



## The Memory Landscapes of “1965” in Semarang

Martijn Eickhoff, Donny Danardono, Tjahjono Rahardjo & Hotmauli Sidabalok

To cite this article: Martijn Eickhoff, Donny Danardono, Tjahjono Rahardjo & Hotmauli Sidabalok (2017) The Memory Landscapes of “1965” in Semarang, Journal of Genocide Research, 19:4, 530-550, DOI: [10.1080/14623528.2017.1393945](https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2017.1393945)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2017.1393945>



© 2017 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 22 Dec 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 238



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## The Memory Landscapes of “1965” in Semarang

Martijn Eickhoff<sup>a</sup>, Donny Danardono<sup>b</sup>, Tjahjono Rahardjo<sup>b</sup> and Hotmauli Sidabalok<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>NIOD, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; <sup>b</sup>Unika Soegijapranata, Semarang, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the formation of memory in relation to the mass violence of the years 1965/68 in Semarang. This port city offers a unique opportunity for studying both the violence of 1965/68 and its long-term effects from a local to a global level. Once nicknamed the “red city” and famous for its Chinese community, the events of “1965” deeply affected the city. Many (alleged) communists from Semarang were sent to prison camps in other parts of Indonesia, while many members of the Chinese community sought refuge abroad. As a result, the mass violence in Semarang continues to reverberate not only in the city, but also throughout and beyond Indonesia. The article is based on the results of two workshops in Semarang, during which a group of Indonesian students studied the memory landscapes of “1965” by combining oral history with site observations. The central question is how the memory of violence, shaped primarily by everyday interaction and communication, relates on the one hand to the urban space in which the violence largely took place, and on the other hand to the official state narratives that deliberately created memory gaps regarding this violence. We focus on three sites representative of different aspects of the mass violence of the years 1965/68 in Semarang: the Sarekat Islam building, the Mangkang mass grave and the Chinese Karang Turi school. Scrutinizing these three sites has taught us that people in Semarang make sense of “1965” through stories and activities that, while interacting with the official narratives, include the missing and the dead. Communism might have been “crushed” with success, but the Indonesian state clearly failed to eradicate the memory of state-supported anti-communist violence.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 February 2017  
Accepted 12 October 2017

### KEYWORDS

memory; Semarang;  
communism; Chinese; prison  
camps

## The Memory Landscapes of “1965” in Semarang

The year 1965 marks a crucial turning point in Indonesian history. The kidnapping and killing of a group of generals by the left-wing 30 September Movement on 1 October was followed by waves of mass violence directed against Indonesian communists. About half a million people were killed, and perhaps another million and a half were detained without trial.<sup>1</sup> The violence paved the way for a military regime headed by President Suharto, known as the New Order. In the official Indonesian history writing of this era,

**CONTACT** Martijn Eickhoff  [m.eickhoff@niod.knaw.nl](mailto:m.eickhoff@niod.knaw.nl)  NIOD, Herengracht 380, Amsterdam, CH 1016, The Netherlands

© 2017 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group  
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

the actual acts of violence during 1965 and the following years, alongside the role played in them by the military, generally went unmentioned. When these topics were touched upon, it was only in passing and in euphemistic terms such as “crushing communism.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite the regime change of 1998—or the fall of Suharto—historical culture in Indonesia is still strongly conditioned by the official state perspectives on “1965” developed during the New Order era.<sup>3</sup> However, although such narratives were codified by official institutions, memories of these events in Indonesian society are not monolithic. An intriguing example in this respect is the nostalgic 2007 history book, *Semarang City, a Glance into the Past*, by Jongkie Tio. This book contains a brief and richly illustrated overview of the history of the city of Semarang in colonial and post-colonial times. The author uses the word “incident” to refer to 1965, and states: “many factories and buildings were burned, bringing the economy into recession.”<sup>4</sup> The reduction of the mass violence to an incident could be understood as a reference to the official state narrative. However, stating that the incident led to an economic recession in itself opposes this same narrative, which tends to stress the economic malaise of the pre-New Order years. What is more, on the same page, we see a picture showing a Chinese shop (actually owned by the author’s father<sup>5</sup>) in flames. The sentence is, therefore, above all a subtle way of writing anti-Chinese violence, which officially remains unacknowledged, into the history of the city of Semarang. Yet other types of violence and other victim groups still go unmentioned.

This article is dedicated to the formation of memory in relation to the mass violence of the years 1965/68 in Semarang. We focus on the broad spectrum of violence that, alongside harassment, intimidation, incarceration, sexual crimes and killing, also includes the damaging, looting and confiscation of property and the defaming, discrediting, dehumanizing and displacing of (groups of) people. It is generally acknowledged that these acts of violence have a taboo status in Indonesian society and as a result are understudied, especially on the local level. The relevant archival materials are often difficult to trace or inaccessible to historians. This article, with its focus on memory, aims to help break this deadlock. The central question is how memory, shaped primarily by everyday interaction and communication, relates on the one hand to the urban space in which the violence largely took place, and on the other to the official state narratives that deliberately aimed to create memory gaps regarding this violence.<sup>6</sup> Following Baskara T. Wardaya SJ, we see memory as a relational phenomenon in which narratives—through time and space—dynamically connect individuals, groups/organizations and events.<sup>7</sup> Inspired by Michael Rothberg, we also understand memory as a multidirectional phenomenon that, despite moments of competition, is primarily the outcome of dialogical exchanges of narratives.<sup>8</sup> The concept of “memory landscapes” connects these approaches to the formation of memory (as relational and multidirectional) and emphasizes the importance of the spatial dimension. This article will show that in these landscapes, sites play a crucial role in evoking, shaping, communicating or controlling memories.

In this article, we discuss some of the results of two workshops in Semarang, during which a group of Indonesian students studied the memory landscapes of “1965” by combining oral history (interviews with “survivors”<sup>9</sup> and former bystanders) with site observations (how did sites transform and what do people—in particular contemporary “users”—remember, do or refrain from doing there?). The workshops formed part of a collaborative project between the Department of Environmental and Urban Studies of the Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata (UNIKA) in Semarang, NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust

and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam, Radboud University Nijmegen (RUN) and software development firm LAB1100.<sup>10</sup> The article also includes some additional interviews with former Chinese inhabitants of Semarang who migrated to the Netherlands in the aftermath of the 1965/68 violence.<sup>11</sup>

As exploring memory landscapes implies co-creating them, a constant reflection on the research process, its social impact and our own position in it was an integral part of the project. In the context of the state-enforced amnesia with respect to the mass violence of 1965/68, we expected a city—as a spatial unit—to be an excellent starting point for exploring memory landscapes. During the workshops, we used twenty interviews to create a digital research environment that soon contained 102 organizations, twenty-four events, fifty-seven persons and thirty-six sites. These can be regarded as nodal points in the memory landscapes of “1965.” In particular, it was the sites, or the spatial nodal points, that enabled us to “enter” the memory landscapes of “1965” and, although the information was generally fragmented, to start understanding the internal connections between the different nodal points in relation to official state narratives. The sites allowed us to trace “trajectories” of mass violence: from the displacement of people from their homes, to their imprisonment, exploitation, torture, killing and/or burial, and their migration as refugees or survivors.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the related infrastructure produced an insight into local “coalitions of violence,” which saw the—often temporary—participation of a variety of social groups.<sup>13</sup> To put it another way, soon after our project started, Semarang turned out to be geographically marked by an officially forgotten network of places of (organized) mob violence, (temporary) detention, interrogation and mass burial connected not just to many comparable sites in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia, but, via transnational Chinese diaspora networks, to other parts of the world including the Netherlands.<sup>14</sup> Some of the sites involved in Semarang have undergone major transformations since 1965/68, whereas others, for various reasons, seem to have been left untouched for decades.<sup>15</sup> After its inclusion in our project, one site—the Mangkang mass grave—became the object of more intense public and media interest and was turned, through rituals and material interventions, into a site of reconciliation by human rights activists.

For this article, we have selected three spatial nodal points in the memory landscapes of “1965” that represent different aspects of the mass violence of the years 1965/68 in Semarang: the Sarekat Islam building that, from its construction in 1919, was a centre for political, educational and religious activities; the Mangkang mass grave near Semarang, where, according to local lore, between twenty-four and forty bodies of murdered communists are buried; and the Chinese Karang Turi school that became the object of mob violence in 1965 and was subsequently turned into a temporary prison named Gaok camp. In 1966, this property was partly restituted to the school board and could again be used for teaching.<sup>16</sup> The sites were mentioned in the interviews with survivors, while contemporary users also told stories about them. Altogether, these help us to increase our understanding of the way in which, in contemporary Semarang, “1965”—via a network of connected and interacting narratives and practices—continues to reverberate through everyday life. The memory landscapes they co-constitute are, to quote Katharina Schramm, no fixed “memory container,”<sup>17</sup> but something intrinsically messy that is thus continuously experienced, contested, worked and re-worked by people, including ourselves as researchers.<sup>18</sup> As such, the three chosen sites also allow us to trace and analyse the mechanisms of the Indonesian state’s official narrative as an implicit model of memory, which aims to influence what people can recall or do.<sup>19</sup>

We start this article with a brief historical overview of the mass violence that took place in Indonesia during what has often been called the “tragedy of 1965,”<sup>20</sup> and introduce some important academic discussions and developments in Indonesian civil society. We then turn to the city of Semarang and describe the course of events there in the years 1965/66. Next, we elaborate on the three selected spatial nodal points in the memory landscapes of “1965.” Finally, we discuss the role memory landscapes do or can play in grassroots-level reconciliation initiatives.

## Indonesia in 1965

The anti-communist violence, or more accurately anti-leftist violence, started in 1965 after a group of army officers and a few leaders of the communist party (PKI) abducted and murdered six generals and a lieutenant of the Indonesian army. By doing so, this group claimed to have prevented a military coup against President Sukarno. Soon afterwards, General Suharto took control of the army and, aided by a pervasive anti-communist propaganda campaign, blamed the killing of the generals on the PKI and its mass organizations.<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, a terror campaign targeted not only communists but also adherents of President Sukarno, leftists in general, members of peasant groups and labour unions and adherents of indigenous (non-Islamic) religions.<sup>22</sup> Although the mass killings were not directed against the ethnic Chinese per se, they were also targeted.<sup>23</sup> At least half a million people were killed during these campaigns. The violence lasted until 1968 and paved the way for the “New Order,” under which a million and a half people were detained without trial while their relatives lost their civil rights.<sup>24</sup>

Since the collapse of Suharto’s dictatorship in 1998, the new democratic government has brought about considerable change in Indonesian society. Nonetheless, with regard to “1965,” impunity continues to rule and there has been no successful central effort to organize transitional justice.<sup>25</sup> Those responsible for the “Indonesian massacres”—as they are termed by Robert Cribb<sup>26</sup>—were not prosecuted and their victims were not rehabilitated. Yet there have been small but significant signs of change. In the years following his election in 1999, President Abdurrahman Wahid publicly apologized for the killings of alleged communists committed by members of the Islamic mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama.<sup>27</sup> Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local grassroots organizations began collecting interviews, and survivors started publishing memoirs and organizing themselves into semi-official bodies.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the violence of “1965” has also become the subject of representation in popular culture and media. However, anti-communist paramilitary groups occasionally disrupt public gatherings—like the screenings of documentaries on 1965—in a violent way, protesting against the rehabilitation of survivors and their families.<sup>29</sup>

Notwithstanding these developments, the official narrative of the “events of 1965,” which portrayed the mass violence as a necessary response to communist treachery, has remained almost uncontested in post-New Order society.<sup>30</sup> In this narrative, the actual acts of killing are only mentioned or shown explicitly when committed by the communists, such as when they supposedly tortured the generals.<sup>31</sup> The best-known constituents of this narrative are the museum and monument at Lubang Buaya and the movie *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (Treachery of G30S/PKI), all three commemorating the “communist” violence perpetrated against the generals.<sup>32</sup> Roosa’s study of three different versions

of the official narrative—the press reports of late 1965 and early 1966 in the army newspapers *Berita Yudha* and *Angkatan Bersendjata*, the writings of Nugroho Notosusanto in his capacity as director of the Armed Forces History Centre dating from the years 1965 to 1975, and the so-called “White Book” published by the state secretariat’s office in 1994—has shown that the actual killings of communists generally go unmentioned. It is stated that the communist party was “destroyed” and that this was done “down to its roots,” but these authors refrain from telling the reader in what manner the party was “destroyed”; when they do provide such information, they contradict themselves. Roosa, therefore, speaks not only of different silences but also of connected claims to objective truth that have become tangled up.<sup>33</sup>

The official silencing also seems to have affected international academia, or at least scholars of mass violence and genocide. Despite their scope and significance, academics have only recently started to study the massacres in Indonesia of this period in a systematic or comparative way.<sup>34</sup> In 2014, the Dutch sociologist and specialist in genocide studies, Abram de Swaan, though without ignoring the role of the military, characterized the extreme violence as a *mega pogrom*, given its (seemingly) spontaneous and participatory character.<sup>35</sup> Other scholars, like Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, stress the role of the military, their specialized militias, detention centres, staging of public “spontaneity” and the role of political and religious groups in the mass violence.<sup>36</sup> These two perspectives reflect opposing political positions that, as such, date to the early 1970s: the leftist-liberal version generally emphasizes the manipulation of the masses by the military, whereas right-wing interpretations stress the role of the people themselves, who were outraged and wanted to take revenge against the PKI for its treasonous coup attempt and did not understand why President Sukarno did not ban the party.<sup>37</sup> In order to move past these two, partly overlapping perspectives, in 2010 Christian Gerlach introduced the concept of “coalitions for violence,” which involved a variety of social groups and institutions, and varying political visions for the future of Indonesia.<sup>38</sup> This concept allows us to develop a more balanced understanding of the local “agents” of the violence and how it started and evolved in the different parts of Bali, Java, Sumatra and the outer islands.

## Communism and “1965” in Semarang and Indonesia

Semarang is a port city on the northern coast of the island of Java. It is the capital and largest city of the province of Central Java. In late colonial times, the city—then part of the Dutch East Indies—was known as a modern place. It hosted a multi-ethnic community—for example, there was a large Chinese minority living in the town—and had a vibrant cultural, religious and political life.<sup>39</sup> Famous in this respect is the meeting in 1920 during which the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV/Indies Social Democratic Association) changed its name to Perserikatan Kommunist di India (PKI); all the board members of this new communist party were inhabitants of Semarang.<sup>40</sup> Because of this event, Semarang has since been nicknamed *kota merah* (red city).

The ISDV, and later the PKI, succeeded in becoming strongly embedded in society. According to Robert Cribb, the party was the first to acknowledge that the best way to recruit the peasantry to communism was through nationalist organizations. For example, since 1916, ISDV members had been successfully infiltrating the first nationalist

mass organization in Indonesia, the Sarekat Islam (SI).<sup>41</sup> This organization, founded in Surakarta in 1911 as an Islamic commercial union consisting of many local branches, soon became a religious and political force to be reckoned with.<sup>42</sup> For a long time it had been impossible to draw a sharp distinction between nationalists, Muslims and communists/Marxists in Indonesian society. People often belonged simultaneously to different parties and organizations.<sup>43</sup> However, after the introduction of party discipline following the foundation of the PKI in 1920, political demarcations became more fixed.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, members of Sarekat Islam were still permitted to belong to other political parties. The different groups within Sarekat Islam were designated as the *Sarekat Islam putih* (the Islamist “white” section) and *Sarekat Islam merah* (the Communist “red” section).<sup>45</sup> In 1921, in Semarang, a Sarekat Islam school was founded in the meeting room of the Sarekat Islam building constructed in 1919.<sup>46</sup> The school—and other branches in Salatiga and Bandung—developed an Islamic curriculum that combined anti-colonialism with anti-capitalism. As such, it is the example *par excellence* of the social and intellectual embeddedness of communism during this era.

In the early 1920s, in colonial circles, there was considerable fear of communist demonstrations or strikes.<sup>47</sup> As a result of the restrictive colonial policies directed against communism, Sarekat Islam schools like that in Semarang were soon closed.<sup>48</sup> At the end of 1926 and the beginning of 1927, there were uprisings in Java and West Sumatra. In Semarang, however, there was no rebellion, because the local authorities had been informed of the plans in advance.<sup>49</sup> The Dutch colonial authorities adopted severe repressive measures. Thirteen thousand people were arrested; some were executed for their participation in murders and 5,000 others were placed under preventive detention. Eventually, 4,500 people were found guilty and imprisoned, while 1,300 were exiled to New Guinea.<sup>50</sup> From then onwards, many Indonesian nationalists continued to adhere to anti-colonialism, but they connected it less with the international framework of Islam or communism.<sup>51</sup> In the 1930s, the nationalist movement was nonetheless suppressed by the colonial state.<sup>52</sup>

After the decolonization of Indonesia—Sukarno proclaimed independence in 1945 and the Dutch, after a colonial war, formally recognized Indonesian independence in 1949—the communist party gained a new and powerful position in society. During the Indonesian revolution, this position was complicated by the fear of leading nationalists that the revolution might fall into the hands of the PKI; likewise, communists believed that the nationalists would never share power with them unless faced with the threat (or the use) of force.<sup>53</sup> After PKI troops took over the city of Madiun (Java) in 1948, the tensions escalated into a genuine violent conflict.<sup>54</sup> For Sukarno and the republican government, this Madiun uprising was a “stab in the back” while they were fighting the Dutch. After thirteen days, the republican troops managed to seize the city; prominent PKI leaders were arrested and some were executed.<sup>55</sup> For the United States, this so-called “Madiun affair”—the communist uprising and its repression by republican troops—was evidence that Sukarno was a reliable ally against the communist threat.<sup>56</sup> However, the PKI was not formally banned and after the Dutch started their second “Police Action” in 1948, members of the PKI were invited to join the fighting again and consequently rehabilitated.<sup>57</sup> In the 1950s, under Dipa Nusantara Aidit’s leadership, the PKI successfully began to build up a mass base in Indonesian society. It promoted a national front that aimed to free Indonesia from international “economic colonialism” and the influence of the country’s feudal elites.<sup>58</sup>

In the former heart of the colonial administration in Semarang, the Tugu Muda monument, inaugurated in 1953 by Sukarno, commemorates the Indonesian revolution and some events that took place in Semarang in 1945. In nationalist fashion, it specifically commemorates the five-day battle from 14–19 October 1945 in Semarang between “the Indonesian youth” (young Indonesian freedom fighters) and a Japanese battalion, led by Major Kido.<sup>59</sup> The monument stresses Indonesian unity and does not mention the specific role and position of the communists.<sup>60</sup> As such, it is very much in keeping with the first version of the *Pancasila* ideology, developed by Sukarno in 1945. He introduced this concept during a speech, thenceforth known as *Lahirnya Pancasila* (the birth of Pancasila). An independent Indonesia would be neither an Islamic nor a secular state, but a Pancasila state. According to Sukarno, Pancasila—literally meaning five pillars—comprised five leading principles: Indonesian nationalism, internationalism/humanitarianism, democracy, social welfare and monotheism.<sup>61</sup> Yet Robert Cribb and Colin Brown state that the Pancasila was created as a “non-ideology,” a device that aimed “to suspend the conflict between deeply antagonistic ideologies.”<sup>62</sup>

Nonetheless, ideological conflicts continued to exist in Indonesian society. From 1957—during the so-called era of guided democracy—President Sukarno therefore developed the *Nasakom* ideology, an acronym for *nasionalisme* (nationalism), *agama* (religion) and *komunisme* (communism).<sup>63</sup> It aimed to balance—or appease—the three main factions in Indonesian politics: the (nationalist) army, Islamic groups and the communists. It not only reflected the ideals Sukarno had developed in the 1920s and early 1930s, but also helped to reduce the power of the Indonesian army.<sup>64</sup> It was in this political context that the PKI developed into the world’s largest non-ruling communist party, with 3.5 million members. More than fifteen million people were members of affiliated organizations, such as BTI (Barisan Tani Indonesia/Indonesian Peasants’ Front), SOBSI (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia/All-Indonesian Labour Union), the Pemuda Rakjat (People’s Youth) and Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia/Indonesian Women’s Movement).<sup>65</sup>

Before 1965, the communist party was present in the public space of Semarang in many ways. There was, for example, a building called Gedung Rakyat Indonesia Semarang (GRIS/Building of the Indonesian People in Semarang),<sup>66</sup> where communist cultural activities took place, while communist organizations were based in the Sarekat Islam building. In 1965, Semarang, like other cities in Central Java, witnessed some violent events related to the coup in Jakarta. The day after 30 September, Colonel Suherman, the provincial chief of army intelligence in Semarang, proclaimed himself commander of the rebel troops in Semarang. With their help, he occupied the city’s radio station.<sup>67</sup> However, Semarang was the first city to fall. When Suherman’s troops were informed of the failure of the coup in Jakarta, the authority of their leader dwindled rapidly. On the morning of 2 October, Semarang was re-occupied by loyalist troops without any violence.<sup>68</sup> However, two weeks later, on 17 October, the RPKAD (Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat/Army Para-Commando Regiment) landed in Semarang, arresting 1,000 leftists that same evening, and started moving its troops from there to other parts of Java, initiating violence. Three days later in Semarang, mobs started to attack Chinese-owned properties, shops and PKI offices.<sup>69</sup> During the following months, the PKI was “crushed”—to use official post-1965 New Order language—and in 1966 the party was officially banned. In Semarang and its vicinity, (temporary) detention centres were set up and

used next to existing prisons. Well-known detention sites included the Gaok camp (in the former Karang Turi school), the Karimata camp, the Plantungan camp, the Ambarawa prison, the Mlaten prison and the Bulu prison.<sup>70</sup> A private house in Jalan dr. Tjipto was also used as an interrogation centre.<sup>71</sup>

Many of the people arrested—when they survived the killings—remained in prison until the mid to late 1970s. During those years, the pluralist Pancasila ideology, originally developed to unite different groups in Indonesian society, started to play a different role. In 1974, Suharto established a committee to redefine Pancasila, which became the sole, almost sacred guiding principle for all social and political activities in Indonesia; due to its repressive nature, it ironically became a tool for the ideological re-education of imprisoned communists.<sup>72</sup> Still, even after their release, former political prisoners continued to be subjected to a range of restrictions, such as the withdrawal of the right to vote or to run for political office; they were also often obliged to report to local authorities.<sup>73</sup>

In the historical department of the city museum of Semarang—the Museum Ronggowarsito—is a collection of dioramas dating from the New Order era that relate to the twentieth-century history of Semarang and Central Java. Remarkably, there is only one diorama depicting Semarang in 1965. Visitors see an anti-communist demonstration on the market square of Pasar Johar in the centre of Semarang, next to Masjid Kauman, the old city mosque. The diorama shows a demonstrating mob demanding that Sukarno take revenge on the PKI for its treasonous coup attempt. One protester carries a banner with the text “selamatkan pantjasila. UUD ‘45” (Save Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945), explicitly referring to the Pancasila ideology of 1945. Furthermore, we see two soldiers wearing red berets, whose presence and attitude suggest that the RPKAD did control the masses and prevent the demonstration from escalating into violence. It is a clear example of the phenomenon described by Roosa, whereby official depictions of the events of 1965 downplay the role of the military and fail to show the violence directed against the (alleged) communists.

### Three Spatial Nodal Points in the Memory Landscapes of “1965” in Semarang

“Violence leaves traces,” according to Katharina Schramm.<sup>74</sup> Our memory landscapes workshops in Semarang, indeed, soon showed us that beneath the surface of society the violence of “1965” was omnipresent, physically in various locations and in related stories and practices. This section focuses on three spatial nodal points in the memory landscapes of “1965” in Semarang: the Sarekat Islam building;<sup>75</sup> the Mangkang mass grave; and the Karang Turi school that became the object of mob violence and that was subsequently turned into a temporary prison named Gaok camp.<sup>76</sup>

According to one of the interviewees, the Sarekat Islam building was used from 1955 to 1965 by the communist-affiliated workers’ union SOBSI. The interviewee had actually worked there himself. On site, our team interviewed a man who told us that his father saved the building from being burned down by a mob by stressing that the fire would spread to the whole neighbourhood and that they would be better off using the building for Islamic activities. However, they did burn all the communist books and documents and items stored in the building. According to him, before 1965 the local people had no problems with PKI organizations. After 1965, the residents were afraid of the government and

the military and therefore attacked the Sarekat Islam building. Our informant claimed that about forty per cent of the people in the neighbourhood were communists, but only a few of them stayed after 1965. "I do not know where the others went," he told us.

Remarkably, in this story the confiscation of the Sarekat Islam building and the burning of books and documents is remembered solely as a means of saving the building. Equally noteworthy is the mention of neighbours who disappeared, as it reflects the gaps in the official narratives about 1965, which speak only in an abstract way of the "crushing" of communism "down to its roots." The history of the building during the Sukarno years, moreover, exemplifies how communism was integrated into Indonesian society on the basis of the Nasakom ideology, which had its roots in anti-colonial traditions dating to the 1920s.

The gaps in the official narratives about 1965 also explain the claim often made by our informants that there are no mass graves in the city. However, one of our interviewees, a former communist who used to work in the Sarekat Islam building, did at one point mention a mass grave at a place near Semarang named Mangkang, which he sometimes visited. We followed his directions and the mass grave turned out to be located on a timber plantation, accessible along a dirt road. The area is owned by Perhutani, the state forest management agency, an indirect indication that the violence was state-sanctioned. At the location, the mass grave is marked by stones that indicate the position (the head and the feet) of the bodies. In the nearby village, people told us detailed stories of a mass shooting almost fifty years previously. Some villagers are afraid of the site. Sometimes they hear screaming voices at night that they find frightening, but they are also afraid of being linked with communism. The first time our team went to the site, in 2013, we met a special person—the *juru kunci* (key holder)—who escorted visitors to the site. This key holder told us that forty men of unknown identity were buried there alongside one woman, who was a *dalang* (shadow puppeteer or *wayang* player). According to the key holder, bullets could not kill her because of her magic powers, so she was buried alive. The victims were not from the village, but were brought from the city of Kendal by truck. Nowadays, people bring offerings (like lipstick, incense, a small mirror or a comb) to the *dalang's* grave to ask her for good luck, or more specifically for a lottery win. On our second visit to the site, in 2014, we spoke to a man who lived with his family virtually next door to the mass grave. He spoke of twenty-four victims and told us that he himself had marked the grave with stones to indicate the position of the bodies (head and feet); this enabled the employees of Perhutani to avoid the place. He was a medium who was able to speak with the victims at a certain time of day, early in the morning. He had been given to understand that they were killed by the so-called "red berets," or RPKAD. He also knew the name of the *dalang* woman: Ibu Muntia. She had been the mistress of the Bupati (regent) of Kendal, whose wife was so jealous that she told the police that the *dalang* was a communist—this was not true, but even alleged membership of the PKI was enough to justify her killing.<sup>77</sup>

The story about Ibu Muntia, combined with the practices at the location, demonstrates that the site of the mass grave is regarded as a spiritual place by many villagers. As such, it relates to *kejawen*, a Javanese religious tradition that consists of an amalgam of beliefs and practices influenced by animism, Buddhism and Hinduism, with an admixture of Islam.<sup>78</sup> It is traditionally practised by the so-called *abangan*, those Javanese who do not live fully in accordance with formal Islamic religious rules.<sup>79</sup> The years before 1965 had seen

increasing competition between more devout Muslims and *abangan* followers of the PKI. From 1963 onwards, direct land reform action by PKI followers in Central and East Java triggered violent responses from the Nahdlatul Ulama: political and class differences between landowners and the landless, often PKI followers, were thus intensified by conflicts over religious identity. One consequence was that, during the killings of 1965/66, the *abangan* also became a target group. Yet the demarcations were never fixed as there were also *abangan* among the perpetrators.<sup>80</sup> In any case, since 1965 *kejawen* has obviously played a pivotal role in reintegrating the site of terror into the spatial setting in which the villagers live and work; as such, it even attracts people from other places.

The story about Ibu Muntia also has another dimension. On the one hand, it partially adopts the official narrative on the need to “crush” communism. The *dalang* was killed, though according to the story she was innocent, not a communist but the victim of a love intrigue. The story thus seems to imply that the communist victims were indeed guilty. The killing of Ibu Muntia, on the other hand, was not exceptional. With regard to Central Java, Gerlach claims that as many as eighty per cent of *dalangs* were killed; however, this is an overestimate not based on reliable information.<sup>81</sup> It is important that the PKI, in the first place, was portrayed on a metaphorical level as the “shadow puppeteer” behind the 30 September Movement.<sup>82</sup> On a local level, the *dalangs* themselves were also depicted as artists who promoted communism. This might in some cases have been true, since *dalangs* were traditionally expected to comment on contemporary affairs and problems of concern to their audience.<sup>83</sup> But there was also an ambivalence among the communists, who sometimes regarded *wayang* as an expression of Javanese feudal values, which Indonesian communism aimed to disrupt.<sup>84</sup>

Given her involvement in adultery, the story of Ibu Muntia also relates indirectly to what has recently been described as the “crisis of the *sinden*” in West Java. In *wayang* performances of the late 1950s and early 1960s in that region of Java, the popularity of the female singer, or *sinden*, among audiences overshadowed that of the male puppeteer.<sup>85</sup> The *sinden*, with her singing and dancing, contested male authority and power and was thus a channel for social change. As such, she was often seen as a danger to society and after 1965 became an integral part of the anti-communist discourse of the New Order.<sup>86</sup> The image of a *sinden* participating in wild, uncontrolled dance parties, moreover, reflects the image developed by the New Order regime of the Gerwani, who, according to their anti-communist propaganda, participated in sexual perversions during the night of 30 September.<sup>87</sup> Against this background, the story of Ibu Muntia, who was not a communist but had an affair with the Bupati of Kendal and was buried alive because her magic powers resisted the bullets of her killers, relates in the first place to the victimhood and agency of local *abangan* and their *kejawen* traditions, also targeted by the so-called anti-communist violence. As such, it reveals that the New Order narrative of communism presumed the existence of clear demarcations in society that were in fact fictional.

The third spatial nodal point we discuss in this article is a Chinese school, named Karang Turi. This school became the object of mob violence on 20 October 1965 and was subsequently turned into a temporary prison, named Gaok camp, where one of our interviewees was interned temporarily. Today, the violence continues to reverberate at the location in everyday forms of play and fascination with these events; we were told by a parent of a former pupil that the school’s Chinese pupils habitually tell each other horror stories about that time. For example, when they score a slam dunk when playing

basketball, the ball may turn into the head of a beheaded Chinese. Generally, for the Chinese inhabitants of Semarang whom we interviewed, discussing violence did not come easily; they are accustomed to avoiding the topic. There are many, often painful, complexities and paradoxes at work here. Anti-Chinese discrimination and violence, whose roots go back to colonial times, had already intensified during the Sukarno era. Furthermore, the Chinese community was internally divided. Although it is difficult to establish fixed lines of demarcation, we can say that, at the time, Chinese identities in Indonesia were above all divided along the lines of citizenship, which was indicative of certain political and cultural orientations. After the 1958 Citizenship Act, only fully implemented in 1960, there were two main categories of Chinese in Indonesia: Indonesian citizens and foreign citizens (the latter category was further subdivided into citizens of the People's Republic of China and stateless Chinese).<sup>88</sup> The violence of "1965" led to new legislation that suppressed any expression of Chinese ethnic, cultural and religious identities and, among other things, forced the Chinese to adopt "Indonesian" names.<sup>89</sup> In 1965, some Chinese actively participated, or were forced to participate, in the violence against other Chinese.<sup>90</sup>

On the other hand, the Indonesian Chinese were also actively involved in self-defence. Mr Bing Oei, for example, now living in the Netherlands and fourteen years old at the time, volunteered to guard the Karang Turi school in Semarang.<sup>91</sup> When, on 20 October 1965, the mob—who, according to Bing Oei, mostly wore black clothes and red kerchiefs and were members of the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia)—came to attack the school, he left the site as he was unable to do anything. Because of the tense situation, the school had already been closed. Soon afterwards, it was turned into the detention camp known as Gaok camp, where even the head of the school, Oei Boen Kong, who taught German and history, was interned (after being arrested in his home and forced to walk to the former school with his hands up).<sup>92</sup> He was interned for his connections to Baperki, the leftist cultural-political organization, which advocated the integration of the ethnic Chinese as a separate identity in the Indonesian nation.<sup>93</sup> Baperki was generally believed to be an accomplice of the PKI and "their" failed coup.<sup>94</sup> As a result, in the first month after the coup attempt in Java, the schools affiliated with Baperki were taken over by the military.<sup>95</sup> Yet the specific course of events in Semarang, in which a Chinese elite school—founded in 1929, with deep roots in the so-called Peranakan community of Semarang and not known for its communist sympathies—became a target of mass violence, is an indication that, at the time, the accusation of being a communist, or a Baperki member, was actually a pretext for ethnic violence against the Chinese. Even more remarkable is the fact that another famous Chinese school in Semarang, the Chinese-English School (CES or Hwa-Ing Chung Shie Shiao) founded in 1916, which actually did have leanings towards the China of Mao, was at least temporarily spared. Yet on 21 April 1966, after the transfer of power to Suharto on 11 March, this school was stormed as well.<sup>96</sup> Siswa Santoso, now living in the Netherlands and a pupil at the time, was forced to flee the school. He remembers the yelling from outside and the fear of his teacher, who led him and his classmates out, when passing military figures from the RPKAD with Sten guns. His teacher continued her lessons privately at home, but later disappeared. He still has no information about her whereabouts.<sup>97</sup>

The gap of half a year between the storming by a mob of two different Chinese schools—and the initial exemption from the violence of a school with links to Maoism—is a strong

indication that this supposedly spontaneous mob violence was staged, especially since our informant Siswa Santoso also mentions the presence of the military. At one of the other spatial nodal points discussed in this section—the Mangkang mass grave—the military is also referenced. The exploration of memory landscapes does not lead to a precise identification of the people or groups who joined the coalitions of violence that were initiating and committing violence in Semarang, as memories are dynamic and might have been influenced by later information. However, it is clear that, as far as our informants are concerned, the role of the army is beyond dispute, especially since the violence started after the arrival of the RPKAD in Semarang on 17 October. A more accurate identification of the “partners” in the coalition of violence in Semarang, and more particularly of the hierarchies involved, remains an important pending research question. This is even more true, as we shall see in the next section of this article, because, although there is a growing social space for victims and their relatives in Semarang, this is happening without the identification of former perpetrators. One thing, at least, is clear: the depiction in the diorama of the spontaneous anti-communist “coalition” between the people and the army at Pasar Johar in the Museum Ronggowarsito is an obscurantist historical construct.

### **Making Sense of “1965” in Semarang**

In the Indonesian debate over reconciliation with regard to the killings of “1965,” one central question is whether the continued efficacy of New Order rhetoric is why many Indonesians are unwilling or unable to participate in the necessary dialogue between positions. Or do Indonesians have little or no knowledge of the past because they simply see no reason why they should?<sup>98</sup> For many of the students who participated in our two memory landscape workshops, general curiosity played a central role. Most had never spoken to a communist before and wondered whether it was legitimate to ask somebody: “Were you a communist?” Some had a special interest because of the activities of family members who belonged to the military or the presence of a mass grave in the neighbourhood in which they grew up. Our interviewees had different motivations for participating in the project. One stressed that talking to the younger generation worked like *obat* (medicine) for her. Another participant had more ambitious aims that could be described as “thick reconciliation” and that, alongside forgiveness, empathy and dialogue, particularly emphasizes truth and justice.<sup>99</sup> For him, it was clear that reconciliation will only be possible if the Indonesian government rehabilitates the PKI and former political prisoners (by acknowledging that they are not guilty of what happened on 30 September 1965), restores the rights of political prisoners (the government should return the houses, land and other properties that were confiscated) and compensates them for what they have suffered. For him, the workshop was a small, but important, first step.

Reconstructing the memory landscapes of Semarang in “1965” cannot be disconnected from monitoring the reactions, discussions and events that accompany and/or are evoked by our project. During our project, the restoration of the ruined Sarekat Islam building began. Those responsible for the restoration describe the building as important for the history of Semarang, but remarkably fail to publicly mention its former use by communists.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, our project found support among members of the Chinese community in Semarang and those who had left Semarang and migrated to the Netherlands.

Those who personally experienced the violence generally endorsed our conclusion that the ransacking of Chinese schools that functioned as places where Chinese-Indonesian traditions were transmitted was an attack on the identity of the Chinese of Semarang, in all their diversity. Again, though, talking about it is not easy, as it seems to place them in the position of social outsiders. They habitually describe the violence itself as a recurrent, terrifying and “strange”—in the sense of perplexing—phenomenon. One of my informants told me: “It is like a family feud: afterwards, you prefer not to talk about it anymore.” She also pointed to the motto of the Karang Turi school: *Melangkah ke Depan* (Take a step forward). For example, when in 1975 the head of the school, Oei Boen Kong, was invited after his release to visit the Netherlands by his former pupils who had migrated there, they did not discuss “1965” with him.<sup>101</sup>

It was above all the Mangkang mass grave—after being identified by and integrated into the memory landscapes project—that became the object of increased public attention, eventually even leading to a public commemoration of the victims.<sup>102</sup> In November 2014, the site was featured in a news item by the national television station Trans 7.<sup>103</sup> That same month, it was also mentioned in the *Jakarta Post*. In the article in this newspaper, the coordinator of the Semarang Historical Activists’ Community (KPS), Rukardi Achmadi, stressed the importance of reburying the bodies, while ignoring the New Order perspective on communists as atheists: “A decent reburial includes matters like prayers by religious leaders.”<sup>104</sup> This suggestion can be understood as a first intercession in the punishment of those buried anonymously in the mass grave. Denying people proper funerals is, after all, a ritual of negation. Muslims require corpses to be ritually purified. On top of this, a mass grave denies families the ability to mourn appropriately, for example by making a pilgrimage to a grave before and after Ramadan.<sup>105</sup> Mass graves, like that in Mangkang, are also crime scenes that contain material evidence of mass murder and as such are a threat to former perpetrators and their supporters.<sup>106</sup> Yet with their focus on bodies and decent reburials—without mentioning the former perpetrators—the members of the Semarang Historical Activists’ Community seemed less interested in this aspect of the site.<sup>107</sup> Reburial should be a humanitarian and not a political or ideological undertaking, according to a member of this community.<sup>108</sup> Yet things turned out differently.<sup>109</sup> After some of the victims were identified thanks to interviews with eyewitnesses in the following months, a small ceremony took place at the mass grave.<sup>110</sup> On 1 June 2015—Pancasila Day—a small gravestone with eight names was erected. The victims were thus “released” from enforced public amnesia and provided with an identity with the help of the nationalist Pancasila ideology. This procedure echoes the role played by this ideology in the release of “communist” prisoners in the 1970s. The ceremony, which made it into an item on CNN Indonesia, was attended by family members of the victims, students, religious leaders and local officials.<sup>111</sup> The gravestone is co-signed by the government, making it the first officially recognized commemorative marker of 1965, and the forestry department has reclassified this section of forest as a grave. The stones that unofficially marked the bodies in the mass grave have been kept in place. The foreman of the historical committee, Yunantyo Adi S., explained that talking—with military officers, city administrators, militia groups, religious leaders (Islamic, Catholic and Protestant) and local people—had created the social space needed to erect this gravestone.<sup>112</sup>

Marking the mass grave without excavating and reburying the bodies and without mentioning the perpetrators is obviously an acceptable, post-New Order way of relating

to “1965” for all parties involved. At the same time, it is, paradoxically, strongly connected to the New Order perspective on “1965” as inter-civilian mass violence in which the role of the military was sufficiently unimportant to be ignored. Yet it should also be noted that, fifteen years earlier, the mass grave excavation in Wonosobo showed that other groups in society can perceive reburials as offensive.<sup>113</sup> The (doubly) marked mass grave in Mangkang is, therefore, a successful example of “thin reconciliation” that aims at a degree of peaceful co-existence, social interaction and cooperation.<sup>114</sup>

The Sarekat Islam building, the Mangkang mass grave and the Karang Turi school are clearly situated in the gaps in the codified history of “1965,” and this is even more true of the related missing neighbours, buried bodies and Chinese who disappeared, were imprisoned or migrated. Scrutinizing these three spatial nodal points in the memory landscapes of “1965” in Semarang has taught us that sites play a crucial role in evoking, shaping and communicating memories. People make sense of “1965” through site-related stories and practices that, while interacting with the official narrative, include the missing and the dead. Communism might have been successfully “crushed,” but the Indonesian state has clearly failed to eradicate the memory of state-supported anti-communist violence. To put it another way, the gaps in the official narrative on “1965” have not led to total public amnesia. On the contrary, our memory landscapes project made clear to us, even within a few days, that in everyday life—at grassroots level in the urban space of Semarang—a reference to “1965” is often, in one way or another, connected to the questions of what is known, what is just, what can be done or should be done. “1965” has become—to quote Berber Bevernage—“a persisting past.”<sup>115</sup> That one nodal point—the Mangkang mass grave—turned into a place of developing thin reconciliation during our project is a case in point. Yet the question of how this development will affect the other nodal points that constitute the memory landscapes of “1965” in Semarang—not just other sites, but also events, organizations and persons—remains open. That this process will occur and in one way or another, sooner or later, will impact upon the official history of “1965” is beyond dispute.

## Acknowledgements

The authors thank Fajri Adieyatna, Kjell Anderson, Marjo Bakker, Pim van Bree, Remco Ensel, Timo de Jong, Geert Kessels, Daan de Leeuw, Alexander van der Meer and Abdul Wahid for their critical reading of earlier versions of this article.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on Contributors

*Martijn Eickhoff* is a Senior Researcher at NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), specializing in war and culture studies. He writes about the history and afterlife of war, mass violence and regime change in Asia and Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a special focus on spatial, material and transcultural aspects. He has been affiliated with NIOD since 2006; he was also Assistant Professor at Radboud University Nijmegen (RUN) from 2006 and 2015. In 2013, he started a project on memory landscapes and regime change in Semarang in cooperation with Soegjapranata Catholic University (UNIKA) Semarang and LAB1100. For

this project, Eickhoff received a grant in 2014 from the Added Value through Humanities (Alfa-Meerwaarde) Programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

**Donny Danardono** is a lecturer at Soegijapranata Catholic University (Semarang, Indonesia). He teaches philosophy of law, law and human rights, and law and gender in the Department of Law. He also teaches philosophy of urban spaces for the master's programme on Urban and Environmental Studies. In 2014 he took part in a project on memory landscapes and regime change in Semarang in cooperation with NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen (RUN) and LAB1100.

**Tjahjono Rahardjo** is a lecturer at the Urban and Environmental Studies programme of the Soegijapranata Catholic University (Semarang, Indonesia). He is currently a member of the Semarang Old City Management Board and the Semarang Cultural Heritage Team established by the municipality of Semarang. In these capacities he is deeply involved in efforts to save Semarang's tangible and intangible heritage.

**Hotmauli Sidabalok** is a lecturer at the Soegijapranata Catholic University (Semarang, Indonesia). She gives lectures on environmental governance for the postgraduate programme on Urban Studies. She also teaches environmental law, agrarian law and taxation law in the Faculty of Law. In 2014 she took part in the research project on memory landscapes and regime change in Semarang in cooperation with NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen (RUN) and LAB1100.

## Notes

1. For the problem of estimating the death toll, see Robert Cribb, "How Many Deaths? Problems in the Statistics of Massacre in Indonesia (1965–1966) and East Timor (1975–1980)," in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhöfer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), 82–98. For general overviews, see Robert Cribb, "Genocide in Indonesia, 1965–1966," *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, no. 2 (2001): 219–39; Robert Cribb, "The Indonesian Massacres," in *Century of Genocide*, ed. Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 235–62; Katharine E. McGregor, "The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966," *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, August 4, 2009, <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/indonesian-killings-1965-1966> (accessed January 15, 2015).
2. John Roosa, "The September 30th Movement: The Aporias of the Official Narratives," in *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia 1965–1968*, ed. Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor (Honolulu: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 25–49, on 32–3 and 44–8.
3. *Ibid.*, 26. Compare with Mary S. Zurbuchen, "Historical Memory in Contemporary Indonesia," in *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), 3–32.
4. Jongkie Tio, *Semarang City, a Glance into the Past* (Semarang, 2007), 93.
5. Interview with Jongkie Tio conducted by Eickhoff, 18 February 2015 (Semarang).
6. Compare with the concepts of communicative and cultural memory; see Jürgen Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 109–18, on 110–11.
7. Baskara T. Wardaya SJ, "Hearing Silenced Voices: A Foreword," in *Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2013), xxiii–xlili, on xxviii.
8. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.
9. In Indonesia, the word "survivor," which has a less passive connotation than "victim" (or *Korban*), is often used; see Jennifer Lindsay, "Translator's Introduction," in Wardaya, *Truth Will Out*, xiii–xvi, on xiv.

10. The first took place on 21–26 January 2013 and the second on 16–27 June 2014. The 2013 workshop was an initial methodological and practical exploration of the research field. The 2014 workshop tested the digital research environment Nodegoat, developed by LAB1100 to map and visualize memory landscapes. See <http://www.niod.nl/nl/projecten/memory-landscapes-and-regime-change-1965-66-semarang> (accessed September 11, 2017). The interviews collected during this project have been anonymized and will be stored at NIOD/DANS.
11. They did so mostly out of fear and also because they were excluded from Indonesian universities and wished to continue their studies. Interview with Ineke Tan conducted by Eickhoff, 11 August 2015 (Zwijndrecht); interview with Bing Oei conducted by Eickhoff, 11 August 2015 (Zwijndrecht); interview with Siswa Santoso conducted by Eickhoff, 15 August 2015 (Ijmuiden); interview with Patricia Tjiook-Liem, Ing Lwan Taga, Swanny Thee and Maya Hian Ting Liem conducted by Eickhoff and Alexander van der Meer, 2 May 2016 (Amstelveen); interview with Soei Liong Liem conducted by Eickhoff and Alexander van der Meer, 19 May 2016 (Amsterdam).
12. Compare with the Terrascapes programme, which focuses exclusively on so-called “key sites” of mass violence in twentieth-century Europe and the interactions between materiality, texts and practice that they host; <http://ahm.uva.nl/research/content/terrascapes/terrascapes.html> (accessed October 7, 2016).
13. For the concept of “coalitions of violence,” see Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17–91, on 87–91.
14. According to Li Minghuan, some of the Chinese who left Indonesia went to the People’s Republic of China, while others emigrated to Germany, Australia, the USA or Hong Kong. The Netherlands, as the former colonizer, was an ideal destination for those Chinese who already spoke Dutch and had a Peranakan background. See Li Minghuan, “Living among Three Walls, the Peranakan Chinese in the Netherlands,” in *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, ed. Elizabeth Sinn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998), 167–83, on 170. Compare with Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2008), 42.
15. “Mapping Memory Landscapes in Nodegoat, the Indonesian Killings of 1965–66,” Nodegoat-net, December 4, 2014, <http://nodegoat.net/blog.p/82.m/6/mapping-memory-landscapes-in-nodegoat-the-indonesian-killings-of-1965-66> (accessed September 11, 2017).
16. The precise procedure by which the whole complex was later restituted in the late 1960s is unknown and surrounded by taboos, probably because murky financial transactions were involved. For some general remarks on the reopening of schools, see Charles A. Coppel, *The Indonesian Chinese in Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 57.
17. Katharina Schramm, “Introduction: Landscapes of Violence: Memory and Sacred Space,” *History and Memory* 23, no. 1 (2011): 5–22, on 6.
18. Barbara Bender, “Introduction: Landscape—Meaning and Action,” in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 1–18; Christopher Tilley, “Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage,” *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 1–2 (2006): 7–32, on 7.
19. For the concept of meta-memory, see Laurence J. Kirmayer, “Landscape of Memory: Trauma, Narrative and Dissociation,” in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays on Memory and Trauma*, ed. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (London: Routledge, 1996), 173–98, on 175.
20. For the term “Tragedy of 1965” (or Tragedi ’65), see Lindsay, “Translator’s Introduction,” xiv.
21. For these events, see Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, “Introduction: The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–68,” in Kammen and McGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence*, 1–24, on 1–4.
22. For a description of the different groups persecuted during this era, see Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 57–66.
23. Yen-Ling Tsjai and Douglas Kammen, “Anti-Communist Violence and the Ethnic Chinese in Medan, North Sumatra,” in Kammen and McGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence*, 131–55, on 155. Cribb and Coppel have warned against exaggerating the number of Chinese victims, whereas in 2013 Melvin argued that the violence involved was genocidal. Robert

- Cribb and Charles A. Coppel, "A Genocide that Never Was: Explaining the Myth of Anti-Chinese Massacres in Indonesia, 1965–66," *Journal of Genocide Research* 11, no. 4 (2009): 447–65; Jess Melvin, "Why Not Genocide? Anti-Chinese Violence in Aceh, 1965–1966," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 3 (2013): 63–91.
24. McGregor, "The Indonesian Killings," 6–7.
  25. In 2004, the Indonesian parliament passed a law on a truth and reconciliation commission. However, in 2006, the Indonesian constitutional court rejected the law, after ruling that an article that provided reparation for victims only after they agreed to an amnesty for the perpetrator was unconstitutional. Since then, attempts to pass the law have stalled. See Martha Meijer, *The Scope of Impunity in Indonesia* (Utrecht: Netherlands Humanist Committee on Human Rights, 2006), 32, 54.
  26. Cribb, "The Indonesian Massacres," 235–62.
  27. Mary S. Zurbuchen, "History, Memory, and the '1965 Incident' in Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002): 564–81, on 571–3; Greg Fealy and Katharine McGregor, "Nahdlatul Ulama and the Killings of 1965–66: Religion, Politics, and Remembrance," *Indonesia* 89 (April 2010): 37–60.
  28. See Vanessa Hearman, "The Uses of Memoirs and Oral History Works in Researching the 1965–1966 Political Violence in Indonesia," *IJAPS* 5, no. 2 (2009): 21–42, on 23. For the role of victim support groups and NGOs, see Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, "Seducing for Truth and Justice: Civil Society Initiatives for the 1965 Mass Violence in Indonesia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 3 (2013): 115–42; Annie Pohlman, "Documentation: Reports by Human Rights and Victim Advocacy Organisations in Indonesia: Reconciling the Violence of 1965," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 3 (2013): 143–65.
  29. Hearman, "The Uses of Memoirs and Oral History Works," 24.
  30. Roosa, "The September 30th Movement," 26; Katharine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007), 105–8, 212–14.
  31. Roosa, "The September 30th Movement," 46.
  32. For the museum and monument at Lubang Buaya and the movie *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*, see Klaus H. Schreiner, "Lubang Buaya: Histories of Trauma and Sites of Memory," in Zurbuchen, *Beginning to Remember*, 261–77; McGregor, *History in Uniform*, 61–110.
  33. Roosa, "The September 30th Movement," 44–9.
  34. For important exceptions, see Cribb, "The Indonesian Massacres," 235–62; Leslie Dwyer and Degung Santikarma, "When the World Turned to Chaos: 1965 and Its Aftermath in Bali, Indonesia," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 289–305; Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 17–91.
  35. Abram de Swaan, *The Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 12, 168.
  36. Kammen and McGregor, "Introduction," 1–4.
  37. Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 21.
  38. *Ibid.*, 87–91.
  39. For the history of colonial Semarang, see B. Brommer, S. Setiadi and J. R. van Diessen, *Semarang: beeld van een stad* (Purmerend: Asia Maior, 1995); Joost Coté, "Towards an Architecture of Association: J. F. Tillema, Semarang and the Construction of Colonial Modernity," in *The Indonesian Town Revisited*, ed. Peter J. M. Nas (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 319–47. For the history of the Chinese in Semarang, see Donald Earl Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang: A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960). For social organization and unions in Semarang, see John Ingleson, *In Search of Justice: Workers and Unions in Colonial Java 1908–1926* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also Agustinus Supriyono, "Gerakan Buruh Di Pelabuhan Semarang: Pemogokan-Pemogokan Pada Zaman Kolonial Belanda, Revolusi Dan Republik 1900–1965" (PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2007).
  40. Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: strijder voor Indonesië's vrijheid: levensloop van 1897 tot 1945* (The Hague: Smits, 1976), 114–19. Compare with Robert van Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1960), 154; Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion:*

- Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 217; Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), 50.
41. Robert Cribb, "The Indonesian Marxist Tradition," in *Marxism in Asia*, ed. Colin Mackerras and Nick Knight (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 251–72, on 253.
  42. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 8.
  43. *Ibid.*, 363–4; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, xiv. Compare with Bernhard Dahm, "An Age in Motion (Review)," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50 (1991): 469–71, on 469. See also Cribb, "The Indonesian Marxist Tradition," 258.
  44. Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite*, 154; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 7; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 50.
  45. Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 217.
  46. Yunantyo Adi S., *Sejarah Singkat Berdirinya Gedung Sarekat Islam (Gedung SI) Semarang* (Semarang, 2013); Poeze, *Tan Malaka*, 121–5.
  47. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 325. Compare with R. E. Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 90–91.
  48. Poeze, *Tan Malaka*, 128–32, 152–66.
  49. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 340–46; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 334–8. Compare with Marieke Bloembergen, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2009), 248.
  50. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 353; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 338; Bloembergen, *De geschiedenis van de politie*, 248.
  51. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 353–4.
  52. Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, *Modern Indonesia: A History since 1945* (London: Longman, 1995), 12.
  53. Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 81.
  54. *Ibid.*, 72–5.
  55. *Ibid.*, 77–80; Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, 54–5.
  56. H. W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: de val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 292–3.
  57. Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 51.
  58. Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, 54–5.
  59. For this battle, see van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië*, 103–5. Compare with P. M. H. Groen, "Patience and Bluff: de bevrijding van de Nederlandse burgergeïnterneerden op Midden-Java (augustus–december 1945)," *Mededelingen van de sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmacht-staf 8* (1985): 91–155, on 114–23.
  60. For this monument, see "Tugu Muda," Wikipedia, [http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tugu\\_Muda](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tugu_Muda) (accessed January 28, 2015).
  61. Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis* (reproduction of 1982 dissertation) (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985), 291–2.
  62. Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, 144–5.
  63. *Ibid.*, 82–3.
  64. Angus McIntyre, *The Indonesian Presidency: The Shift from Personal Towards Constitutional Rule* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 72; Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia*, 231. At the same time, Sukarno stressed that the Indonesian people were united in their struggle against the NEKOLIM (Neo-Colonialism and Imperialism) of the so-called Old Established Forces (Oldefos). See Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, 84–6.
  65. Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 19–20.
  66. For the recent transformation of the GRIS site, see <https://akusukamenuis.wordpress.com/2010/05/19/gris-jejak-historikal-yang-hilang/>; <http://metrosemarang.com/5-bangunan-bersejarah-di-semarang-yang-sudah-hilang-3380> (accessed November 6, 2017).
  67. John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'état in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 54–5.

68. Helen-Louise Hunter, *Sukarno and the Indonesian Coup: The Untold Story* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 42.
69. Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 27, 59. See also David Jenkins and Douglas Kammen, "The Army Para-Commando Regiment and the Reign of Terror in Central Java and Bali," in Kammen and McGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence*, 75–103, on 83; Mathias Hammer, "The Organisation of the Killings and the Interaction between State and Society in Central Java, 1965," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 3 (2013): 37–62, on 39, 43. For the role of the Catholic Church, see Gregorius Budi Subanar, *The Local Church in the Light of Magisterium Teaching on Mission: A Case in Point: The Archdiocese of Semarang—Indonesia (1940–1981)* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001), 239–40.
70. Sometimes the prisons dated from colonial times, as was the case of the Mlaten prison and the Bulu prison; see Groen, "Patience and Bluff," 114.
71. *Indonesia: An Amnesty International Report* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1977), 88.
72. Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, 136. For the sacredness of Pancasila, see McGregor, *History in Uniform*, 84–91; Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 23.
73. Hearman, "The Uses of Memoirs and Oral History Works," 23.
74. Schramm, "Introduction," 5.
75. For an overview of the history of this building, see Yunantyo Adi S., *Sejarah Singkat Berdirinya Gedung Sarekat Islam*.
76. For the history of this school, see *1929-80-2009; reuni 80<sup>th</sup> Karangturi* (Semarang, 2009).
77. Compare with <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/smcetak/jadi-tempat-meminta-nomor-togel/> (accessed October 8, 2016).
78. Niels Mulder, "Abangan Javanese Religious Thought and Practice," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 139 (1983): 260–67, on 260; Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2005), 15. For the cult of graves, see Henry Chambert-Loir, "Saints and Ancestors: The Cult of Muslim Saints in Java," in *The Potent Dead: Ancestors, Saints and Heroes in Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Henry Chambert-Loir and Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 132–40, on 134–5.
79. Mulder, "Abangan Javanese Religious Thought and Practice," 260. The *abangan* are also known as the "red ones"; see Mulder, *Mysticism in Java*, 15. For the rise and history of this group, see Merle C. Ricklefs, "Religious Reform and Polarization in Java," *ISIM Review* 21 (2008): 34–5; Merle C. Ricklefs, "The Birth of the *Abangan*," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 162, no. 1 (2006): 35–55, on 36. Compare with Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), 5–6.
80. Ricklefs, "The Birth of the *Abangan*," 35. For the role of Nahdlatul Ulama, see Fealy and McGregor, "Nahdlatul Ulama and the Killings of 1965–66."
81. Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 45. Compare with Laurie Margot Ross, "The Artist Registry: Tracking Itinerant Artists before and after Suharto's 1965 Coup d'état in the Cirebon Region, West Java," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 39 (2011): 145–69.
82. Saskia E. Wieringa, "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, no. 4 (2011): 544–65, on 549.
83. Ruth McVey, "The *Wayang* Controversy in Indonesian Communism," in *Context, Meaning and Power in Southeast Asia*, ed. Mark Hobart and Robert H. Taylor (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 21–51, on 23.
84. *Ibid.*, 21–2.
85. Andrew N. Weintraub, "The 'Crisis of the Sinden': Gender, Politics, and Memory in the Performing Arts of West Java, 1959–1964," *Indonesia* 77 (2004): 57–78, on 58.
86. *Ibid.*, 75, 77.
87. Saskia E. Wieringa, "Communism and Women's Same-Sex Practices in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 2 (2000): 441–57, on 441.
88. Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, 32–7.
89. Cribb and Coppel, "A Genocide that Never Was," 458–9.
90. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 62–3.

91. Interview with Bing Oei conducted by Eickhoff, 11 August 2015 (Zwijndrecht)
92. Ibid. Compare with Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 57.
93. It is not known if, or to what extent or how his homosexuality played a role in this persecution. Interview with Soei Liong Liem conducted by Eickhoff and Alexander van der Meer, 19 May 2016 (Amsterdam). Baperki (Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship) was founded in 1954, and its membership consisted mainly of Indonesian Chinese who were Indonesian citizens of foreign descent. Baperki promoted the integration of the Indonesian Chinese, by which they meant the right to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while at the same time being willing to integrate and avoid exclusivity. In order to alleviate anti-Chinese racism and discrimination, Baperki made an effort to educate Indonesians on the meaning of citizenship, including basic human rights and respect for ethnic diversity. See Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 43–4. Compare with Cribb and Coppel, “A Genocide that Never Was,” 450.
94. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 57.
95. Ibid., 57, 65.
96. For the seizure of Chinese schools in the months March–May 1966, see J. A. C. Mackie, “Anti-Chinese Outbreaks in Indonesia 1959–68,” in *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1976), 77–138, on 115–18. Compare with Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 65–6.
97. Interview with Siswa Santoso conducted by Eickhoff, 15 August 2015 (Ijmuiden).
98. Ariel Heryanto, “Screening the 1965 Violence,” in *Killer Images: Documentary Film, Memory and the Performance of Violence*, ed. Joram ten Brink and Joshua Oppenheimer (London: Wallflower Press, 2012), 224–40, on 234–6.
99. Janine Nathalya Clark, *Assessing the Impact of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 41–6. Compare with Anders H. Stefansson, “Coffee after Cleansing? Co-existence, Co-operation, and Communication in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 57 (2010): 62–76, on 64.
100. See, for example, “Gedung Sarekat Islam Mulai Dipugar,” *Suara Merdeka*, September 24, 2014, <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/smcetak/gedung-sarekat-islam-mulai-dipugar/> (accessed February 1, 2015).
101. Interview with Ineke Tan conducted by Eickhoff, 11 August 2015 (Zwijndrecht).
102. For a description of the “discovery” of the grave by students from UNIKA, see “Dulu Angker, Kini Dikunjungi untuk Cari Keberuntungan,” *Kompasiana*, February 1, 2015, [http://www.kompasiana.com/purwanti\\_asih\\_anna\\_levi/dulu-angker-kini-dikunjungi-untuk-cari-keberuntungan\\_54f35ef3745513a22b6c728e](http://www.kompasiana.com/purwanti_asih_anna_levi/dulu-angker-kini-dikunjungi-untuk-cari-keberuntungan_54f35ef3745513a22b6c728e) (accessed October 8, 2016).
103. “Situs Kuburan Massal Korban Tragedi 1965 di Kota Semarang,” Trans7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfsrZHeoFwo> (accessed October 8, 2016).
104. Ainur Rohmah, “Decent Burial Sought for 1965 Victims,” *Jakarta Post*, November 18, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/11/18/decent-burial-sought-1965-victims.html> (accessed October 8, 2016).
105. Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam*, 21.
106. Richard Wright, “Where Are the Bodies? In the Ground,” *The Public Historian* 32, no. 1 (2010): 96–107, on 103; Sarah Donnelly et al., “Scene of Crime Investigation,” in *The Scientific Investigation of Mass Graves: Towards Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures*, ed. Margaret Cox et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 148–82.
107. Their spokesman stated: “Some of them were Muslims, as well as others of other faiths. They might not have been prayed for after being executed, or their bodies might not have been treated appropriately.” Rohmah, “Decent Burial Sought for 1965 Victims.”
108. <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/smcetak/kuburan-massal-tragedi-1965-ditemukan/> (accessed October 8, 2016).
109. During that same period, the Semarang Society for Human Rights (Perkumpulan Masyarakat Semarang untuk Hak Asasi Manusia/PMS-HAM) reported the existence of the mass grave to the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM); see <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/smcetak/kuburan-massal-tragedi-1965-ditemukan/> (accessed October 8, 2016).
110. <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/salah-satu-korban-kuburan-massal-semarang-diduga-bupati-kendal/> (accessed October 8, 2016). For an interview with an eyewitness, see <http://berita.suaramerdeka.com/salah-satu-korban-kuburan-massal-semarang-diduga-bupati-kendal/>

- suaramerdeka.com/sebelum-dieksekusi-korban-kuburan-massal-sempat-mengaji-satu-jam/ (accessed October 8, 2016).
111. "Tangis Keluarga Iringi Penisanan Kuburan Pembantaian 1965," *Viva*, June 1, 2015, <http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/632801-tangis-keluarga-iringi-penisanan-kuburan-pembantaian-1965> (accessed October 8, 2016); "Jejak kuburan massal tragedi 1965," CNN Indonesia, April 26, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHYgyttMCqE> (accessed October 8, 2016).
  112. Gerry van Klinken, "Homemade Monuments (2)," *KITLV blog*, March 15, 2016, <http://www.kitlv.nl/blog-homemade-monuments-2/> (accessed October 8, 2016).
  113. Katharine McGregor has analysed the first exhumation of a mass grave of PKI victims in Wonosobo in the year 2000, during which a forensic team was able to identify twenty-six people. The aim was primarily to allow people to rebury their relatives, which was possible because a prison official had recorded the names of the people to be killed. When preparing the exhumation, there seemed to be broad social support but during the attempted reburial there was an outbreak of organized mob violence. McGregor concludes that the re-humanizing of the victims posed a threat to those members of the military and groups that had since 1966 celebrated their heroic role in "crushing" communists; they were afraid of the creation of a competing "hero cemetery of communism." See Katharine McGregor, "Mass Graves and Memories of the 1965 Indonesian Killings," in Kammen and McGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence*, 234–62, on 236, 250, 258.
  114. Clark, *Assessing the Impact*, 41–6. Compare with Birgit Bräuchler, "Introduction: Reconciling Indonesia," in *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace* (London: Routledge, 2009), 3–33; Susan Dwyer, "Reconciliation for Realists," in *Dilemmas of Reconciliation: Cases and Concepts*, ed. Carol A. L. Prager and Trudy Govier (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2003), 82–98.
  115. Berber Bevernage, *History, Memory and State-Sponsored Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 5.