

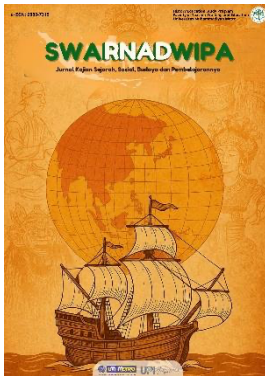
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## Examining The Controversy Behind The Events Of the 30 September 1965 Movement

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### Abstract

This research aims to describe the controversy behind the events of the 30 September 1965 movement. Starting from the controversy regarding the naming of the event, the mastermind and motive, genocide after the 30 September movement, the pretext for mass murder, to books and films that explain the events of the 30 September movement in 1965. Research methods uses historical or historical methods in the form of descriptive narrative through 4 stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Based on research results, after the incident occurred, many controversies occurred, such as the naming of the event, there were various versions of G30S/PKI, which meant that the PKI was the mastermind, on the other hand, G30S, that the PKI was not one hundred percent the perpetrator, Gestapu meant the 30th September movement, and gestok meant the movement. one october. Then the masterminds of the incident were 5 versions of the PKI itself with the motive of wanting to change communist ideology, Suharto who wanted to get rid of Sukarno, Soekarno with the motive of getting rid of generals who were not pro him, the TNI AD because of dissatisfaction between the general staff and military leaders who were wallowing in wealth, and the CIA with the aim of preventing communism in Indonesia. The post-event genocide which caused controversy due to indiscriminate arrests and clear laws led to books and films appearing with different points of view regarding the 30 September movement in 1965. This research provides insight into the controversy behind the events of the 30 September movement in 1965 in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Controversy, Events, G30S, PKI, September

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### INTRODUCTION

Before the outbreak of the 30 September Movement (G30S) on 30 September 1965, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had become one of the largest political forces in Indonesia. Supported by major communist countries, the PKI established close ties with President Soekarno, cultivated officers in the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), and controlled various vital national organisations. The PKI's efforts culminated in late September 1965 with the outbreak of the G30S rebellion. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Untung and Brigadier General Supardjo, the G30S aimed to overthrow President Soekarno and establish a communist government. However, the G30S failed to achieve its goals. Government loyalist forces under the command of General Suharto successfully crushed

the rebellion. This event marked the end of the PKI's influence and the beginning of Suharto's rise to power, who would then rule for 32 years during the New Order era (Permata, 2016:223). Although more than 50 years have passed since the events of 30 September, this incident remains one of the most controversial topics in Indonesian history. There are various versions and interpretations of the G30S, with different main actors depending on each perspective. The official version of the New Order under Suharto pointed to the PKI as the main mastermind of the G30S, with Lieutenant Colonel Untung as its leader. This version emphasises the PKI's role in planning and executing the uprising, as well as their involvement in the murders of the TNI AD generals. Meanwhile, other versions of the G30S have emerged, such as the PKI's version, which accuses Suharto of being the mastermind behind the G30S in order to eliminate the PKI and seize power (Hartono, 2020).

Various versions of the story circulated, colouring the narrative surrounding the kidnapping and murder of the TNI AD generals, the involvement of the PKI, the role of President Soekarno, and the genocide that ensued after the G30S. The naming of this event also varied, from G30S/PKI, Gestapu, to Gestok, reflecting the different perspectives and interests of each party. The controversy intensified during the Reformation era, when new alternative versions emerged, challenging the official narrative of the New Order that had dominated until then (Suparjan, 2016:38). These alternative versions were often silenced and ignored during the New Order era, but they re-emerged and were critically examined during the Reformation era, such as the circulation of books and films related to the 30 September movement that explained the events from various perspectives. In historiography, there is research related to the events of the September 30th Movement in 1965. One such study is a research article entitled 'The Controversy over Suharto's Involvement in the Suppression of the G30S/PKI in 1965' (Andrianto, 2016). The study explains the origins of the September 30 Movement and Suharto's involvement in suppressing the G30S movement. However, the study still focuses on the course of events from the beginning of the movement until the end and does not specifically discuss the controversy that arose after the September 30 Movement in 1965. This study aims to describe the controversies behind the events of the 30 September Movement in 1965.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses the historical method, which involves examining and analysing historical records from the past. There are four stages in the historical method: 1. Heuristics: This stage involves searching for and collecting historical sources relevant to the research problem. These sources can be traces of the past, events, artefacts, and written documents. 2. Source criticism: This process involves assessing the authenticity and credibility of the data used in historical research. 3. Interpretation: This stage involves determining the relationship between the facts obtained, with the aim of obtaining a sequence of events that have significant meaning. 4. Historiography: This is the method of presenting or writing the results of historical research that has been conducted (Abdurrahman, 2011:104).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The 30 September 1965 Movement (G30S) is not only an event in Indonesian history, but also a controversy that continues to rage. Various narratives and versions of the story circulate and clash, following this event with complex and multidimensional controversy.

### **Naming of the Event**

The G30S/PKI event, the use of the slash (/) can be interpreted as 'and or' in the context of G30S/PKI, meaning that the PKI was on the same side as the G30S. The use of the symbol (/) also serves as a doctrine that the perpetrators of G30S were the PKI. G30S, this naming implies that by removing the slash PKI (/PKI), it is stated that the perpetrators

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of the G30S incident were not necessarily 100% PKI. The circulation of books, news, and magazines related to the G30S incident depends on whether the author is pro or supportive of the PKI or, conversely, against or opposed to the PKI. During the Gestok incident, when the tragedy of '65 occurred, the Indonesian people were confused and wondered about the essence of what had actually happened. Then, suddenly, the G30S incident occurred, namely the events of 1 October 1965. In his speech, Bung Karno did not directly refer to it as 'G30S', but rather 'Gestok', which is an abbreviation of Gerakan Satu Oktober (One October Movement) (Wardaya, 2011:126). The Gestapu Incident The term Gestapu or the September 30th Movement was introduced by Soegandhi, a high-ranking army officer (Said, 2018:28).

### **The Puppeteers and Motives Behind the G30S Incident**

There are at least five different versions of the scenario regarding who was actually responsible for the G30S and what their motives were, namely the PKI, firstly, to eliminate the Indonesian Army by forcibly removing and killing officers who were considered major obstacles to the PKI's goals, such as General A Yani, who disagreed with the addition of a fifth branch of the military (arming workers and farmers) and simultaneously seizing government power. According to the TNI, the PKI's motive for doing this was an attempt to seize power (to change the state ideology to communism) (Ghani, 2017: 296-297). Another opinion also reinforces the TNI's view, namely according to Permata (2015: 225), who wrote that the official version of the New Order stated that the PKI was the main mastermind with the motive of changing Indonesia from a Pancasila-based state to a communist-based state. The second version of the Indonesian Army, Motif on the contrary, according to Anderson and MC Vey, the G30S incident was motivated by problems within the Indonesian Army itself, both among young (high and middle) officers from the Diponegoro Division, where dissatisfaction was found with the General Staff and military leaders in Jakarta who were considered to be luxurious and corrupt (Permata 2015: 227). Secondly, there was tension between Sukarno and the Army General Staff (SUAD), who were considered to be in frequent contact with the CIA, raising doubts about the patriotism of the SUAD generals and other military generals in Jakarta (Permata 2015: 227).

The third version of Soekarno. In 1974, a Dutch writer named Antonie Dake published a confession made by Bung Karno's aide, Bambang Widjanarko, in his book entitled 'The Devious Dalang'. In his confession, Bambang Widjanarko revealed that on 4 August 1965, President Sukarno summoned Lieutenant Colonel Untung and instructed him to take action against generals who were considered disloyal. However, it was later revealed that Bambang Widjanarko's confession was merely a strategy to avoid supporting the fact that Soekarno was involved in the July 1971 elections. This was revealed after Bambang Widjanarko admitted that he was forced to give this testimony (Aizid, 2014:143-144). This allegation was based on several motives revealed by several researchers, such as the testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Untung, which was broadcast the day after the incident at 7 a.m. on Radio Indonesia, where Latief declared that the incident occurred with the aim of preventing an attempt to overthrow Sukarno's power by a number of generals who had established relations with the CIA (Ghani, 2017: 300). This opinion was then supported by several writings from Dutch author Antonie Dake, who revealed that Sukarno was no longer patient in dealing with Army figures who did not support his revolutionary programme. For this reason, Sukarno conspired with communist forces, which throughout the Guided Democracy era were known as enemies of the army.

The Fourth Version: Suharto, according to W.F. Wertheim in his article entitled 'Suharto and the Untung Coup-The Missing Link' (1970), was first involved in the incident on the night of 1 October 1965 during a meeting with Latief and Lieutenant Colonel

Untung, the leader of the team that kidnapped the seven generals. However, many historians and political experts believe that Suharto was not a genius capable of systematically planning a coup. They believe that Suharto only learned of the incident through his previous meeting with Untung and Latief, which prepared him to take action. This readiness became his main weapon to crush the PKI and seize power from Soekarno. (Aizid, 2014:144-145). This assumption is based on considerations of the possible motives behind Suharto's manipulation of the events. The first motive for Suharto's actions was analysed based on the continuation of the G30S incident, which revealed that the murder of six generals loyal to Sukarno was the beginning of Suharto's 'creeping coup' to overthrow Soekarno (Adam, 2018: 18-19).

The fifth version is from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). According to Ghani (2017: 297), this assumption is based on the fact that Indonesian leader Sukarno leaned slightly to the left and the PKI was one of the major parties in Indonesia. Therefore, the CIA wanted to prevent Indonesia from becoming communist so that the CIA could maintain its influence and stability. Second, according to the former President of the CIA, the United States did not like the formation of the Jakarta-Beijing Axis because the United States was afraid and did not like the idea of Soekarno becoming the new leader of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

### **Discovery of G30 S Victims**

The assassination of generals in Indonesia, known as G30S, is also known as the Lubang Buaya incident. Lubang Buaya is the name of a place near the Halim Perdana Kusuma Air Force Base, which was later used as the name of the well where a number of army officers were killed at that location. The small well containing six generals and one officer was discovered on 3 October 1965 by the Army Commandos Regiment (RPKAD) based on information from a police officer who had been kidnapped along with the generals (Sukitman) and was later found by his troops. (Fadlan, nd, 113-114). Regarding this Lubang Buaya well, there is controversy about Sukarno's position at that time. According to Ulf Sundhaussen (an Australian military political observer), on 3 October, Saelan led Tjakrabirawa to Lubang Buaya to cover up the traces of the kidnapping on Sukarno's orders. Meanwhile, according to Colonel Maulwi Saelan, Sukarno's position at that time was in Halim, which was the location where the generals were killed, so that Sukarno was close to the presidential Jet Star aircraft, which was in Halim at that time (Fadlan, nd, 113-114).

### **Post-G30S Genocide**

After the G30S movement, there was a genocide between 1965 and 1966, which involved the mass arrest and killing of PKI members and sympathisers. They were detained in concentration camps, interrogated, tortured and killed. The arrests were divided into several categories: proven PKI members who were directly involved, those considered to be PKI or affiliated with the PKI, sympathisers, or anyone who had any connection with the PKI (underbow/affiliated with the PKI/Leftist ideology). Thousands of PKI members and sympathisers were detained between 1965 and the 1980s as part of the New Order's efforts to eradicate communism in Indonesia. Fear and paranoia gripped the public, making it easy for them to accuse others of being communists. There were also groups who wanted revenge against the PKI and took advantage of the situation to get rid of their political opponents. Through the Indonesian Army, the New Order government carried out repressive actions against PKI members and supporters using violence (Wardaya, 2006: 146-147). The victims of the killings were civilians who may not have known about or been involved in the G30S incident. They were executed without a fair trial in large numbers. Information about the massacre was not widely disseminated, and the exact number of

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victims is unknown, with estimates ranging from 500,000 to one million people who were victims of the mass killings.

After the G30S, the military moved quickly to strengthen itself and rally anti-communist and religious forces to fight the PKI, which was considered a deadly threat to Indonesia. In crushing the G30S movement, the military was assisted by Islamic scholars who had their own issues with the PKI, which led to fierce conflict between the scholars/kyai and PKI members/sympathisers at that time. At that time, the PKI, religious groups and nationalists had differing views and ideologies, which led to social tensions that culminated in conflict. In November 1965, East Java was hit by mass killings. Supported by the army, Muslim youth groups such as Barisan Ansor and NU carried out cruel actions against PKI members and sympathisers. In November 1965, East Java was hit by mass killings. Right-wing Muslim youth groups such as Barisan Ansor NU, with the support of the army, carried out cruel actions against PKI members and sympathisers. The source of the dispute originated from friction between the PKI and landowners after the UUPA (Basic Agrarian Law) and UUBH (Profit Sharing Law) were enacted in 1960. The struggle for rights over waqf land owned by Islamic boarding schools triggered open conflict with Muslims. The clerics and boarding schools felt aggrieved by the UUPA and tried to divide the land so that it would not be subject to land reform regulations. On the other hand, the PKI wanted to distribute the land owned by the clerics and the state to the common people under the slogan 'land for the people' (Werdininggar, 2015:37).

One such conflict occurred in Kediri between the Ansor Youth Movement and the PKI, which peaked after the 1955 elections, in which the PKI emerged victorious. This victory emboldened the PKI to intensify its actions, including attacking NU members, especially those who owned large tracts of land. Kediri is believed to have been the site of the largest massacre in East Java. Tens of thousands of people, including students from various Islamic boarding schools, members of Ansor and Banser, jointly besieged PKI bases in Kediri. Previously, they had gathered for a standby rally in the city square led by Syafi'i Sulaiman and H. Toyip, two prominent Nahdlatul Ulama figures in Kediri. The participants were given the explicit instruction to 'Crush the PKI!' A massive open massacre took place over several months throughout the Kediri region. One of the locations was the banks of the Brantas River, where victims were beheaded and their heads thrown into the river (Arifudin, 2019:4-5).

### **Justification for Mass Murder**

Regarding the mass killings that occurred, the clerics and NU leaders justified the actions on the grounds that, in their view, the PKI were atheists and therefore deserved to be killed, or that it was lawful to kill people who did not believe in God. Some referred to this as 'Muslim slaughter', namely the mass killings carried out by santri and clerics against PKI sympathisers, even though in reality there were PKI members who were Muslim, but they were members of the PKI party in Kediri and were lumped together as atheists. Suharto, through the Indonesian Army, preferred to eliminate victims by force rather than execute them in public. This was done to avoid public scrutiny (Werdininggar, 2015:40). Although the G30S had a major impact on Indonesian history, its scale was relatively small. This event only occurred in two regions, Jakarta and Central Java, and only involved one branch of the armed forces, namely the army, but Suharto exaggerated it as if the PKI wanted to carry out a revolution and was preparing for war (Roosa, 2008:26). Thus, mass killings were carried out under such pretexts.

### **Book About the 30 September Movement**

Books related to the G30S incident also contain controversial elements. The controversial nature of books related to the G30S can be classified into two categories: first, books that discuss the G30S during the New Order era and books that discuss the G30S during the Reformation era; and second, books that are pro-PKI and those that corner the PKI. First, entering the Reformation era, there was confusion among the public regarding the chronology of the events of the 30 September Movement. This confusion arose because since the reform era, many books and articles about the events of the 30 September Movement have been published with different chronologies. This is in line with the New Order era, which was known for its dictatorial leader who used the argument of national stability to censor and filter books and articles during his reign. As a result, books and articles about the G30S during that period contained New Order indoctrination, namely that the PKI was the main mastermind behind the murders of the high-ranking generals and that Suharto played a major role in eradicating and handling the G30S events with precision and dexterity (Soetresno, 2006: 22-23). If they did not conform to the standards of the time, the writings or articles would be censored, as in the case of the 1955 book *Bayang-Bayang PKI (The Shadow of the PKI)* (Institut Studi Arus Informasi), which was eventually censored by the Attorney General's Office because it contained a brief description of various versions of the masterminds behind the G30S (Adam, 2018: 95-97).

Meanwhile, during the reform era, books about the G30S incident began to emerge, such as books containing explanations of the alleged masterminds behind the incident, such as Soekarno, Soeharto, the Indonesian Army, or external parties such as the CIA. The second controversy regarding books related to the G30S incident is books that are considered pro or con regarding the allegation that the PKI was behind the G30S incident. An example is the book *'Aku bangga jadi anak pki'* (I am proud to be a child of the PKI) by Dr. Ribka Tjiptaning Ploletariyati, which from its title can be considered contrary to the statement that the main mastermind behind the G30S incident was the PKI. Meanwhile, the book *'The Destruction of the PKI'* by Olle Tornquist and the book *'Countering the Resurgence of the PKI'* by Alfian Tanjung can also be considered pro based on their titles, with the statement that the PKI was the main mastermind behind the G30S incident.

### **Film about the 30 September Movement**

After the events of 30 September 1965, films were made to commemorate the coup orchestrated by the PKI, such as the film *Pengkhianatan G30 S/PKI (The Treason of 30 September/PKI)* by Arifin C. Noor, which was released in 1984. Under the control of the New Order regime, the film *G-30S/PKI* served as a powerful propaganda tool. This film not only recounts the events of 30 September 1965, but also systematically instils the belief and perception that the PKI was responsible for these events. The film narrates the PKI rebellion with dramatic and violent undertones. It begins with DN Aidit's manoeuvre through the General Council to seize power. The coup was carried out by the Tjakrabirawa troops by executing the generals. Colonel Untung was portrayed as the commander of the operation and elevated Suharto as the saviour who crushed the PKI and banned its existence. This decision triggered the tragedy of the mass slaughter of the PKI in 1965-1966 (Najir et al., 2022:653). The film also sparked controversy because the scenes of torture in the film did not correspond with reality, as there were no signs of torture. Then there is the film *'The Act of Killing'* by director Joshua Oppenheimer, which was released in 2012. In the Reformation era, this film emerged as a counterbalance to the New Order's single narrative about the 30 September Movement. *The Act of Killing* offers a new perspective by portraying the tragedy in North Sumatra, where many innocent PKI members fell victim to violence. The film explains that the perpetrators of the massacre (executioners) proudly carried out their deeds (Mirnawati, 2019:80). Next is the film *'Senyap'* by Joshua Oppenheimer, released in 2014. *Senyap* tells the sad story of families who were victims of mass killings in Indonesia in 1965-1966. This film reveals the fact that the killers are still

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living freely without being punished and show no remorse, enjoying a comfortable life, as if the bloody tragedy had never left a deep wound on the victims (Widianto et al., 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion outlined above, the historical conclusion is that the controversy surrounding the events of 30 September 1965 takes various forms, including different names for the events, such as G30S/PKI, which means that the PKI was the mastermind behind it; G30S, which means that the PKI was not entirely responsible; Gestapu, which means the 30 September movement; and Gestok, which means the 1 October movement. There are five versions of who was behind the events: the PKI itself, with the motive of wanting to replace the communist ideology; Suharto, who wanted to remove Sukarno; Sukarno, with the motive of removing generals who were not pro-Sukarno; the Indonesian Army, due to dissatisfaction between the general staff and military leaders who were wealthy; and the CIA, with the aim of preventing communism in Indonesia. The genocide that followed the events also caused much controversy due to the indiscriminate arrests of people considered to be PKI sympathisers, the justification for the mass killings of PKI sympathisers, which had not been proven through legal channels, and the events that seemed to be exaggerated at the time, to the books and films that emerged after the New Order era, namely the reform era, with different perspectives on the 30 September 1965 movement in Indonesia. The author suggests that further research be conducted on historical events in Indonesia that still contain a lot of controversy, so that it will enrich the national historical knowledge of Indonesia.

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