms” dictated by foreign financial institutions. Coupled with wide spread popular anger and mounting protests led by students, president Suharto finally stepped down in May 1998. For more information, please refer to *Democratization in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, edited by Marco Bunte and Andreas Ufen, Routledge, 2009.
 24. For more information, please see Sita W. Dewi and Margareth S. Aritonang’s “Kidnapped Activists Pin Hopes on Jokowi-Kalla,” *The Jakarta Post*, 5 July 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/07/05/kidnapped-activists-pin-hopes-jokowi-kalla.html>.
 25. The actual term used in New Order speak is “tidak bersih lingkungan.” For more New Order parlance, please refer to Hersri Setiawan’s *Kamus Gestok*. Galangpress, 2003.
 26. In his memoir, Jusuf Wanandi, an influential Suharto-era policy analyst, approximates the number of political detainees to be 600,000 in 1971. The detainees were placed in categories “A” for those were accused of being involved in the G30S coup attempt with legal “evidence”; “B” were those accused of being involved but without “legal evidence”; and “C” were detainees arrested based on mere suspicion of their involvement. For more information please see *Shades of Grey: A Political Memoir of Indonesia, 1965-1998*. Equinox Press, 2012.
 27. The Khmer Rouge which gained power in 1973, implemented categories for its citizens differentiating “new people” from “old people.” Almost everyone suspected of having ties with the previous regime before the Khmer Rouge and alleged “subversives” were then sent to various death camps (of which one is the infamous Tuol Sleng/S-21) where most would die from torture, hard labor, and malnutrition. For more information please refer to David Chandler’s *Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot’s Secret Prison* and Francois Bizot’s excellent autobiography, *The Gate*. Bizot is the only foreigner to have survived one of the Khmer Rouge’s death camps.
 28. For a more in-depth discussion of this concept, please refer to Kar Yen Leong’s “Exorcising Ghosts and Phantasms: Reinterpreting Indonesia’s Past through

- unseen Realms,” conference presentation on Reconciling Indonesian History with 1965, 10-12 November 2016, Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany.
29. This concept was pointed out by Katherine McGregor in her study of young activists working on the issue of reconciliation between a mass-based Muslim organization Nadhalatul Ulama and former political prisoners. For more information, please see “Memory Studies and Human Rights in Indonesia.” *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 350-361.
 30. During the New Order period, the state spared no expense embarking on constructing museums as a way of “showcasing” the nation. For more information, please refer to Klaus H. Schreiner’s “History in the Showcase: Representations of National History in Indonesian Museums” in *Nationalism and Cultural Revival in Southeast Asia: Perspective from the Centre and the Region*, edited by Sri Kuhnt-Saptodewa, Volker Grabowsky, and Marthin Großheim, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997, pp. 99-118.

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