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Campus on Fire: Indonesian Universities During the Political Turmoil of 1950s-1960s

Campus en feu : les universités indonésiennes dans la tourmente politique des décennies 1950 et 1960

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Campus on Fire: Indonesian Universities During the Political Turmoil of 1950s-1960s

Introduction

Tak berapa lama, suara gemuruh datang mengiringi bus-truk yang mengangkut massa berjaket kuning, biru, dan hijau. Dengan penuh amarah mereka meneriakkan yel-yel untuk membakar Ureca [Universitas Res Publica]. Saat itulah batu mulai berhamburan... Laboratorium di beberapa fakultas meledak dan hangus terbakar... Kampus Ureca dicap sebagai kampus "kiri" yang berafiliasi dengan komunis dan Cina.²

(In a minute, a roaring noise was heard accompanying the bus-trucks filled with a mass wearing yellow, blue and green jackets. They were furiously shouting to burn down Ureca (Universitas Res Publica). At this moment, stones were thrown... Labs in some faculties exploded and were burned down. ...Ureca Campus had been labeled as a "leftist" campus affiliated with communists and China).

This account gives an insight into the attack on the Universitas Res Publica (Ureca) Campus in Jakarta on October 15, 1965, two weeks after the 30 September Movement (G30S). The attack also marked the beginning of a counterrevolutionary campaign targeting universities, a campaign intended to eliminate all communists and leftist scholars/students from campuses. What happened to Indonesian universities after the violence of 1965 remains largely under-researched, even after the proliferation of historical works on the "1965 event" since the fall of Suharto's New Order regime in mid-1998. Whereas the cultural impacts of 1965 on the arts, literature and popular culture have

1. Department of History, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.

2. "Siapa Membakar Kampus Res Publica?," *Tempo*, 6 April 2014, p. 59.

been addressed by numerous studies (among others, Foulcher 1986, Irawanto 1999, Hill 2012, Herlambang 2013, Heryanto 2014, Chambert-Loir 2016), the impacts of this political event on education and academia have been the focus of only few studies.

A pioneer on this topic, Murray J. Thomas —an American observer in Indonesia in the 1960s— published two important works in 1973 and 1981. In the first publication, he provides a chronological survey of the development of Indonesian higher education from the colonial period up to the 1970s, highlighting the institutional problem that resulted from the political upheaval of 1965. His second publication focuses on the former period, especially on the PKI's comprehensive program and strategy in the field of education, arguing that in comparison with other parties, the PKI showed a more progressive and thorough strategy in asserting its influence on the state's educational system and policy.

The following substantive study on the topic appeared only in 2003. Daniel Dhakidae (2003) is perhaps the first Indonesian scholar after the fall of New Order to have published a comprehensive study on Indonesian intellectual history. In a chapter of this book, he shows how the counter-revolutionary campaign of the ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia) targeted universities, colleges, academies, and research institutions, especially those that were suspected of having a connection with the Indonesian Communist Party. He mentions that the Minister of Higher Education and Sciences has issued a special decree (*Surat Keputusan No. 1/dar tahun 1965*)³ under the auspice of the military to temporarily —but in reality, permanently— suspend 14 universities/academies 'affiliated' with the PKI (Dhakidae 2003: 224). Nevertheless, this study does not further investigate the expansion of the policy to other campuses nor does it deal with the consequences it had for individuals working and studying at those institutions.

Besides these two authors, who have addressed the question of political violence and academia globally, few studies have mentioned the impact of the 1965-66 events on Indonesian intellectual life. The agrarian specialist Benjamin White (2005: 120-21) argues that the events of 1965 have had a negative impact on agrarian studies on several leading campuses of Indonesia. A large number of academics —who were often also activists— in respectable universities such as the Bogor Institute of Agriculture, the University of Indonesia, Padjadjaran University of Bandung and the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, were expelled from their campuses. They were suspected of being members of the PKI or at least of being supporters of communist ideas on agrarian reform. Most of them never returned to their campuses. A few regained their positions but they had to undergo a harsh screening process and then worked under strict supervision. Along the same lines, Farid (2005: 167-69) argues that

3. ANRI, Koleksi KOTI (*Komando Operasi Tertinggi*), *Tjataan Kronologis Di Seputar Peristiwa 30 September*, 'Surat Keputusan No.1/dar tahun 1965'.

the banning of Communist/Marxist ideologies largely influenced the lack of critical discourse in social science studies in Indonesia after 1965.

These works have clearly shown that the events of 1965-66 had a strong impact on the Indonesian higher-education system and affected the development of a social discourse within the sciences. To delve further into the issue, the present study investigates the immediate impacts of the counter-revolutionary policy against the so-called 30 September Movement (G30S) carried out on the campuses. It proposes a closer look at what happened on several campuses in order to understand how and in what way the campaign was implemented to control the higher-education sector. As a corollary, the article intends to sketch out the effects of this campaign on the universities.

This paper uses the available yet limited historical sources and combines them with interviews with the survivors of this political turmoil. It begins with a brief survey of the political developments in Indonesia in the 1950s and their impact on campuses, which eventually led to the political upheavals of 1965 and their consequences.

Politics and Campus Prior to 1965

The years 1950-1965 are known as the period of hyper politics. It was the period when political parties with different ideologies were harshly competing with each other to gain power and influence. This political competition penetrated deeply into the academic life of universities, particularly from the mid 1950s until the early 1960s. After leading Indonesia through the destructive period of decolonization and the revolutionary war, the charismatic Sukarno, officially sworn in as president in 1950, brought liberal parliamentary democracy to his country, an experiment to find the best political system for the newly independent Indonesia. Apart from the successful issuing of the 1950 Constitution and the effective organization of the first democratic election in 1955 (Feith 1962), the liberal parliamentary system failed to establish a stable government (with six consecutive cabinets within four years alone), to perform economic recovery from the war, and to create a solid social justice and education system (Ricklefs 2008: 289-320).

Under this liberal democratic system, Indonesian society remained highly fragmented until the end of 1950s. It was divided to a large extent by different ideological orientations, religious aspirations, ethnic sentiments, and local and regional egoism. This situation brought about political instability and economic stagnancy, which led the political elite to see liberalism as no longer a suitable ideology for the Indonesian political system. Sukarno himself began to explicitly criticise the Western-style parliamentary democracy.

During this period, the politicization of the Indonesian education sector—especially on the secondary and tertiary levels—reached its highest level (Suwignyo 2012: 291-98). Indoctrination was the first visible form of

politicization of this sector. Sukarno's nationalistic speeches and "revolutionary" ideas were adopted as a source of inspiration for civic education, citizenship, and national character-building in higher education. The speeches were formalized and broadcasted to the population by ministerial departments, for example through the Coordinating Ministry of Peoples' Relation (*Menko Hubungan Rakyat*) led by Ruslan Abdul Gani. The speeches were also incorporated into university curricula, from which students were expected to learn, remember, and then follow Sukarno's doctrines (Hutagaol 1985: 131). Higher-learning institutions filled with adult learners were considered as strategic instruments to spread Sukarno's ideas and mobilize support from the younger generation. The political parties shared the same belief and tried to develop a relationship with university students by establishing contact with student organizations. As a consequence, the competition amongst political parties and the political tension on a national level did not spare students' activities and university staff (Hutagaol 1985: 132).

While promoting the non-aligned political movement, at the same time Sukarno was also trying to rebuild the Indonesian economy up from out of the ruins of war. He benefitted from both the USA and the USSR, by making multilateral cooperation agreements and accepting "developmental aids" to build the military, economy, and higher education sectors (Boden 2008: 110-30).

In the early 1950s, the Indonesian higher-education system was in its formative stage, when it was struggling to cope with such basic problems as financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, and limited human resources. For this reason, Sukarno accepted "the capacity building project aids," initially from the USA and then from the Soviet Union. Under the auspices of Colombo Plan and UNESCO, the USA has indeed been very active in providing Indonesia's higher-education system with financial and technical assistance since 1950. In July 1954, for example, the Indonesian government and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed the first agreement worth US \$ 2,500,000 (approximately US \$ 23,140,000, 2018 rate⁴). Within this framework, the Medical College of the University of California sent twelve physicians to work with the Medical Faculty of the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, and the latter sent fifty graduate students to California for advanced training. In addition to that, the scheme also supplied laboratory equipment, teaching materials, and books. Another agreement, worth US \$ 1,797,907 (approximately US \$ 16,640,000, 2018 rate⁵) was signed in 1956 to finance the cooperation between the College of Engineering of the Kensington University and the Institute of Technology in Bandung, which covers the supply of laboratory equipment and textbooks, the organization of advanced training for graduate students, and research training. A similar scheme was

4. Calculated with <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com> on March 24, 2018.

5. Ibid.

also formulated between the University of California at Los Angeles and the Science Faculty of Gadjah Mada University at Yogyakarta. Finally, another US \$ 1,250,000 contract (approximately US \$ 11,570,000, 2018 rate⁶) was signed in July 1957 to finance the cooperation between the University of Kentucky and the Agriculture Institute at Bogor to support the human resource development programs and the organization of training, teaching, research and management aspect of higher education (Mooney Jr. 1963: 94-96). In addition to these aids, Indonesian universities also cooperated with some American foundations, like the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations to develop their human resources, especially in the social sciences and humanities (Ford Foundation 2003).

Almost at the same time, the Indonesian government also began a military and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union, which also included a development program for the higher-education sector. Boden (2008: 116) has calculated that from 1959 to 1965, Indonesia received a total of 789 million roubles (around US \$ 263,750,000, 1965 rate⁷) of financial aid from the Soviet Union, more than one-fifth (21%) of the total amount provided by Moscow to all non-socialist developing countries, making Indonesia the biggest recipient ever. Most of this financial aid –around 90%– was apparently used for military purposes, particularly to strengthen Indonesian armed forces in order to support Sukarno's "anti-imperialist" agenda. The remaining bulk of the Soviet aid was spent to finance the development of heavy industry (steel production sites), agroindustry (fertilizer factories), energy (thermal power stations), infrastructure (street and bridges), and education (oceanography and engineering) (Boden 2008: 118). Gadjah Mada University received Soviet educational aid in 1959-1960, particularly in advanced training for graduate students and in capacity-building programs for the medical, pedagogy and science faculties (Sardjito 1961: 51). Thanks to this international assistance, the Indonesian government was able to continuously improve the quality of its higher-education institutions.

However, in the wake of Guided Democracy in July 1959, the academic life of Indonesian universities suffered backlash from Sukarno's revolutionary ideas, as he had promoted the need to sustain the unfinished Indonesian revolution, and henceforth declared campuses "a tool of revolution." This manifested in the early 1960s when Sukarno launched two political confrontations: first against the Dutch in 1959-1962 on the issue of West Papua and then against Malaysia and Western capitalist nations that supported the formation of the Malaysian federation in 1962-1965. These confrontations affected student activism and campus life in the following ways: the political indoctrination for students and faculty members; the recruitment of students to become auxiliary armed forces

6. Ibid.

7. Calculated with <http://www.historicalstatistics.org/Currencyconverter.html>.

(militia), thus abandoning their studies; the strengthening antagonism against Western nations, and the extradition of international experts and professors – mostly Dutch and Americans – working with several Indonesian universities. In addition to that, the confrontations had increased the spending budget for military purposes, reduced the budget for developmental programs including educational sectors, which still needed financial support to improve quality and quantity. One of the direct consequences of Sukarno's policy at that time was to disrupt and halt the advancement of Indonesian universities (Thomas 1973: 197-8; Hutagaol, 1985: 136-8).

In the context of student activism and “campus politics,” the PKI, through its student organization CGMI (*Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia* – Student Movement of Indonesia Concentration) and its union SSP (*Serikat Sekerja Pendidikan* – Education Workers Union), emerged as the most active party, present through intra-campus organizations, which sought control of campus politics and tried to influence its policies. Along with the shifting political atmosphere to the left, CGMI with its nationalist ally, GMNI (*Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia* – National Student Movement of Indonesia) prominently led student political activism in the early years of the 1960s. They aggressively engaged with several issues, such as supporting the dismissal of Mochtar Kusumaatmaja, a law professor at Padjadjaran University in Bandung who criticized Sukarno's guided policies in 1962, and the ousting of Western professors (mostly from the USA, the UK and Australia) who had taught in Indonesian universities since the 1950s (Thomas 1973: 202-203).

In the context of national politics, in the same period, the PKI emerged as the most energetic party in promoting progressive ideas and programs on education, touching on issues from primary to higher-education levels, including an extensive extra-curricular program. With such progressive and strategic programs in the education sector, the PKI turned to the prominent provider of private-education institutions, such as Universitas Rakyat (UNRA), outside the State educational institutions. The party focused on educating a large part of the population, consisting mainly of the “lower groups” of Indonesian society, and they were successful in that endeavour with the surprising result of raising critical thinking and analysis (McVey 1990). A contemporary observer, R. Murray Thomas (1981: 373), identified three schemes in the strategy used by the PKI in the education sector; namely (1) controlling the existing governmental bodies; (2) weakening the uncontrollable organizations that would become a potential threat; and (3) creating new organizations to attract support from the main targeted constituents.

The PKI applied the first strategy to secure the highest-ranked position in several relevant institutions, particularly the ministry of education. This was intended to exert influence on the policy-making process in this department.

The strategy was quite successful as in 1957, Professor Prijono⁸, who had the favour of the PKI (although he was not a cadre of the party), was appointed by Sukarno as the new Minister of Education. This key person became the PKI's agent to bend the direction of the Indonesian education system along the pathway of communist-based education "ideology." They did so, for example, by appointing more pro-communist teachers-educators and by influencing the direction of the national schooling system, especially through curricula, textbooks, and teacher training. For these purposes, the PKI also intervened in the recruitment of teachers and schoolmasters and tried to influence the organization of the Teachers' Union of the Republic of Indonesia (*Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* - PGRI), strategies which in both cases were quite successful with an estimation of approximately 10,000 to 30,000 sympathisers.⁹ However, the PKI's objectives to control the ministry of education resulted in only a modest success: the Nationalist Parties, Muslim organizations, and the Military refused to cooperate, and they even countered the PKI's plan (Thomas 1981: 374-75). In 1961, the government decided to establish a separate Ministry for Higher Education and Sciences (*Perguruan Tinggi dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* – PTIP) under the leadership of Dr. Thojib Hadiwidjaja, then Brig. Djend. Dr. Sjarief Thajeb, both military-supported figures¹⁰. From that date, Prijono had to deal with a figure whose vision for education was opposed to the one he carried.

The second strategy to weaken opposing groups was implemented among others in the field of student activism, for example when the CGMI aggressively 'attacked' the religious-based student's organization HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* – Muslim Students' Association), accusing them of being a treasonous instrument of foreign imperialism, for which reason CGMI asked Sukarno to abolish the latter organization (Thomas 1981: 378-80). As the HMI resisted this assault and rejected all the CGMI's suspicions, the polemic between the CGMI and the HMI created a political tension on the campuses,

8. Professor Prijono was born in Yogyakarta, trained in classical Javanese dance, held a doctorate in literature from Leiden University, and was Dean of the Arts Faculty at the University of Indonesia from 1950 to 1957 (Lindsay 2012: 206).

9. Researchers have measured the PKI success with regard to this specific education sector quantitatively by taking into account the number of teachers who were lost or removed from their job after 1965. These figures differ from one estimation to the another and need to be taken cautiously as they do not indicate clear affiliation. Thomas (1981: 375-76) has estimated that 32,000 teachers and schoolmasters were removed from their jobs, while Suwignyo (2012: 429) comes up with the calculation that about 30,000 – 100,000 teachers had been dismissed from the schools. The PGRI's report mentions that the number of communist members among school teachers amounted to no more than 10,000. Taking the lowest estimation as a basis, these figures nevertheless show the PKI's relative success in attracting interest from the teachers' community.

10. Brig. Djend. Dr. Sjarief Thajeb was appointed as the PTIP Minister in 1964, replacing Dr. Thojib Hadiwidjaja, who was ousted for his failure to condemn the *Manikebu* (Manifest Kebudayaan) case and for his pro-American policy. Dr. Sjarief Thajeb himself was acting as Rector of University of Indonesia (1962-1964).

and gradually turned into a mutual hatred between the two organizations. Such emotional feelings later stimulated an equally aggressive counter-action that the HMI and other Islamic student organizations directed at the CGMI and other leftist organizations in the months after September 1965 (Tanja 1979; Sitompul 1982; Hefner 1990).

The PKI's third strategy – to create a new organization – was opted for only in response to certain situations: *first*, when the opponents had already gained control over the targeted institutions so the PKI had little chance to take them over; *second*, when there were no institutions found suitable to fulfil the needs of particular groups which were important constituents of the party; and *third*, when the party could not fully control the targeted institutions, but still wanted to influence them from the outside by means of pseudo-official organization. The establishment of two ambitious bodies exemplified this strategy: they are the *Lembaga Pendidikan Nasional* (the National Education Institute) and the *Universitas Rakyat* (UNRA or the People's University). Created by enthusiastic educators, the first organization sought to solve the leadership crises in national educational affairs and supported President Sukarno's intentions to eliminate the remaining vestiges of Western cultures, particularly capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism, to be replaced by a national democratic education system (Thomas 1981: 381-82).

Unlike *Lembaga Pendidikan Indonesia*, which claimed to have no formal affiliation with the PKI, UNRA proclaimed itself from its outset as the vanguard of the PKI's program on the education sector. In its opening ceremony attended by D.N. Aidit, one of the main leaders of the PKI, on 25 September 1958, Siswojo –the Director of UNRA, who was born in Yogyakarta, and attended Muhammadiyah school during his youth before joining the PKI (McVey 1990: 14)– explained that UNRA was the PKI's main instrument to meet the pressing need for 'ideological reinforcement' in order to accomplish the Indonesian revolution. In Siswojo's words:

Indonesian revolutionary movement, under the leadership of PKI, is now getting stronger and bigger, occupying an important position in national and international politics. This greatness is a big test, and its ultimate test is to accomplish the August revolution, the national and democratic revolution. The ideological front hence should take a part in this test. UNRA is one of the instruments of struggle in the ideological front. (Siswojo 1964: 10).

Built on the above mentioned philosophical and ideological principles, the university was designed to develop the following four characteristics. *Firstly*, it was open to the public, without discrimination, but partisan in practice; meaning every one could join, but while the university welcomed knowledge coming from the West or the East, the curricula and learning process were formulated in such a way that would empower and liberate Indonesian people from the remains of the colonial mentality. *Secondly*, it developed critical thinking and stood against any anti-progressive powers or parties, and against conservatism

in ideology, knowledge and culture. *Thirdly*, it emphasized the philosophical or epistemological principle that theory should be practical and formulated to support the social movement. The social movement should also be used as the basis for theoretical formulation and “feed” into it. And *fourthly*, despite its being open to the general public, the university prioritized labour and peasant activists, patriotic students, progressive women, and any one having the goodwill to attend the university (Siswojo 1959: 6-12). In his welcoming speech, the Minister of Education, Prof. Prijono, lauded the university as a breaker-through to the old dogma saying that knowledge is only for “the chosen few,” and that “the *Universitas Rakjat* was evidence that knowledge is the right of the masses, not just a restricted elite” (Siswojo 1959: 18).

Applying such strategies, the PKI not only occupied a major place in the field of education, it was also very present on the political scene, as a major player alongside religious groups, nationalists and the military. Prior to the attempted coup these political powers competed harshly with each other to gain a better place in the closer circle of President Sukarno. At that juncture, Sukarno was the only focal point uniting those competing powers together in a fragile political equilibrium, which would have collapsed at any time if the focal point had weakened.

The liquidation of the “PKI-affiliated colleges/universities”

Ten days after the aborted coup of September 30th, 1965, Brigadier General Dr. Sjarief Thajeb, the Minister of Higher Education and Sciences (PTIP), issued a hurried emergency decree on October 10th, 1965 to temporarily close down (but, permanently in fact) four universities, nine academies, and one institute that were suspected of having certain links with the PKI.¹¹ The four universities were *Universitas Res Publica*, *Universitas Rakjat Indonesia*, *Universitas Rakjat*, all located in Jakarta, and *Universitas Pemerintah Kotapradja Surakarta* in Solo. Others academies and institutes, including the training centres for social and political sciences, journalism, literature and history, engineering and agriculture, shared the same fate. They were *Akademi Ilmu Sosial Aliarcham* (Jakarta), *Akademi Ilmu Politik Bachtarudin* (Jakarta), *Akademi Teknik Ir. Anwari* (Jakarta), *Akademi Ilmu Djurnalistik Dr. Rivai* (Jakarta), *Akademi Sastra Multatuli* (Jakarta), *Akademi Ilmu Ekonomi Dr. Ratulangi* (Jakarta), *Akademi Ilmu Sedjarah Ronggowarsito* (Solo), *Akademi Djurnalistik W.R. Supratman* (Surabaya), *Akademi Djurnalistik dan Publisistik Teruna Patria* (Malang), and *Institut Pertanian E.G.O.M.* (Bogor). The action

11. ANRI, Koleksi KOTI (*Komando Operasi Tertinggi*), *Tjataan Kronologis Di Seputar Peristiwa 30 September*, *Surat keputusan No.1/dar tahun 1965* (the number of the decree implies its special status, *dar* stands here for “darurat,” that is “emergency”). The decree was issued under the auspices of the Higher Command Operation or *Komando Tertinggi* (KOTI), a special unit within the Army established by Sukarno. Later, Lieutenant General Suharto deployed it to coordinate the counter-revolutionary campaign against the PKI.

was apparently the first step taken by the minister as part of the “counter revolutionary campaigns” of the Indonesian Army against the so-called 30 September Movement in the education sector. The Minister’s decree was based on a consideration that:

*Lembaga-lembaga swasta tersebut telah membantu secara langsung maupun tidak langsung petualangan gerakan kontra revolusi bernama Gerakan 30 September; atau setidaknya mereka menjadi sarang di mana petualangan-petualangan politik tersebut bersembunyi.*¹²

Those private colleges have directly or indirectly helped the people from the counter-revolutionary movement called the 30 September Movement, or at least they apparently became the hub where those political adventurers hid their movement.

Thus, KOTI and the PTIP Minister speculatively thought that those institutions had certain connections with the PKI, some even were considered as “the PKI’s think-tanks” in nurturing its communist revolutionary ideologies and in preparing cadres for the 1965 event.

Eventually the policy did not stop with those fourteen institutions only. Three days after the emergency decree mentioned above, the PTIP Minister Sjarief Thajeb issued two other decrees¹³ to extend similar measures to other education institutions presumably for having connections with the PKI. They were *Universitas Kesenian Rakjat* in Bandung, *Akademi Ilmu Politik Ngurah Rai* in Denpasar (Bali), *Universitas Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusumo* (Yogyakarta), *Institut Pendidikan “Harjono”* (Jakarta), *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (IKIP) “Kudjang”* (Bandung), *Akademi Seni “Cornel Simandjoentak”* (Bandung), *Universitas Dr. Tjipto Mangunkoesoemo* (Yogyakarta), and *Akademi Tekstil-SOTEXI* (Bandung). In addition to these colleges and academies, the Indonesian Scholar’s Association (*Himpunan Sarjana Indonesia*, established in Yogyakarta with branches in Jakarta, Bandung, Malang, etc.), “Taman Kanak-kanak Melati” (kindergartens run by the Women’s Movement of Indonesia - *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, GERWANI, which claimed to have around 1,478 branches all over Indonesia), and several secondary schools (*Sekolah Landjutan Pendidikan Nasional*) were also dissolved (Menteri Sekretaris Negara 1994: 41-42). The PTIP Minister issued two others decrees¹⁴ related to the elimination of PKI-affiliated organizations. The first decree was issued on 11 October 1965 to justify the dismissal and banning of the communist students organizations CGMI (*Central Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia*) and PERHIMI (*Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia*). Both were deemed to have actively participated in the 30 September Movement. Therefore, the government officially prohibited all these organizations’

12. Ibidem, Surat keputusan No.1/dar tahun 1965 (the *Consideration* section).

13. ANRI, *Arsip Depdiknas, Surat Keputusan No. 4/dar tahun 1965, Surat Keputusan No. 15/dar tahun 1965*, both issued on 13 October 1965.

14. *Surat Keputusan No. 2/dar tahun 1965 and Surat Keputusan No. 16/dar tahun 1965.*

activities, including their participation in representative bodies, sport, art, and press organizations, and in any other state/official institutions. The second decree issued on 30 November 1965 officially outlawed the Teachers Training Colleges administered by the PGRI *Non-Vak Centraal* (Non-Aligned Teachers Union of the Republic of Indonesia, a wing of the PKI-leaning union) all over the country¹⁵. Like previous decrees, this was also issued to meet the will of the army for clearing higher education institutions from the influence of counter-revolutionary actions committed by the 30 September Movement.

The series of decrees by the PTIP Minister were actually a manner of pre-emptive immediate measures taken by the army team concerning the education sector. As a matter of fact, there was no further explanation regarding why these policies were enforced and to what extent those banished institutions really did have connections with the PKI. As it was a political decision in mid crisis and for the sake of urgency, indeed such radical and authoritarian policies obviously needed no justification whatsoever. The only reason for the PTIP Minister to issue the decrees was that he wanted to create a clear parameter in order to cut down the PKI-linked institutions no matter how irrational those policies were and how unclear the connections of the targeted institutions with the PKI were in the past.

The screening of public universities

What happened to the students, lecturers, administrators, and other people working in those dissolved institutions? How many were they actually? Did any of these people become victims of the mass killing or, if they survived were they among those to be exiled to Buru Island? These are still unanswerable questions due to the limited sources available. Yet, considering their position as PKI members or affiliates to its mass organizations, it can be assumed that, when they survived, the people working in these educational institutions would be arrested as political prisoners under category B or C, two of the three categories under which prisoners were classified after 30 September¹⁶.

After abolishing the PKI-affiliated institutions, Suharto and his military regime extended the counter-revolutionary movement by implementing a structural screening scheme modelled on the hierarchy of government bureaucracy. This policy was directed in the first place at the core state

15. Following the increase of the PKI's influence, in 1964 the PGRI split into two factions: the Communist-supported PGRI, chaired by Subandri – naming itself 'PGRI *non-vak centraal* (non-aligned PGRI), and the PGRI chaired by M.E. Subiadinata, which was called by Subandri's group "PGRI *vak centraal* (PGRI aligned with the army), and which later named itself 'Pancasila-based PGRI' (Suwignyo 2012: 404, footnote 100).

16. Whereas prisoners from group A consisted of the highest ranks of the PKI, considered as having planned the 30 September Movement, the ones from group B consisted of people who were the rank and file of the party. Prisoners belonging to the C category were members or supporters of the mass organizations affiliated to the PKI (McGregor, 2009).

institutions and later at non-state institutions. Via this policy, Suharto sought to 'clean out' any PKI elements or legacies from state apparatuses and state institutions. On October 3rd, Sukarno missioned Suharto to restore order and security. Acting as Chief Staff of High Command Operation and Commander of Command Operation for the Restoration of Security and Order (*Kepala Staf Komando Operasi Tertinggi/Panglima Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Penertiban – Pangkopkamtib*), Suharto issued an instruction letter No. 22/KOTI/1965 on October 15th. It contained an order to state administrators and bureaucrats to start a structural screening process. The letter was complemented with a comprehensive screening procedure to be operated in all departments, bureaus and other state institutions in order to eliminate any possible elements of the PKI's 30 September Movement.¹⁷

Following this instruction, the screening process began in state institutions all over the country, from the central government in Jakarta to the local government at the district level. Interestingly, some institutions had already commenced the screening process before the issuing of official instructions. This was exemplified by the House of Representatives (DPR), which announced its screening results three days earlier —on 12 October 1965. In that letter, Arudji Kartawinata, the chair of the House explained that all the PKI's Members of Parliament had been suspended. They were Susilo Prawiro Atmodjo, Jagus, Let. Kol. Ranu Sunardi, Siauw Giok Tjhan, Nja' Diwan, K. Wardoyo, Gde Puger, and Supardi.¹⁸

Following Suharto's instruction letter No. 22/KOTI/1965 on October 15th the Minister of the PTIP, in cooperation with local and regional military authorities (PAPELRADA—*Panitia Pelaksana Dwikora Daerah*), coordinated the screening process in higher education institutions. The screening of universities was intended to identify students, lecturers, professors, and university employees who were deemed to have been involved in the 30 September Movement and to take action towards them. In practice, the screening process was often implemented rather recklessly and as a result, ad hoc in nature. In several institutions, it became a means used for private interests as well. Moreover, information about the screening process and its results were highly scattered and far from complete. Not all universities

17. ANRI, Koleksi HUBRA, 1963-1966, No. 1900.

18. ANRI, Koleksi HUBRA, 1963-1966, No. 788. Similarly, the President Sukarno through his Presidential Decree No. 104/1966 had decided to suspend the status of nine PKI cadres as members of *Musyawarah Pembantu Perentjaan Pembangunan Nasional*, an advisory body for national development planning. They were Abdulmadjid Djojodiningrat S.H., Samsir, Suparna Sastradiredja, Roodhito S. Sosrodiwirjo, M. Zaelani, Supardi, Ir. Sakirman, Nj. Suwarti Bintang Suradi, and D.N. Aidit.

publicly announced the results of their screening. Based on the available information, the following paragraphs highlight the process in some state universities and their effects.

Gadjah Mada University, one of the oldest and largest state universities in Indonesia, is the best documented.¹⁹ On January 6, 1966, Prof. Herman Johannes (engineering professor), the rector, announced that the screening process in his university has been completed. There was a large number of people suspended: 115 employees (including 112 lecturers and 3 assistant-lecturers), 2,986 students, and 1,212 administrative staff members were identified as involved in communist activities (mostly by joining CGMI,²⁰ HSI and SSP²¹), and hence were ousted from the campus on November 1, 1965. Statistically, this figure was much higher than the initial estimation made by the Minister of Education and Science, Dr. Sjarief Thajeb, who visited the university two months before.²² A local newspaper, *Kedaulatan Rakjat*,²³ reported a different figure (2,505 students in total), but with more detailed information about the students' backgrounds. According to this newspaper, these "suspected" students were from almost all the faculties of the university. They consisted of 631 students from the Faculty of Engineering, 394 students from the Faculty of Law, 201 from the Faculty of Economics, 176 from the Medical Faculty, 171 from the Veterinary Faculty, 153 from the Faculty of Letters, 135 from the Faculty of Forestry, 132 from the Faculty of Agriculture, 92 from the Faculty of Pharmacy, 87 from the Faculty of Psychology, 85 from the Faculty of Geography, 80 from the Faculty of Biology, 78 from the Faculty of Science, 41 from the Faculty of Dentistry, 35 from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, and 14 were unidentified. Yet, we could not find further information about these students, including their gender or religious and ethnic backgrounds. According to another study which gives a larger number, from the total of 3,059 suspended students, 2,034 individuals were allowed to resume their studies, while a third could not return to campus and were 'unaccounted' for in official reports (Rahardjo et al. 1999: 60). According to the different estimations, between 2,500 and 3,000 students were suspended in UGM, making it the most affected university after 30 September. This is not

19. For a detailed study on Gajah Mada before and after 1965, see Abdul Wahid 2018.

20. By 1964, CGMI claimed to have had 40,000 members all over Indonesia. Of these, 3,000 were in Jakarta, 5,754 were in North Sumatra and Aceh (McVey 1990: 20).

21. HSI stands for *Himpunan Sarjana Indonesia* (Scholars' Association of Indonesia), while SSP is *Serikat Sekerja Pendidikan* (Union of Education Workers). The military considered both organizations as having links with the PKI.

22. *Warta Berita Antara*, 24 September 1965. According to Rahardjo et al. (1999: 50), by December 1964 UGM had 16 faculties with a combined total 16,680 students and 5,658 staff members including 399 professors, 199 assistant professors, 69 instructors at the University hospital and 877 administrative personnel.

23. 19 January 1966, also cited by Darban et al., 1993/1994.

surprising in a city where the PKI exerted a strong influence on local politics, as shown by the results of the 1955 elections in Yogyakarta, where the PKI obtained the largest number of votes (Soewarno, 1994: 305).

Interestingly, in order to ensure the accuracy of information, the screening team recruited students and even lecturers to do the job since the university had almost no reliable information or database about student activities and their political affiliations. The team believed that they could obtain better information from the students who had better information and knowledge about the activities of their fellow students, especially those who were previously engaged in rivalries with the targeted group of students. Survivors explained the different steps followed in the manipulative screening process. According to one witness, Tedjobayu – a former student at UGM, suspected students were rounded up in several places, namely the Jefferson Library, the Vredenburg Fort building, and the Wirogunan prison, all places located in downtown Yogyakarta.²⁴ In these places, they were subjected to torturous and brutal interrogations, and often suffered sexual violence. One of the interrogators is reported to have later become a prominent professor.²⁵

Unlike what happened at Universitas Gadjah Mada, information about the screening process in other prominent public universities is very limited. The smaller numbers of expelled students and staff may therefore be a direct consequence of this fact and only partially reflect reality. University of Indonesia (UI), an important public university in Jakarta, did not make its official report on the 1965 screening results available to the public. Yet, *Suluh Marhaen*, a journal published by GMNI (Ali Surachman Faction) reported that around 1,000 UI Jakarta students and 700 UI-Bogor students (now Institut Pertanian Bogor, IPB) were suspended.²⁶ The same journal also reported that according to Major General Amir Machmoed, the commander of Jakarta Army Headquarter, there were 1,153 UI students who had gone through the screening process.²⁷ From this total, 219 students were officially ousted from university.²⁸ In addition to this, an unknown number of lecturers were also expelled, after the UI Rector issued a decision (*SK Rektor UI No. 041/Sk/BR/65*) confirming the firing of all lecturers who were affiliated with HSI.²⁹ Such a decision may have been taken with the permission of the Ministry of

24. Interview with Tedjobayu, former student of the Biology Faculty, UGM, 20 August 2015.

25. Interview with Sri Muhayati, Tedjobayu, all former students at UGM.

26. "GMNI sesalkan Deputy Menteri PTIP Mashuri SH", *Soeloeh Marhaen*, 5 August 1966.

27. "Pangdam V/Djaja Majdjen Amir Machmud: Stop Screening Mahasiswa," *Soeloeh Marhaen*, 9 August 1966.

28. "UI Sewenang-wenang. Apakah pemetjatan 219 mahasiswa bukan pemetjatan massal?" *Soeloeh Marhaen*, 7 August 1966.

29. "Bukan Soal Intern UI," *Soeloeh Marhaen*, 5 September 1966. A large number of students and lecturers at UI Bogor (now IPB) were also suspended, and some of them permanently expelled (Interview with Gunawan Wiradi, 25 June 2015, Bogor).

PTIP, which coordinated the management of all state universities in Indonesia.

The three state universities located in Bandung, did report about the screening process in their respective institutions. Padjadjaran University announced that it had suspended as per 1 November 1965, 227 students from various faculties and 25 docents, assistant docents, and administrators for their involvement in the communist organization. The neighbouring university, *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan* (IKIP) Bandung, also made a public statement about its screening results. In total there were 80 people convicted of being involved in the PKI-affiliated organization. This group consisted of 17 docents and assistant docents who had primarily joined HSI, three administrators, and the rest were students (members of CGMI and PERHIMI).³⁰ Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), another public university, reported that it had conducted a screening process of its students and staff by the end of 1965, but did not make the results available to the public.

Other reports can be found from Diponegoro University Semarang, which had formed a special screening committee to investigate its students and employees. After spending one month, the committee announced that 4 lecturers were removed from their positions, 2 lecturers were temporarily suspended, and 11 were terminated or fired.³¹ In Sumatra, the North Sumatra University in Medan proclaimed that it had fired ten students of former CGMI members and several lecturers for their involvement in the PKI's affiliated organization. University of Andalas in Padang took similar measures, terminating the status of 23 students from the Faculty of Law, 14 students from the Medical Faculty, and 2 students from the Faculty of Agriculture, all because of their involvement in CGMI activities.³² From Kalimantan, it was reported that the University of Mulawarman in Samarinda had also expelled several students who were CGMI members, one lecturer, and several university employees.³³

From Sulawesi, the rector of Hasanudin University in Makassar made the screening report available to the public on 28 November 1965. It mentioned 95 lecturers involved in the counter-revolutionary action promoted by the PKI. Meanwhile in Manado, Sam Ratulangi University had fired without consent 16 docents, 8 administrative staff, and 100 students who joined CGMI, PERHIMI and other PKI organizations. This step was followed by IKIP Manado, which

30. ANRI, HUBRA Collection, 1963-1966, No. 1174.

31. *Warta Berita Antara*, 17 January 1966.

32. *Warta Berita Antara*, 16 January 1966.

33. *Warta Berita Antara*, 22 November 1965.

also suspended 19 students suspected to have been involved in the G30S Movement. These 19 students were from the Biology department (8 persons), the Pedagogy department (8 persons), and the Law Faculty (3 persons).³⁴

Thus, based on the official information available, there were in total around 5,141 students (from a total of 278,000 students in 1965; cf. Hutagaol 1985) and 302 lecturers/staff members of public universities in Indonesia who were suspended because of the suspicion of being members of PKI-affiliated organizations, notably CGMI, HSI and SSP.

The figure would be much larger if all public universities had published or made their screening archives available for public access, and if the disbanded private universities linked to the PKI were also integrated into this investigation. In fact, many universities keep their screening archives closed considering them to be classified documents, only to be used for their own interests.

It is also important to note that in the same period there were many Indonesian students studying abroad. Some of them chose universities in socialist countries like China, Russia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Cuba, etc., while others sought international degrees in Western countries. By 1965, for example, there were about 2,000 Indonesian students studying in Russia. Most of these students failed to return home after the 1965 event, and their existence slipped out of national memory (Hill 2012).

Further investigation is needed to know the subsequent fate of those suspended students and employees, whether they became part of the victims of the massacre of 1965-1966 or survived the killing but were later imprisoned on Buru Island.³⁵ For sure, they lost not only their rights and career as students, employees, or lecturers and researchers; more importantly they also lost their rights to make a decent living as citizens of Indonesia and their position as intellectuals, thinkers or scientists in their field and community.

The abolition of communist educational institutions and the elimination of communist sympathizers from state universities was not considered enough to prevent the possible revival of communism and similar ‘threats’ in Indonesia. For that reason, the New Order regime found it necessary to create a systematic preventive mechanism by institutionalizing the screening scheme up until the early 1990s in order to uproot communism completely from Indonesia and make sure that all public universities remained “environmentally clean” from any legacies of the PKI and other radical leftists.³⁶ The screening scheme was even extended further to control the recruitment and promotion of

34. *Warta Berita Antara*, 22, 23 November 1965.

35. More than half of the total –ca. 12,000– political prisoners stationed on Buru Island, were former student activists, and university staff, the rest were writers, artists, and bureaucrats. Interview with Tedjobayu, former Buru Prisoner, 20 August 2015 in Jakarta.

36. At UGM, for example, the last decree that concerns the screening policy was issued in 1992, after which similar decrees are no longer mentioned on the list of university archives (Arsip Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2009).

public servants working on campuses, the purchase of reading materials, the curriculum, and the supervision of research activities. The latter included a control on the writing and teaching of the history related to the 1965 events to ensure that the knowledge about Communism-Leninism and the history of the PKI were in accordance with the national (regime) interests. Further research would be needed to understand more about the impacts of this screening policy on curricula and learning activities in Indonesian campuses.

In addition to that structural scheme of screening, the New Order government introduced in the early 1970s an indoctrination program for all Indonesian citizens to be incorporated into the school curriculum, from high school all the way up to the university's curriculum. The program contains the official historical narrative of the 1965 event, stressing the PKI's betrayal and the "evil" character of communism. Professors, military generals, top-rank bureaucrats were all involved in formulating the indoctrination materials, which overall were designed as a contribution to civic education and citizenship, by promoting the official state interpretation of *Pancasila*, the five principles of Indonesian national ideology. By the end of 1970s, the government indoctrination was chiefly directed to achieve the following purposes: 1) to instruct the imprisoned communist-affiliated citizens to obtain their loyalty to *Pancasila* and the government; 2) to prepare new education curricula for the schools; and 3) to conduct series of courses on the *Pancasila* for all civil servants (Thomas 1981: 392).

Conclusion

By approaching the mechanism of screening within several universities, this study –based on various sources of first-hand information– reveals the existence of a chain of command from state institutions, especially the PTIP, and the active complicity of academicians in the ousting of leftist students and university staff members from public universities. The whole screening process was conducted –often through torturous and violent approaches– with the intention of eliminating a group of people, believed to embody and spread a communist ideology. Within the very specific context described earlier – with the large place taken by the PKI in the educational sector – the involvement of students or teachers in groups under PKI influence was, however, far from reflecting such an ideology.

Interestingly, the counter-revolutionary campaign started on campuses quite early, only weeks after the failed coup of 30 September. The army "cleaned up" public universities from any communist and leftist elements through a structural screening scheme, involving universities authorities, lecturers and students. As a result, thousands of students, hundred of lecturers and universities' staffs were declared "guilty" of being part of the 30 September Movement (G30S) or at least of being supportive of the leftist

movement in the years before 1965. The available documents are far from sufficient to really gauge the result of the screening process. Yet it is safe to say that the number of students, scholars and university administrators, who went through the screening process and then were convicted, is much larger than what can be grasped through available sources from 11 universities out of a total of 355 institutes of higher education (Hutagaol 1985). This sample remains of importance and raises questions: the numbers of people expelled from Diponegoro University in Semarang or Andalas University in Padang are, for example, surprising low and one may ask if the rectors were, for example, able to interfere in the process or if organisations connected to the PKI were simply very unpopular in some places.

What happened to those leftist students and intellectuals is arguably an integral yet forgotten part of the 1965-1966 violence. While specialists still debate on the scale and impact of this genocidal violence, it can be argued that academia also suffered from physical and intellectual violence. Theoretically, the impacts of the political events of 1965-66 in Indonesia are visible in the following aspects: human resources (lecturers, students, and administrative staff members), organization (administration, inter-university cooperation, leadership), and academic activities (curricula, research, professional organization, and international cooperation). Taken together, the transformation of these three aspects served Suharto's policy to establish a new type of ruling system in Indonesia –The New Order– from within educational institutions.

This inner dimension does not concern only the imposed State ideology through the setting up of a new curriculum, but it also concerns the eradication of a social tendency in the different fields of studies by the ousting of such sensibility in the ranks of the students and the staff. The production of knowledge changed consequently.

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Interviews

- Tejobayu, former student of the Faculty of Biology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, living in Jakarta.
- Sri Muhayati, former student of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada, living in Yogyakarta.
- Gunawan Wiradi, former lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Indonesia at Bogor (now Institut Pertanian Bogor), living in Bogor.

Appendix 1. **The Number of suspended docents, staffs and students in several public universities**

No	Universities	Docents/ staffs	Students
1.	Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta	115	2,986
2.	Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta*	Unavailable	1,700
3.	Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung	25	227
4.	IKIP Bandung, Bandung	20	60
5.	Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang	17	Unavailable
6.	Univ. Sumatera Utara, Medan	5	10
7.	Universitas Andalas, Padang	Unavailable	39
8.	Universitas Hasanudin, Makassar	95	Unavailable
9.	Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Manado	24	100
10.	IKIP Manado, Manado	Unavailable	19
11.	Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda	1	‘Several ’
Total		302	5,141

Source: Compiled from various sources, *Warta Berita Antara*, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, ANRI, Koleksi KOTI.