

Book Reviews

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Buried Histories: The Anticommunist Massacres of 1965–66 in Indonesia. By John Roosa. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020. xvii+352 pp.

The destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) and its associated mass organizations had a significant impact on the Cold War and ushered in the army-backed New Order regime in Indonesia. John Roosa's rigorously researched and beautifully written book sheds light on how it was that half a million PKI members and sympathizers could be massacred in a matter of months. Drawing on a combination of archival research and insightful and deeply moving interviews, Roosa has made another significant contribution to the study of Indonesian political history after his groundbreaking 2006 monograph, *Pretext for Mass Murder*.

Scholars have only begun to study the anti-communist violence in Indonesia in detail after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998. Many of their works bring to light and, indeed, rely on interviews with victims and their families and those implicated in committing the violence. Roosa's earlier book investigated what was known as the 30 September Movement, a grouping of leftist military officers and soldiers whose kidnapping and killing of seven army officers in Jakarta on 30 September – 1 October 1965 were used by the army as a pretext for destroying the PKI and its associated mass organizations. Using newly available sources—namely, interviews and archival documents of the key protagonists—Roosa uncovered some pieces of the puzzle, such as the nature of the 30 September Movement and its relationship to the PKI's Special Bureau and party chairman D.N. Aidit.

Buried Histories focuses on the army's anti-communist operations led by Major General Soeharto. A key argument of the book is that the detention of hundreds of thousands of PKI members and sympathizers created a ready supply of victims for Indonesia's killing fields. To establish the evidence for this argument, the book first examines how the party, under Aidit, made some crucial errors, such as believing that it could influence the military by burrowing into the institution and working with politically friendly officers. This political line had fatal consequences, and the party leadership failed to anticipate the dangers posed by their foes in the army. The book then analyses how the army crafted and circulated propaganda to create panic and fear of the Left, which subsequently enabled the capture and detention of activists on a mass scale.

The next chapters examine the state's policies of dealing with the PKI and the balance of power in Central Java, Bali and South Sumatra from October 1965 to January 1966. The violence was prevented, limited or intensified, depending on the army and civilian leaders in each location and the relative strength of the PKI and rival parties such as the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI). Using archival and interview materials, Roosa shows convincingly that the involvement of the Army Paracommando Forces (Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat, RPKAD) was a crucial factor in intensifying the violence. Through this detailed approach, the book argues, therefore, that the massacres were not a foregone conclusion. He suggests, as other researchers have, that the violence should be seen as extending to 1968, with further army operations that year against PKI resistance in East Java.

The killings reorientated Indonesian society into one in which capital had the upper hand through the banning of trade unions and the wholesale transfer of assets from the victims and the banned leftist organizations to the state and certain private interests—takeovers that were legalized after the fact. In unearthing individual stories, Roosa shows that, while the victims were targeted primarily for their involvement in leftist organizations, certain material benefits that accrued to them from such involvement also became coveted

by rivals, who then collaborated with the army to wrest control of these possessions. Indeed, the chapters on Bali and South Sumatra are those that most clearly demonstrate the political economy of the killings, an aspect of the violence that remains underexplored by researchers. This book demonstrates that the question of how certain groups benefited materially from the anti-communist violence and the local dimensions of the massacres could reveal the national and international significance of these massacres and, possibly, why this history remains buried.

The book is well-written and deeply humanistic; the words of the interviewees included in the book make for a visceral reading experience. Roosa's discussion of the families of the victims in Bali, including his reconstruction of the massacre at Kapal, shows the impact of the anti-communist violence until today. By looking at the efforts of ordinary Indonesians to memorialize the violence, the book reminds us of the failures of successive Indonesian governments to address the serious crimes that brought the New Order regime to power.

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Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam. By Thy Phu. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2022. 265 pp.

In the United States, the war in Vietnam conjures up images of battlefields, brutality, suffering and the heroism of the American military. This overarching narrative is represented by iconic