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Collaboration in Mass Violence: The Case of the Indonesian Anti-Leftist Mass Killings in 1965–66 in East Java

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to examine further the concept of collaboration in genocide and mass killings through the case study of anti-communist mass killings in Indonesia in 1965–66. High degree of civilian involvement in the killings has misled to a conclusion that the state (in this case, the Indonesian army) did not have a significant role in the killings. The Indonesian state and some scholars interpret the violence as a result of horizontal conflict between the communists and religious or nationalist groups; or violence that could not be generated an overarching pattern, because in some areas the army took the lead, while in other areas, it was the civilians. This article examines the killings in East Java, one of the provinces with a high death toll. Previous studies in this province conclude that civilians were dominant in taking actions against the communists and leftists. However, this does not mean that the army did not have a significant role in the violence. Through the analysis of the newly-accessed East Java military (Kodam V Brawijaya) archives collection, this article will show that although mass killings were executed by civilians in early October 1965 in East Java, they became coordinated and systematic under the military command since mid-October 1965. Readings on the archives strongly show that the military structurally facilitated the violence, while on the other hand, civilians collaborate with the military to remove Indonesian leftists. The collaboration in East Java shows a structurally coordinated move to persecute the communists.

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The aim of this article is to examine further the concept of collaboration in genocide and mass killings through the case study of anti-communist mass killings in Indonesia in 1965–66. This case has been a controversial event in Indonesian historiography, mainly because of the question “who perpetrated the killings?” While some people argue that the killings were a result of local resentment and horizontal conflict between the left and right,¹ others

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¹ For example, Hermawan Sulisty, *Palu Arit Di Ladang Tebu: Sejarah Pembantaian Massal Yang Terlupakan (Jombang-Kediri 1965-1966)* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2000); Kenneth R. Young, “Local and National Influences in the Violence of 1965,” in *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, ed. Robert Cribb (Australia: Monash University, 1990), 63–100.

believe that the Indonesian army systematically executes the violence and killings, and therefore the Indonesian case can be regarded as a case of genocide.² However, in many areas in Indonesia within the period of 1965–66, the killings were not exclusively performed by either side – the military nor civilians alone. Instead, both of these groups collaborate to achieve the same goal: exterminating the communist and the left. Developing this concept of collaboration, and using the newly accessed East Java military archives, this article argues that the killings, which was previously unstructured, became massive and coordinated after the military released an instruction to use civilian forces in annihilating the left. This does not mean that resentment between the two groups did not exist. On the contrary, as this article will show, although local tension existed, it could not have escalated into such massive bloodbath without the army's interference. By instructing the participation of civilians, the military constructed an imaginary "solution" to the long-standing conflict between these two groups – that exterminating the communist and left was the only sensible act to save the country. The instruction to collaborate created a legitimization of violence and became a strong basis for civilians to launch their attacks against the left.

In official narratives, the 1965–66 killings are described as spontaneous response to the actions of the 30 September Movement or *Gerakan 30 September*, where six army generals and one middle-rank army officer were kidnapped and killed by a small group of military officers. Although there is still an ongoing debate of who were behind the movement and why, the Indonesian army accused the Indonesian Communist Party or PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*) as the perpetrator behind this movement.³ This accusation was followed by an extermination project against the communists and other Leftist organizations' members, families, and supporters. Nevertheless, it is now clear that the actions of the 30 September Movement served as a pretext for the military to launch a preplanned attack against PKI to establish a new regime.⁴ Approximately 500,000–1,000,000 people were killed by the military in collaboration with civilian groups between those years; others experience gross human rights violations which involve extermination, forced migration, tortures, forced disappearance, forced labour, sexual abuse and persecutions.⁵ Involvement of civilians, for example, the Islamic youth of Nahdlatul Ulama (the prominent Islamic organization in Indonesia) led the government, and also some scholars, to argue that the 1965–66 violence was simply a result of horizontal conflict between rightist and leftist groups, which culminated from a long historical tension between them since pre-independence Indonesia (1945–60s). This argument undermines the role of military and the state, and therefore, placing the Indonesian 1965–66 mass killings on the periphery of the genocide studies

² Jess Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–66* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

³ The first critical analysis came from Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey with their famously known Cornell Paper, which argues that the 30 September Movement was an internal army coup by junior officers. See Benedict Anderson, Ruth McVey, and Frederick Bunnell, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1971).

⁴ John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 203–4. Roosa argued that the September 30th Movement had no clear 'mastermind', whether one person or a tight cluster of people. Although there was one person who served as a bridge between the PKI leaders and progressive military officers, he was not in a position of command nor a decision maker. The September 30th Movement was a disorganized attempted coup which was easily terminated by Suharto.

⁵ Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia Republik Indonesia, *Ringkasan Eksekutif Laporan Penyelidikan Pelanggaran Hak Asasi Manusia Berat* (Jakarta: Komnas HAM RI, 2012), 3–40.

cannon.⁶ To discuss whether or not the 1965–66 killings can be categorized as a genocide is beyond the scope of this article. The following New Order regime, led by Suharto, took over in 1966 and developed a nationwide memory project to commemorate the seven army officers, the 30 September Movement, and the “evil” communists, while placing the anti-communist killings and violence in the margins of Indonesia’s history.

The concept of collaboration in mass violence has challenged the binary perspective in mass violence that focuses on the tensions between perpetrators and victims alone. While this concept has been widely discussed in cases of Holocaust and Second World War,⁷ little is known about cases outside this context. Weiss-Wendt and Üngör have tried to expand the concept of collaboration by incorporating cases of the Armenian Genocide, Nazi-occupied Baltic states, and the Rwandan genocide. From these cases, they expand the concept of collaboration in genocide as “an act of collective reasoning that leads a minority or subordinate group that has been the subject of structural inequality to assist the hegemonic power in physically destroying another such group – one that has been targeted – for the purpose of improving its own status”.⁸ The term *hegemonic power* is used to replace occupation *regime* or *enemy*, taking into account a more dynamic power relation, the diverse character of each case, and the history of ethno-religious relations between the groups involved.⁹ The authors also noted that collaboration may result from a long-standing history of discrimination by the hegemonic group.¹⁰ Moreover, in the three case studies, there were no centralized authority that could release a binding order to assist the killings, but an unspoken consensus directed for mass violence surely existed.¹¹

While Weiss-Wendt & Üngör emphasize the power relation between the hegemonic and minority groups in collaboration, the Indonesian case differs from this approach. The religious and nationalist groups that were involved in the 1965–66 killings were definitely not minority or subordinates. The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), ever since its establishment, has gained an important and forefront role in Indonesia’s politics. Throughout the 1950s and after the 1965 killings, they remain close with factions in the government and military.¹² In the 1955 election, NU, the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), and PKI were in the top four of the election results. At the local level, landlords and religious leaders (*ulama* and *kiai*) were also members or sympathizers of NU or PNI. Since the establishment of the Basic Agrarian Law in 1960, conflict and resentment between the nationalist or religious groups with the left and communist parties became exacerbated along

⁶ Alexander L. Hinton, Thomas LaPointe, and Douglas Irvin-Erickson, “Introduction Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, Memory,” in *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge Memory*, ed. Alexander L. Hinton, Thomas LaPointe, and Douglas Irvin-Erickson (London: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 6.

⁷ For example, see the work of Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Gross, through a study in a small Polish town of Jedwabne in 1941, contested the common assumption that the Jews in Poland were murdered only by the Nazis. In fact, the Jedwabne murders pointed that the Jews in the town were murdered by the other half of the population – basically, their own neighbors. Although Gross’s work invited criticism, he definitely provides nuanced understanding of individual decision and social dynamics. For review of Gross’s work, see Janine Holc, “Working through Jan Gross’s Neighbors,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 3 (2002): 453–9.

⁸ Anton Weiss-Wendt and Uğur Ümit Üngör, “Collaboration in Genocide: The Ottoman Empire 1915–1916, the German-Occupied Baltic 1941–1944, and Rwanda 1994,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 427.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 406.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 427.

¹² See Greg Fealy and Katharine McGregor, “East Java and The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in the 1965–66 Anti-Communist Violence,” in *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–66*, ed. Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor (Honolulu: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with University of Hawai’i Press, 2012), 104–30.

with the land reform policy. Landlords were reluctant to give up their land for distribution, while peasants were persistent in demanding “land for the landless”.¹³ In this case, the collaboration between NU or nationalist parties with the military actually represents a collaboration between a dominant group with the army to eliminate threats posed by the left and communists.

This brings us to the second element of collaboration, which is the unspoken consensus and the absence of strict order to collaborate, as cases from Turkey, Baltic states, and Rwanda have shown. The Indonesian case proved otherwise – that a structural order from the military, directed to various mass organizations to assist the extermination of the left, was released. This instruction provides a legitimate ground for violence, which made the killings an “acceptable” act to remove the communists and the left from the nation. The previous resentment and unstructured violence were transformed into widespread and structural killings by civilians since the release of the instruction.

To elaborate this argument, I will present the case of 1965–66 killings in East Java by analysing the archives of the East Java’s military command, Kodam V Brawijaya.¹⁴ This collection is stored in the Brawijaya military museum in Malang municipality along with other inventories, from the revolutionary war to military operation in East Timor. It is open to public, with a permission letter that can be obtained from the Military Command’s Mental Guidance Office or Bintaldam (*Bina Mental Kodam*) in Malang. Together with the military archives found in Aceh and Banyuwangi, the Brawijaya military archives added to the newly discovered archives related to 1965–66 operation – something that was impossible a few decades ago.

The specific inventory on the 30th September Movement 1965 consists of operation reports, daily records, radiograms, and regulations during 1965–68 collected from four different Resort commands in East Java (*Korem* in Surabaya, Malang, Mojokerto, and Madiun). The most complete collection of these archives is the one from Malang resort command. As I will show later on, the military played a major role in the violence, and that participation of civilians was under their coordination. The violence in East Java became massive not because civilians acted by themselves, but because the army released instructions where collaboration between them became highly possible. In other words, rather than inhibiting the violence, the army released direct orders to mobilize rightist organizations against the left.

This article will begin with a short overview of the debate on the 1965–66 killings in Indonesia. The following section will describe the expansion of army’s power prior to the 30 September Movement. They did not only expand their territorial command (stretching their institutions down to the district level), but also in political terms, which includes building alliance with civilian groups. The next section will discuss the situation in East Java, specifically in the first months after the 30 September Movement. In the later section, I will highlight the major findings from the Brawijaya military archives – that the local movement of civilians became structurally coordinated under the military towards the end of October 1965.

¹³ Rex Mortimer, “The Indonesian Communist Party and Land Reform, 1959-1965” (Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Victoria, 1972).

¹⁴ This regional command was firstly established as the Kodam (Komando Daerah Militer/Regional Military Command) VIII Brawijaya, East Java. In 1985, the name was transformed to Kodam V Brawijaya. In the archives collection that I used, the name Kodam VIII Brawijaya was still used.

Existing Analyses on the 1965–66 Violence

Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor have described that the nationwide mass killings and violence of 1965–66 can be identified in four phases since the occurrence of the 30 September Movement. The first phase is filled with physical violence against PKI, its allies and supporters, perpetrated by the army and anti-communist alliances (consisting of nationalist and religious groups).¹⁵ Their acts range from anti-communist mass demonstration, destruction of communists and their allies' offices, to detention and massacres. The killings did not emerge in the same phase in every area in Indonesia. The first massacres occurred in Aceh at the end of the first week of October; and only began in East and Central Java in mid-October 1965 after the appointment of Suharto as the commander of the Army. Meanwhile, the killings in West Java, North Sumatra, and Bali started in late 1965. These differences do not mean that the killings were not structural, on the contrary, it reflected the diversity within the army body itself – it required the formation and ongoing renegotiation of an Army-led anti-communist alliance, including consolidation of control over the provincial state apparatuses.¹⁶

The second phase of violence, from January-May 1966, was marked by the decreased power of Sukarno and ended with forced-shift of authority to Suharto. With this backdrop in central politics, killings at the local level continued and followed by witch-hunt in areas where massacres did not emerge beforehand, such as West Sumatra, Lampung and East Nusa Tenggara.¹⁷ The third phase covers the month of June to October 1966, was indicated by intensive efforts to consolidate control over central organs of state power. This also includes enforcing new anti-communist policy, social re-ordering, and re-directing economy and Indonesia's foreign policy. The fourth phase occurred in 1967–68, indicated by legal processing and long-term imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of people, and also by clean-up operations against the remaining leftist. These operations include the RPKAD (the Indonesian special forces) operation in November 1967 in West Kalimantan, and the East Java army operation in South Blitar in 1968.¹⁸

Different timings of the killings influenced various analyses of perpetratorship and the actors behind the killings. Numerous official statements by the Indonesian government, for example, deny the role of the army as the actors behind this violence. Officials and scholars then present the violence as a horizontal rupture, caused by rooted hatred between the communists and religious groups. An example of this official product is the white book of the 30 September Movement written by Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, which stated that "... tensions finally exploded into communal clashes resulting in bloodbaths in certain areas of Indonesia".¹⁹ In this framework, the military presented their operation as a justified attempt to secure the situation from an explosive conflict and to create peace and order. Participation of civilians in the violence also led some scholars to believe that the army only have a minor role in the violence.²⁰ However, these

¹⁵ Kammen and McGregor, *The Countours of Mass Violence*, 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹ Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the "September 30 Movement" in Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT. Pembimbing Masa, 1968), 77.

²⁰ See Sulisty, *Palu Arit Di Ladang Tebu*.

horizontal-conflict analyses failed to explain how collective tensions could escalate into a nationwide mass killings in a certain period of time.

In contrast to this horizontal conflict theory, a different opinion pointed that the state (in this case, the army) played a central role in the violence. A structural order was given from the central to their subordinate military commands in the regions to organize the mass killings. As Geoffrey Robinson argues, genocide and mass killings are political acts, which means that they do not “naturally” occur, but were intentionally and politically created by the authorities. Whether the killings started early or later, depend largely on the alliance between the authority and local civilians to carry out those violence.²¹ For example, in areas where the regional military command was united and had sufficient troops, the killing took place earlier (such as the case of Aceh), but delayed in areas where the army regional command was politically divided (such as East Java).²² This line of argument became stronger when two recent regional studies analyse military reports that pointed to the army’s structural coordination in the violence. The first is Ahmad Luthfi’s article on the violence in Banyuwangi, where he uses reports of Kodam (district military command) 0825 Banyuwangi. His study argues that the violence was structurally coordinated by the army through, for example, the establishment of the army-directed Vigilance Command Body (Badan Komando Siaga/ BKS) in every village.²³ The other is Jess Melvin’s study on Aceh’s military command, where she shows that the commander actively went on a tour to different districts in order to coordinate the annihilation of communists in the province. Melvin also argues that the anti-communist operation in Aceh was under the support and knowledge of the national military command, and therefore can be considered as an intentional act to eliminate certain group of people, or an act of genocide.²⁴

A third stance argues that there is no overarching pattern of the killings, because in some areas the army took the lead, where in others, it was in the hands of civilians. For example, in East Java, civilians from NU moved aggressively against PKI as a result of long-standing resentment that involves land disputes and religion. Meanwhile, in Central Java, the violence and killings became intense once RPKAD troops (the Indonesian special forces) were sent from Jakarta.²⁵ John Roosa coined this as the dualistic thesis.²⁶ Even though the killings follow a national pattern,²⁷ regional differences also occurred and may not be easily analysed into this uniform national pattern.²⁸ Therefore, the killings cannot be placed as a responsibility of a single party or institution.²⁹ However, through

²¹ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 15–17.

²² *Ibid.*, 151–2.

²³ Ahmad N. Luthfi, “Kekerasan Kemanusiaan dan Perampasan Tanah Pasca- 1965 di Banyuwangi, Jawa Timur,” *Archipel* 95 (2018): 624. This article is also based on the discovery of internal military archives from various sources, such as Korem 083, Kodim0825 Banyuwangi, and several reports from Puterpra.

²⁴ Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide*, 300. Melvin also presents a critical analysis on the genocide definition, as stated in the 1948 Genocide Convention. She includes previous discussions that pointed to the intentionality in 1965–66 violence and the target group in the violence that went beyond members of a political party.

²⁵ Ulf Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics, 1945–1967* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982), 207–19; Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 145–55.

²⁶ John Roosa, “The State Knowledge About an Open Secret: Indonesia’s Mass Disappearances of 1965–1966,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 2 (2016): 2.

²⁷ The national pattern in this case shows that killings were usually preceded with mass detention and disappearance. *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁸ Young, “Local and National Influences”.

²⁹ See Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

studies of two cases of violence in Aceh and Bali, Roosa argued that the dualistic thesis failed to capture one feature of uniformity in the act of violence across different areas, which is the disappearance of people who were already detained.³⁰ Findings in Aceh and Bali show that the army mobilized civilians, organized the detention camps, and provide trucks to transport detainees to execution sites. Looking at these facts, it is hardly impossible that the army together with civilian groups independently adopted the same method of disappearing detainees in different parts in Indonesia. Roosa then pointed that instructions from the central capital (Suharto and his allied generals) must have existed and sent to their subordinates in the provinces.³¹

The violence in East Java has always been used as an example to support the stance of horizontal conflict and dualistic thesis. For example, Harold Crouch explains that while the army leadership in East Java hesitated to move without clear instruction from Jakarta, leaders of Ansor decided to move aggressively against PKI. This began with a meeting on 10 October, and continued by synchronized rallies on the thirteenth at Kediri, Blitar, Trenggalek and other towns where the Ansor masses attack PKI offices and killed their supporters.³² Kenneth Young, through his study in Kediri, pointed to the connection between national politics and local motives, together with the absence of restraining forces, which resulted in continuous slaughter against the left throughout October 1965.³³ Siddharth Chandra, using statistical methods and population data, estimates the deaths in East Java reached around 150,000 with a total loss of population of 175,169.³⁴ Cross-examining population data with the 1955 election result, Chandra was able to point that in regencies where political support for NU was high, there is a large population decline. On the other hand, regencies with low political support for NU tend to experience a high population increase, most possibly due to migration.³⁵ However, Chandra's analyses between political support for NU and the population numbers could not explicitly prove that the NU acted independently in the violence.³⁶ Moreover, the fact that civilians from NU participated in the violence does not mean that the army does not have any significant role. The key to violence and mass killings in East Java (and also in other areas such as Bali and Aceh) lies in the directed collaboration between the army and civilians.

It is important to note that most of the previous research on East Java were produced during the time of authoritarian New Order, where Suharto was still in power (1966–98). Internal military documents were impossible to access at that time. The current condition opens the opportunity to reassess the event by using those documents. Through readings of the Brawijaya military archives, this article will show that although civilian groups took the early initiative to annihilate the communists, it was not entirely the case that the army remain passive throughout the remaining months in 1965. On the contrary, on 21 October 1965, the East Java military Commander, Basuki Rachmat, release a clear instruction to eliminate the communists in the area and to utilize anti-communities civilians to assist

³⁰ Roosa, "The State Knowledge About an Open Secret," 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³² Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 147–52.

³³ Young, "Local and National Influences," 27.

³⁴ Siddharth Chandra, "New Findings on the Indonesian Killings of 1965–66," *Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 4 (2017): 1078.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1071.

³⁶ Chandra noted that his research could not resolve the debate about the independency of NU and Ansor and the extent of the army's role in the killings. *Ibid.*, 1079.

this goal. It might be true that this instruction was eventually released by Rachmat after looking at the commencement of operation in Central Java.³⁷ Nevertheless, this delay could be more related to reorganization of alliance between the army and local officials in East Java to agree for expanding the anti-communist purge, as McGregor and Kammen initially suggest. Since then, the violence that were once launched by civilians and militias, had now become coordinated under the army's command. Meanwhile, these civilians received a stronger basis to annihilate the communists and leftists after a long-standing resentment against them (the motive ranges from individual reasons, competition for property, to political or social mobility). The killings in East Java could not have been highly massive if such basis did not exist.

Expansion of Army's Power

To understand the collaborative nature of army and civilians in Indonesia, the Indonesian army should not be seen merely as a national defense institution, but also a political body. Their political nature can be traced back to the period of struggle for independence (1945–50), where guerrilla fighters were politically aligned into irregular units (local *laskar*) besides serving as regular armed forces.³⁸ Its political character also means that the Indonesian army is quite diverse, with extra-military political loyalties and stronger commitment from soldiers to their commanders than to the army institution as a whole.³⁹ Throughout the 1950s to 1960s, the army's power had expanded, not only in terms of organizational structure, but also in their political power, including in regional authorities. The period also witnessed the tension between three political powers: the army, President Sukarno, and PKI that ended along with the 30 September Movement.⁴⁰ Until 1965, the army was not a professional armed force in the western sense of understanding – they had no cohesion, no obedience to government directions except when it was to the armed force's advantage, and their performance in facing foreign opponents had been insufficient.⁴¹

The crucial period for the expansion of army's power occurred in 1957, along with the released of martial law (state of war and siege/ *Staat van Oorlog en Beleg*/ SOB) as a response to the increasing regional Darul Islam rebellions in Aceh (1953–62), West Java (1948–62), South Sulawesi (1953–65), and PRRI/ Permesta rebellion in West Sumatra and Sulawesi (1958–61). The army became more firm in political (and also economy) field, by placing their members in the cabinet, upper echelons of the civil service, and regional administration.⁴² They also tried to dominate the National Front, a coordinating body that was established in August 1960 with a main goal to complete the national revolution and “organize the closest cooperation between the Government, the people and other state

³⁷ Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 151.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25. The guerrilla strategy used during the war also contributed to the political character of the army. With lack of professional training and modern equipment, the army relied heavily on the support of local civilians. This had created a thin boundary between military and civilian life during the guerrilla.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰ See Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide*, 63–9.

⁴¹ Ian MacFarling, *The Dual Function of the Indonesian Armed Forces: Military Politics in Indonesia* (Canberra: Defence Studies Centre, 1996), 73.

⁴² Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 41.

bodies".⁴³ Among the seventy-three members of the executive board (including representatives from PKI), at least eleven of them were military men, and of the seventeen provincial branches established by April 1961, nine of them were chaired by the local army commander.⁴⁴ With a structural organization from the central government down to the district level, in 1962, the National Front allowed membership of individuals and political parties.⁴⁵ In March 1964, members of the National Front was incorporated into the Catur Tunggal, an administrative system where four government elements, consisting of the governors or regents, local army commanders, police chiefs and public persecutors, made collaborative decisions on their regional issues. By placing their officers in the position of governors and regents, the army tried to increase their power over the regional administration.⁴⁶ With the integration of the National Front into Catur Tunggal, the name transformed into Panca Tunggal.⁴⁷

Another point of expansion occurred under the backdrop of confrontation against Malaysia, where in 1964, Sukarno issued a decree for the formation of Regional Dwikora Executive Authority (*Penguasa Pelaksanaan Dwikora Daerah*), or Peperlada.⁴⁸ Its main task was to organize and supervise all activities concerning or affecting the anti-Malaysia campaign.⁴⁹ The decree also stated that in carrying its duty, the Peperlada should consult with Panca Tunggal in their own regions to gain suggestions in policy development, assistance for coordination between government bodies, and support for the implementation of related policies.⁵⁰ The authority of Peperlada included confiscating properties, prohibiting a person to reside or leave a certain place, detaining people for 30 days, and transferring a person to certain places under high surveillance if the person is indicated to disrupt security.⁵¹ Peperlada was also obliged to report directly to the President, and thus, bypassing the central military headquarters. Furthermore, the President himself appointed the head of Peperlada, which was dominated by the provincial army commander. Therefore, regional decisions relied mostly on the commander, including decisions related to eliminate communists' actions in the late 1960s.⁵² As we shall see in this article, existing bodies such as Panca Tunggal and Peperlada became a significant institution in supporting the annihilation operation against the left.⁵³ Panca Tunggal's inclusiveness of civilian members not only facilitated coordination between the army and anti-communist civilian organizations during the 1965–66 operation, but also provided opportunity for political parties or other civilian groups to gain advantages from their alliance with the military even before the 30 September Movement.

⁴³ Rex Alfred Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959–1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 101.

⁴⁴ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 152.

⁴⁵ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*, 101.

⁴⁶ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 175.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴⁸ Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 56. This campaign was launched against British attempt to form the Malaysia Federation, which was perceived as a neocolonial practice.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵⁰ Muhono, *Ketetapan MPRS dan peraturan negara yang penting bagi anggauta Angkatan Bersendjata* (Jakarta: Tentara Nasional Indonesia, 1966), 1245.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1246–7.

⁵² Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 186.

⁵³ See Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide*. This role of Peperlada and Panca Tunggal is also consistent with the pattern in Aceh.

Together with the expansion of political power, the army also increased their territorial power. The concept of territorial warfare rooted from the guerilla warfare strategy during the Independence war. This strategy was regarded as the most effective move to defeat Dutch soldiers who were considered better equipped and larger in numbers. In 1958, a Committee on Army Doctrine emphasizes that guerilla warfare was the only sufficient defense for the Indonesian army, and therefore, support from civilians became a prerequisite for successful military operations.⁵⁴ This thesis became the Army's Concept of Territorial Warfare,⁵⁵ highlighting the advancement of people's national consciousness (especially villagers) "to the extent that he will be willing to sacrifice anything in the defense of the higher cause", and in return, the army should establish stability, internal security and social justice.⁵⁶ One year after, the army used this guideline to expand their Territorial Organization. The *Tentara and Territorium* (T&T),⁵⁷ which was established at the provincial level, were renamed into *Komando Daerah Militer* (Regional Military Command/ *Kodam*) and increased the numbers from seven to sixteen. At the lower level, *Komando Resort Militer* (Military Resort Commands/ *Korem*) that incorporate several regencies, were established in several areas, followed by the formation of *Komando Distrik Militer* (District Military Command/ *Kodim*) at the district or regency level, and *Komando Rayon Militer* (Military Precinct Commands/ *Koramil*) in the sub-districts (Figure 1). The logic behind *Koramil* was to prepare the mentality of the people for a territorial warfare, and prevent mental unrest.⁵⁸ This, according to Sundhaussen, was basically the military's strategy to tackle PKI's growing influence of the grassroots masses although the military never explicitly stated it.

In East Java, the T&T V Brawijaya became Kodam VIII Brawijaya based on the army decree dated on 24 October 1959.⁵⁹ New military units were established, such as Korem 083 on 16 October 1963, Korem 081 and 082 on 25 November 1963, and Korem 084 on 9 July 1966.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the Kodim structure was established through a commander's decree on 25 January 1964, where ten Kodim were formed in Korem 081, seven Kodim in Korem 082, nine Kodim in Korem 083, and seven Kodim in Korem 084.⁶¹ With this new territorial structure, the army started civic action programmes, such as public indoctrination or cultural events, while at the same time, connected closely to civilian administration, religious and cultural organizations, youth groups, veterans, trade unions, peasant organizations, political parties and groups at regional and local levels. They even sent doctors, engineers, and entertainment groups for the purpose of winning the hearts and minds of the people.⁶²

⁵⁴ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Rower*, 138.

⁵⁵ See Abdul Haris Nasution, *Fundamentals of Guerilla Warfare: Related to the Indonesian Defense System in the Past and in the Future* (Jakarta: Indonesian Army Information, 1953).

⁵⁶ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 140.

⁵⁷ In this territorial concept, there were seven military territories (during 1950–57): North Sumatra (T&T I), South Sumatra (T&T II), West Java including Jakarta (T&T III), Central Java (T&T IV), East Java (T&T V), Kalimantan (T&T VI) and East Indonesia (T&T VII). These T&Ts were established to conduct guerilla warfare independently of orders and supplies from the headquarters. Within the regiments in the T&T, a subordinate body of Military District Commands was specifically responsible for liaison with the civilian population. *Ibid.*, 58–60.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁵⁹ The territorial code for the Brawijaya command was changed from VIII to V, based on the decision of the Army Chief of Staff no. Kep/411/1985 on 12 January 1985. Since then, the East Java Regional Military Command is known as Kodam V/ Brawijaya. Koesworo Setiawan, *Kodam V/Brawijaya Dalam Untaian Perjalanan Bangsa/ In Nation's Journey* (Jakarta: PT. Nusa Global Prima, 2006), 43.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 37–8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶² Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 141–2.

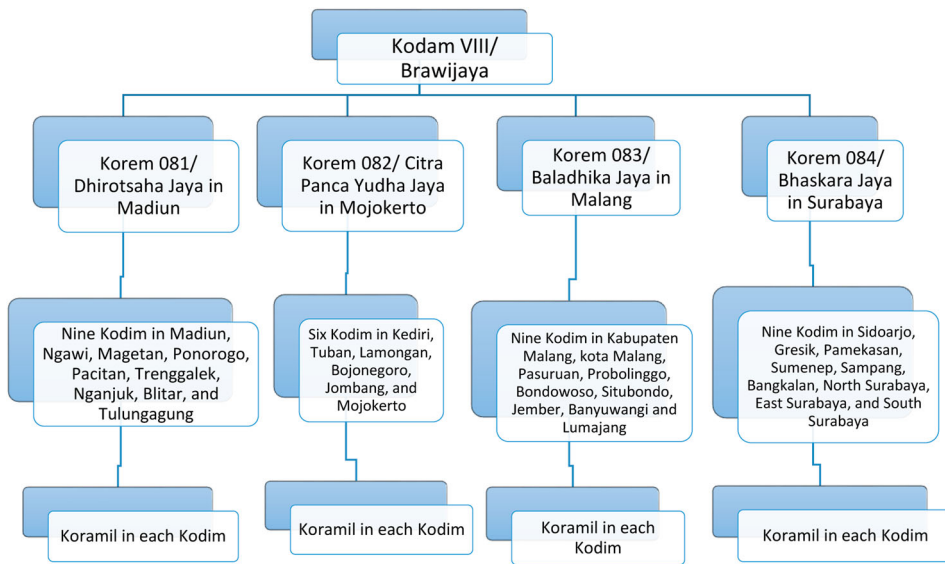


Figure 1. Structure of the Kodam VIII/ Brawijaya Territorial Command.

However, the growing army's power did not go uncontested by PKI, who was fully aware of their strategy. PKI chairman Aidit, for example, launched critics against the army for becoming increasingly authoritarian and endangering Indonesia's democracy. Aidit captured the intention of the military "to create a Martial Law rule without the Martial Law itself", for "continuing a dictatorial rule in the name of Catur Tunggal in the provinces", and for activating their units in villages.⁶³ Realizing their weak influence in the army, PKI also used their close connection with Sukarno to propose the expansion of Nasakom principle (stand for *Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* or Nationalist, Religion, Communist – a principle that represented the unity of three major sociopolitical tendencies in Indonesian society)⁶⁴ into the military by establishing advisory teams to work with the commanders of the four services.⁶⁵ This tension between PKI and the army illustrates that both parties did not only compete for upper-level political support (in this case, from Sukarno and political elites), but also for lower grassroot civilian endorsement. After the 30 September Movement, this tension ended with the military's control at both levels.

Key Features on the Violence in East Java

Existing studies on the 1965–66 killings in East Java highlight two central features of the violence in this area: the slow response from the provincial military commander to annihilate the communists and the intense involvement of civilians in the violence. Since the army announced on 8 October 1965 that the 30 September Movement was masterminded

⁶³ Aidit stated this critic in a report to the Central Committee on 10 February 1963. *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁴ Sukarno used this term to bring together competing forces during Indonesia's Guided Democracy period (1959–65) to foster a sense of national unity. Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 43–4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

by PKI,⁶⁶ Kodam VIII Brawijaya in East Java had not taken any direct action against the communists. This slowness was considered as an indecisive attitude of the East Java military commander, Basuki Rachmat.⁶⁷ However, keeping in mind that the army is a political body, they will certainly need political allies to execute the persecution against the left. Therefore, Brawijaya commander's hesitancy or slowness should also be seen as a moment of shifting political alliance: from one that was subordinated to Sukarno, to a coup-oriented military faction dominated by Suharto. A shift which assured that once the elimination of the left started in East Java, the army will receive the most significant support that it needed.

East Java in the 1960s was certainly an example of diverse political orientation of its authorities. The Surabaya Mayor, Moerachman, was a BTI (peasant's union affiliated with PKI) which was later detained after the accusation of being involved in the 30 September Movement. Eight regents and mayors as well as PKI-nominated representatives in regional government bodies and assemblies were also suspended on 29 October 1965 by the East Java Governor Wijono as a response to the Movement.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the Kodam VIII Brawijaya officers were considered as fairly Sukarnoist – being personally loyal to Sukarno, but sporadically expressed anti-communist stance.⁶⁹ Brawijaya Commander, Basuki Rachmat, was considered as the “moderate reformers” group, those who were more critical but not directly aggressive to Sukarno, and since October 1965, the dissention against him had increased.⁷⁰ Both Rachmat and the Peperlada chief of staff, Colonel Widjaja Sukardanu, were considered hesitant to release instruction for massive operation against the communists,⁷¹ also because East Java was experiencing the problem of troop insufficiency.⁷² The hesitation may indicate that Rachmat and his officers needed time to ensure that the political shift that they were going to take will not disadvantage them. In this case, Brawijaya Command is an interesting example that being anti-communist and Sukarno's loyalist was not on opposite ends.

However, even before Rachmat was replaced, two of his subordinates already moved more aggressively against the communists, resonating to the national anti-communist statement that was already launched publicly on 8 October 1965. One of them is Willy Soedjono, Madiun Regional Commander, who was recorded to initiate arrests of PKI cadres (about 200 in the city of Madiun alone).⁷³ The other is Colonel Sumardi, the

⁶⁶ This statement first appear in the army newspaper on the same date. Kammen and McGregor, *The Countours of Mass Violence*, 2.

⁶⁷ Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 151–2.

⁶⁸ Dahlia Setiawan, *The Cold War in the City of Heroes: US-Indonesian Relations and Anti-Communist Operations in Surabaya, 1963–1965* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014), 215. In *Report from East Java*, the reporter noted that Governor Wijono was irresolute. His subordinates complained about his slowness in commencing purges against the communists, even those directly under his supervision. Wijono's decision to dismissed Leftist-oriented officials may be a result of his political shift. Benedict Anderson, trans., “Report from East Java,” *Indonesia* no. 41 (1986): 148. This article is a translation of a report by an intelligence officer to his superior in East Java, written on 29 November 1965.

⁶⁹ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 212.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁷¹ Anderson, “Report from East Java,” 146.

⁷² Eight of the province's sixteen battalions were serving elsewhere at that time. Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 151. Added to that, thirty per cent of them were involved in the coup. Anderson, “Report from East Java,” 146. Dahlia Setiawan also supports this analysis using US intelligence documents that reported Rachmat's conversation with American Embassy's political officer, Jacob Walkin, informing through a telegram that the commander started to had enough troops to continue the anti-communist purge in East Java only on 19 November 1965. Setiawan, *The Cold War in the City of Heroes*, 247.

⁷³ Anderson, “Report from East Java,” 146–7.

Regional Commander in Malang-Besuki who was reported as the firmest in arresting PKI leaders and activists. On 14 November 1965, Sumadi organized a meeting with several local heads, regents, residents and former governors and residents, in order to find a policy which would achieve more intensive cooperation between military and civilian authorities; solving problems resulted from the extermination of PKI; and solving economic problems, which can be exploited by PKI.⁷⁴ However, even before this meeting on 14 November, leaders of Ansor already held their own meeting on 10 October, as Crouch described.⁷⁵ This was followed by rallies and mass killings in Kediri, Blitar Trenggalek, and other places.

This brings us to the second key element of the violence in East Java, which is the participation of civilian groups. Some scholars concluded that the killings in East Java were the result of initiatives from lower-level military and civilian forces without clear direction from their military superior.⁷⁶ In this case, civilian forces that took the lead in East Java was NU's youth wing Ansor. Their involvement resonated with religious reasoning of Holy War and defending Islam that was widely circulated by their respected Islamic teachers (the *Kyais*).⁷⁷ However, it is important to note that there were different factions within NU's central leadership regarding the 30th September Movement. Young generations of NU led by Zainur Echsan Subchan, was determined to move more aggressively against PKI, while their senior leaders remained more passive.⁷⁸ Studies and reports about the violence in East Java also described gruesome acts in the killings, such as public torture, mutilation and decapitation.⁷⁹ In many areas, body parts and corpses were left in public spaces to generate terror.⁸⁰ However, religious reasoning was a less significant motive, compare to political and socio-economic forces such as NU's electoral popularity and the attacks against landowners from NU.⁸¹ This indicates that the elimination of PKI created secure political and economic spaces for NU.

Not only NU, but the Catholic Party (*Partai Katolik*) and Catholic Youth (*Pemuda Katolik Republik Indonesia/ PMKRI*) also formed an alliance with the military even before the September 30th Movement. Moving independently from their central leadership, the Catholic Party and PMKRI use the catholics within the military to safeguard their movement. FX Trikatmo, a former PMKRI activist in Malang, East Java, explains the relationship between PMKRI and the military:

⁷⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁷⁵ Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 147. Kenneth Young noted that Ansor already organized mass demonstration in Kediri on 13 October 1965, which accelerated the killings in rural areas. Young, "Local and National Influences," 80–1.

⁷⁶ Kammen and MacGregor, *The Countours of Mass Violence*, 16–17. Hermawan Sulistyono recorded that the military remained passive in the massacre in Kediri and Jombang. He only noted that the Kodim commander in Kediri sent his officers in civilian clothes to join Ansor's mass actions. Sulistyono, *Palu Arit Di Ladang Tebu*, 166.

⁷⁷ Other reasoning includes statement such as "If the PKI were not killed first, then we would be killed"; "A person is not a real Muslim if he does not want to exterminate PKI members"; "They had attacked our faith". Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 173. Harold Crouch also noted that it was common to find religious teachers (*kyai*) and scholars (*ulama*) of NU mobilizing their students at religious schools (*pesantren*) to take communists from their homes and killed them at certain places. Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia*, 152.

⁷⁸ Andréé Feillard, "Traditionalist Islam and the Army in Indonesia's New Order: The Awkward Relationship," in *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Barton and Greg Fealy. (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1996), 45–7.

⁷⁹ See Anonymous, "Additional Data on Counter-Revolutionary Cruelty in Indonesia, Especially in East Java," in *The Indonesian killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, ed. Robert Cribb (Australia: Monash University, 1990).

⁸⁰ Pipit Rochijat told a story where corpses were stacked together on rafts with PKI banner on top. Pipit Rochijat and Ben Anderson, "Am I PKI or Non-PKI?," *Indonesia* 40, no. 40 (1985): 44.

⁸¹ Based on correspondence between central and local NU officials, the central leadership played a role in encouraging the violence at the local regions. Fealy and McGregor, *East Java and the Role of Nahdlatul Ulama*, 105–30.

It was [19]63, very intense.⁸² Intimidation [from PKI towards Catholic Party and PMKRI] was also strong. Ah, why did we dare to organized a Bishop's mass meeting (*apel Uskup*)? Because at that time in Malang, Catholic figures were dominant. Amongst others; the chairman of Askam (*Aksi Sosial Katolik Malang*/ Catholic Social Action in Malang) was Colonel Moedjiono. He was the Commander of the Military Police (POM) in East Java – Brawijaya. The POM Korem Commander was also a Catholic. Their auditor, in East Java, in Malang, the military auditor was also a Catholic. The air force commander was also a Catholic, but apparantly, he was Oemar Dhani's⁸³ cadre. So he was arrested. There were a lot of Catholic figures. When the military was dominant, then, who will dare [laughing]. They were the ones who supported us in Malang.⁸⁴

Instead of being used by the army, it was the other way around for these civilian activists (possibly also those of NU's) – Trikatmo portrayed PMKRI as an organization with agency to utilize the army. Although his story may be exaggerated, it still reflects the existing collaboration between religious group and the military even before the 30 September Movement. PMKRI took advantage of the catholics within the military body to secure their mass movements, and strengthen the position of catholics within the tense and intimidated rivalry with PKI around 1963. However, reflecting on Trikatmo's account, even when civilian organizations seem to act independently, they would not have made the decision to do so if they were not completely sure about the army's support for their actions.

From Chaos to Structural Extermination

The first weeks after the 30 September Movement was filled with ambiguity. Authorities and civilians in the regions were not certain on what the movement was, and how to respond to it.⁸⁵ As this section will show, in the first weeks of October 1965, military actions in East Java were geared towards creating peace and order. However, as soon as the political tendency shifted into an anti-leftist stream, these actions transformed into creating and facilitating anti-communist violence. Civilian groups that were once more-or-less independent allies of the army, now became a client of their military patrons, believing that the nation is entering a war against the communists.

In East Java, weeks after the 30 September Movement were rather chaotic: both the communists and anti-communists groups mobilized themselves to convey a public statement. From early to mid-October 1965, mass movements included demonstrations (by rightist and leftist groups), destruction of leftist's properties (houses or offices), and clashes between the two parties.⁸⁶ During that period, authorities were still trying to take control of the situation. For example, on 10 October 1965 in Pasuruan, Panca Tunggal dismissed 2000 demonstrators from religious groups targeting communists.⁸⁷

⁸² Trikatmo was referring to the political rivalry between PKI and anti-communist organization such as NU and the Catholic Party.

⁸³ Oemar Dhani was the national air force commander (1962–65), but was accused of being involved in the 30 September Movement.

⁸⁴ FX Trikatmo (ex-PMKRI activist), in discussion with the author, 11 June 2016.

⁸⁵ In Aceh, an activist who were putting posters about PKI as the mastermind behind 30 September Movement was confronted by a military guard using his bayonet. This happened because in early days after 30 September Movement, even the military was not sure who was behind the movement. Melvin, *The Army and The Indonesian Genocide*, 121.

⁸⁶ This also includes destruction of houses or properties of Chinese residents in the area, accusing them of supporting the Indonesian communists. Laporan G30S/PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

On 11 October 1965, battalion commander Zeni (the army corps of engineers) 5 was instructed to cooperate with Puterpra (*Perwira Urusan Teritorial dan Perlawanan Rakyat* which later on became *Koramil*) in Lawang to keep demonstrations in order (*menjaga ketertiban demonstrasi*), and prevent destruction of houses, stores and officers, and to release a warning shot, if necessary.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the communists also organized their mass movements. On 21 October 1965, for example, 300 communists in Cluring village, Banyuwangi organized a demonstration.⁸⁹ Received by the local Panca Tunggal, the demonstrators made several statements: they will continue to support Sukarno as reminded by the PKI central committee; create national revolutionary unity on the bases of NASAKOM; continue to execute five revolutionary principles (*Panca Ajimat Revolusi*); and persecute the people who were responsible for burning innocent people's houses. Up to this point, it seems that mass mobilizations were organic and uncoordinated, while the authorities were still attempting to prevent high degree of casualties from these movements.

A turning point in East Java's purge against the left occurred after the formation of Pupelrada (*Pembantu Pepeprada* or Assistant Pepeprada). Its establishment serves as an extension of Pepeprada that goes to the regency/ district level. While the head of Pepeprada was dominated by the military commander in the province (Kodam), the Pupelrada was led by the regional commanders (Korem). A telegram to the regional Panca Tunggal and Kodim mentioned *Pepeprada* Decree No. Kep-15/10/65 about the formation of Pepeprada in *Korem/ Kopursiaga (Komando Tempur Siaga/ Battle Command)* and the establishment of Pupelrada or Pembantu Pepeprada (Assistant Pepeprada) in Korem 083 Malang on 13 October 1965. Located on Bromo street 17, Pupelrada Korem 083 operated under the leadership of Colonel Sumadi, the Korem (Military Resort Command) 083 Commander.⁹⁰ Pupelrada was also established in other districts and regencies.⁹¹ Its formation meant that now, the *Korems* also have extra-judicial powers such as prohibiting a person to reside or leave a certain place, detaining people for 30 days, and so on. Furthermore, the information division of Pupelrada 083 clearly stated that "all parties are obliged to assist efforts to normalize the situation and to prevent the misuse of people's current emotional state".⁹² Normalizing the situation, in this case, was to eliminate the communists and leftists. This was basically an explicit call for every group, including civilians, to be involved in the persecution against the left.

One day after the formation of Pupelrada in Malang, religious youth groups held an Action Command (*Komando Aksi*) public meeting in Malang town square on 14 October

⁸⁸ Radiogram T. 582/1965 directed to Komandan Batalyon Zeni Tempur (Dan Jon Zipur) 5 on 11 October 1965 in Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Radiogram T. 591/1965 directed to Regional Panca Tunggal ex Residence/ Besuki (Panca Tunggal Tk. II ex Karesidenen/ Besuki) through Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 16 October 1965 in Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹¹ Another document from the Brawijaya archives also shows the existence of Pupelrada in Korem 081, Madiun. Unidentified report from Korem 081, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹² Sie Penerangan Pupeprada 083, *Pokok-pokok Kebijakan Pelaksanaan Penerangan Staf Pupelrada Korem 083 dalam Menghadapi Penyelesaian Apa Yang Dinamakan Gerakan 30 September, 28 October 1965, revised on 6 November 1965*, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a. Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia. This document sometimes uses Pupelrada and Pupeprada. It refers to the same body.

1965.⁹³ At this meeting, the youths stated publicly that they will assist the army in crushing the 30 September Movement and was received by Colonel Soemadi, Commander of Kopur III/ 83 (*Komando Tempur/* Battle Command under Korem 083). The meeting also handed over 250,000 youths from 30 mass organizations under the *Front Pemuda* (Youth Front) of Malang City. It did not state further to whom the youths were handed over. Although the numbers might be exaggerated, public meetings became a common starting point of a more coordinated mass mobilization that also occurred elsewhere.⁹⁴ On the same date, the military began to release orders to arrest and investigate members of *Gerwani* and *Pemuda Rakyat* in order to search for “complete information related to the 30 September Movement”.⁹⁵ This radiogram instructed every Kodim (District Military Command) to cooperate with local police command and Panca Tunggal to investigate *Gerwani* and *Pemuda Rakyat* members who were involved in the training of volunteers in Jakarta. The investigation should emphasize on their knowledge about the 30 September Movement and its implementation in the regions. Whether or not this radiogram influenced the mass killings is still unclear, but it shows that previous mass demonstrations started to shift into an attack against the left.

On 23 October 1965, head of staff Pupelrada 0825/ Brawijaya (presumably refers to Kodim 0825 Banyuwangi) conducted limited meeting attended by Puterpra, PP (presumably *Pemuda Pancasila*), Hansip (*Pertahanan Sipil/* civil defence), and head of government Departments (*Djawatan*) to inform the establishment of Pupelrada in East Java.⁹⁶ The meeting also stresses the military operation to secure and stabilize local government. Since then, the nature of the Korem 083 report started to change. From late October to December 1965, the report frequently mentioned killings of leftist organization members by unidentified killer (*pembunuh tidak dikenal*).⁹⁷ For example, on 16 November 1965, four cases of killings were recorded in the report and in one of those cases, four bodies were found in a rice field.⁹⁸ The document also reported self-disbandment of Leftist organizations in different areas. However, a radiogram on 30 November 1965 stated that disbandment of political or mass organizations that were involved in the 30 September Movement should be accepted by the District Military Commander (*Dandim*) as head of *Pupelrada* and witnessed by Panca Tunggal and other organizations in the National Front.⁹⁹ This indicates the possibility that self-disbandment were not voluntary, but under the pressure of the military.

⁹³ Laporan G30S/PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹⁴ In Surabaya, a mass rally took place on 16 October 1965 in the Heroes Monument, which was organized by the East Java and Surabaya Action Committee to Crush Gestapu (Panitia Aksi Mengganjang Gestapu). Setiyawan, *The Cold War in the City of Heroes*, 210.

⁹⁵ Radiogram T. 587/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 14 October 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a. Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹⁶ Laporan Gerakan 30 September/ PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹⁷ The language that is used in the document is vague. It did not reveal any actors, but focused on the finding – a body that were predominantly members of Leftist groups. This is similar with the Aceh documents. See also Melvin, *The Army and The Indonesian Genocide*.

⁹⁸ Laporan Gerakan 30 September/ PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

⁹⁹ Radiogram T. 715/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 30 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

When Local Acts Became Coordinated: Pancasila Operation in East Java

The formation of Pupelrada became a turning point where organic movements from rightist and leftist groups in the first weeks of October 1965 were transformed into attacks against the left by mid-October 1965 in Malang, East Java. The diverse political orientation amongst East Java's authorities is now becoming increasingly coherent in eliminating the left. In this case, involvement of civilian masses in the anti-communist purge should be perceived as an effort to create the belief that the violence against PKI was a result of spontaneous communal anger – a feature of a civil war.¹⁰⁰ While in fact, it was certainly the army that had made civilian movements increasingly massive and aggressive towards the left in East Java. On 21 October 1965, Basuki Rachmat eventually established Pancasila Operation to eliminate the communists in East Java.¹⁰¹ This decision secured Rachmat's own career, and he was appointed as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1966–68) in Suharto's cabinet.

The instruction of Pancasila Operation stated that “with all authorities in all Kodam VIII/ Brawijaya, together with other *Angkatan*, Panca Tunggal, and other apparatus, we should improve the implementation of Dwikora and *continue the extermination of the remaining contra revolutionary 30 September Movement down to its roots to create peace and order in East Java*”.¹⁰² In this operation, every battalion was obliged to report local situation every six hours to a joint command post in Surabaya.¹⁰³ The Operation also instructed all Korem to “execute every military or non-military acts, inside or outside our own troops, in accordance with the Commander's policy”.¹⁰⁴ This instruction implies the need to align every movement under one military command against the left. Furthermore, the operation also targeted the left within military bodies. For those military personnel who conducted disciplinary offense related to the 30 September Movement, they will be handed over to the screening team of Kodam VIII.¹⁰⁵

Pancasila Operation also explicitly instructed the use of civilian forces. The document stated that “for the purpose of the operation, local civilian forces that clearly expressed their support for the army can be used in eliminating September 30th Movement”.¹⁰⁶ Although the document did not specify further the involvement of civilians, it opened a spectrum of possibilities for civilians to conduct violence against the left. Furthermore, the instruction of the Pancasila Operation was (by the least) acknowledged by the National Army Commander (*Panglima Angkatan Darat/ Menpangad*) A.H. Nasution (1962–66) and the Commander of Army Strategic Reserve Command (*Panglima Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat/ Pangkostrad*) Suharto (1963–65).¹⁰⁷ This suggests that the operation was structurally coordinated, or by the least acknowledged, among every level in the army, from the central to the regions.

¹⁰⁰ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 212.

¹⁰¹ None of the existing studies on East Java have mentioned this operation before.

¹⁰² Perintah Operasi No. 5 Pantja Sila, 21 Oktober 1965, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia, 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

¹⁰⁵ Prinmin No. 57/ 1965 dari Prinop No. 5. 21 Oktober 1965, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Instruction of Pancasila Operation was sent to Commanders of Battle Command in Korem 081 to 083, commanders of battalions in East Java, Menpangad, Pangkostrad, the commander of Kodam/ Regional Military Command Diponegoro (Central Java) and Udayana (Bali), and to other unit in Brawijaya command. *Ibid.*, 4.

After the release of the Pancasila Operation, a number of radiograms were sent to the Kodim under Korem 083 Malang to organized the use of civilians. A radiogram released on 26 October 1965 instructed that “progressive revolutionary organizations that stand behind the army to crush the counter revolutionary movement should be under Puterpra” (former name for Koramil), including combative military trainings by individuals or groups.¹⁰⁸ This suggests the army’s attempt to stop random mass movements and start a consolidation under the *Koramil* (Military Precinct Command at the district level). Later in November 1965, the Puterpra was ordered to be armed, including the Technical Assistance Unit (*Unit Bantuan Teknis*) who should be assigned later on to the weak Puterpra.¹⁰⁹ Arming the Purtepra also meant that military forces at the lowest level (sub-district) should be more aggressive in eliminating leftists.

Soon after this radiogram, a series of documents also give similar instructions regarding civilian forces. On 23 November 1965, a radiogram ordered:¹¹⁰

- 1 Mass action groups that do not yet have an office should be provided by Catur Tunggal. Put them together with *Hansip* (civil defence).
- 2 KAMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia/ Indonesia University’s Student Action Front*) should be united with the mentioned AA¹¹¹ and include University’s Student Regiment (*Resimen Mahasiswa*)
- 3 The task of the mentioned AA is to assist the army by:
 - 1 Forming teams to register residents at the level of village neighbourhood, village, sub-district, district or regents, national companies, private companies, universities, and so on in order to dismiss PKI internally (it should be dismissed by the end of November)
 - 2 Providing information
 - 3 Providing information and indoctrination for ex PKI sympathizers who wants to be good citizens
 - 4 Conducting operations together with ABRI
 - 5 Psy war defense
 - 6 Conducting counter
 - 7 Staying anti Neo-colonialism (*Nekolim*)¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ The radiogram also instructed to form investigation team (*tim pengusut*) from district to sub-district levels, where members should be adjusted with local situation. Radiogram T. 298/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 26 October 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹⁰⁹ Radiogram T. 658/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 6 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹⁰ Radiogram T. 702/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 23 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹¹ The document did not give further explanation of AA. However, a term of Golongan Agama/ Ansor (Religious group/ Ansor) was used in a situation report of Korem 081 Madiun and Kediri. It is highly possible that AA in this document also referred to this specific civilian group. G30S/ PKI di Daerah Korem 081 Madiun-Kediri, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹² The term *Nekolim* was introduced by Sukarno in relation to the Indonesian revolution. While during Sukarno period, anti-*Nekolim* refers to the support for independence and anti-Dutch or foreign intervention, after the 30 September Movement, the meaning of anti-*Nekolim* transforms into supporting communists, because the communists were considered as a threat to Indonesia’s revolution.

The document did not explain further the details of each point. However, it is clear that the army was organizing civilian forces under their command to perform registration of residents (presumably screening team similar to Central Java's Teperda),¹¹³ give assistance in military operations and participate in giving indoctrination, presumably amongst villagers and detainees who were accused as communists and leftists.

The pattern of the killings also resonates with the case of Aceh and Bali. People were initially detained before they were transferred to a certain place to be killed. In my fieldwork in a village in South Malang, Jono, a local merchant who was a former Catholic Youth/ PMKRI activist shared his experience during the killings. He was assigned as a local guard in the village at that time, and he saw prisoners being taken away and killed in a public cemetery:

I saw it [the military operation]. People were detained, including my friends. They were brought to the police station, and punished, but not through a judge, prosecutors and so on. They were accused of being militant PKI members, such as members of a branch, sub-branch, and so on. Others were only followers – many of them... It was the army who did the killings... In the public cemetery, next to the main road, they dug a large pit. People's hands were tied in the back, then they were shot with an AK [presumably referring to AK-47, a type of firearm]... Anzor assisted, sometimes they also did the slaughter. It was mob rule. Maybe they have a grudge, so this was their chance to get rid [of the PKI].¹¹⁴

Jono explicitly pointed to the collaboration of the army and Anzor (NU youth wing). This may explain why an anti-communist operation was a success even in an area, such as the district in South Malang, where 90% of the residents were considered to be communists. It was an operation which heavily utilized civilian forces, and therefore, resulted in little resistance on the ground.

Instructions to organize civilian forces under the army command continued towards the end of November 1965. For example, a radiogram on 25 November 1965 ordered a middle-rank officer (*Pama/ perwira menengah*) to directly lead mass actions.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, two days later, another radiogram instructed cessation of all mass movements; and channel AA through *Hansip*, provided them (mass movements) with uniforms and let the army directed them.¹¹⁶ This was a very explicit order of transforming civilians into military personnel. Another radiogram clearly stated the acknowledgement of KAMI as the only student organization permitted by the military, where all students were obliged to be involved with the main task of annihilating the 30 September Movement under the army leadership.¹¹⁷ Through these instructions of civilian's involvement,

¹¹³ This is similar to Central Java's Teperda or Regional Investigation Teams (Team Pemeriksa Daerah), which had the duty of interrogating and collecting information from prisoners. Formation of Teperda was directly instructed by Suharto. Mathias Hammer, "The Organisation of the Killings and the Interaction between State and Society in Central Java, 1965," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 32, no. 3 (2013): 53.

¹¹⁴ Jono (ex-PMKRI activist), in discussion with the author, 23 August 2016.

¹¹⁵ Radiogram T. 706/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 25 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹⁶ Radiogram T. 702/1965 directed to Kodim 0818–0825 and 0831 on 27 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹⁷ Radiogram ST.705/1965 on 25 November 1965, "G30S/ PKI tahun 1965," No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

it is not surprising that by 4 December 1965, the Commander of Korem 083 reported to the Brawijaya Commander that all PKI under Korem 083 area were “terminated.”¹¹⁸

To conclude, there are two strategies that are highly significant in the anti-communist operation in East Java. First is the establishment of Pupelrada that provides legal bases for the Korems under the Brawijaya command to perform arrests, confiscate properties, and other extra-judicial acts. The second is the use of civilian forces in the Pancasila Operation, which had various tasks from providing information to directly assist the operation. Although detailed evidence (so far) about civilian involvement can only be found in Korem 083 Malang, it is highly possible that other Korem in East Java, and even in other provinces, also produce similar instructions. This shows that although the civilian forces moved organically in the first weeks after the 30 September Movement, it was eventually coordinated under the structural command of the East Java army command since late October 1965.

Records of Detention

Another indication that the army was monitoring the violence was through their records of detainees. In the report of the 30 September Movement in Korem 083 Malang, a specific log was available to track the number of detainees. These numbers were recorded daily, starting in early November (at least in Korem 083 – it may be earlier or later in other regions) until December 1965. The mechanism for recording the numbers was not mentioned, but in several dates, the document also provides numbers of prisoners in each Kodim (see data from 10, 13 and 16 November). This suggests that the numbers were possibly generated hierarchically, presumably from Koramil, to Kodim, and then to Korem 083, and maybe reported further to Kodam V/ Brawijaya. Prisoner’s data at Kodim level was also found in other regions, such as Kodim 0809 Kediri which listed 245 civil services, 211 village officials and 2,955 civilians in detention.¹¹⁹

Based on [Table 1](#), we can see that the number of prisoners increased from early November (2,472 people) to early December (6,259 people), and decreased slowly towards the end of December (4,431 people). Note that on 12 December 1965, the number of prisoners decreased sharply only within twelve hours. There is no further explanation of this change. However, keeping in mind that mass killing was usually preceded by detention; it is highly possible that the numbers declined because the detainees were killed.¹²⁰ Their detention period was also uncertain. In Korem 082 in Mojokerto, for example, there were still 7,398 people detained until the end of 1966. The report further explained that since October 1966, Korem 082 no longer received maintenance fund or donation for the prisoners, so they have to rely on their own families for food for the remaining detention period.¹²¹ Detainees were not always held in state prisons or other military facilities. In Malang and surrounding areas, ex-Chinese schools or factories were transformed into detention centres, managed

¹¹⁸ Laporan Gerakan 30 September/ PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹¹⁹ The date of this record is not available. Rekapitulasi: Daftar korban-korban penumpasan GESTAPU/ PKI di wilayah Kodim 0809/ Kediri, Komando Distrik Militer 0809 Kediri, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

¹²⁰ See Roosa, “The State Knowledge About an Open Secret”.

¹²¹ Kegiatan Kopur II/ Rem-082 Dalam Penumpasan Gerakan 30 September, “G30S/ PKI tahun 1965,” No. Inventaris 316-a, Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia, 5.

Table 1. Number of prisoners in Kopur Siaga III/083, November–December 1965.

Date	Military Personnel	Civilians in the Armed Forces	Public Civilians	Total Prisoners	Prisoners in Kodim
4 November 1965				2,472	-
10 November 1965				2,337	Kodim 0818: 471 people Malang, Kodim 0819 Pasuruan: 165 people, Kodim 0820 Probolinggo: 262 people, Kodim 0821 Lumajang: 118 people, Kodim 0822 Bondowoso: 271 people, Kodim 0823 Situbondo: 158 people, Kodim 0824 Jember: 215 people, Kodim 0825 Banyuwangi: 553 people, Kodim 0831 Ponorogo: 129 people
13 November	39		2,428	2,467	Kodim 0818: 529 people Malang, Kodim 0819 Pasuruan: 241 people, Kodim 0820 Probolinggo: 106 people, Kodim 0821 Lumajang: 222 people, Kodim 0822 Bondowoso: 271 people, Kodim 0823 Situbondo: 196 people, Kodim 0824 Jember: 215 people, Kodim 0825 Banyuwangi: 558 people, Kodim 0831 Ponorogo: 129 people
16 November				2,821	Kodim 0818: 543 people Malang, Kodim 0819 Pasuruan: 253 people, Kodim 0820 Probolinggo: 204 people, Kodim 0821 Lumajang: 235 people, Kodim 0822 Bondowoso: 441 people, Kodim 0823 Situbondo: 243 people, Kodim 0824 Jember: 215 people, Kodim 0825 Banyuwangi: 558 people, Kodim 0831 Ponorogo: 129 people
20 November	34	1	3,959	3,997	-
21 November	45	1	3,974	4,020	-
23 November				1,509	-
27 November	102	1	4,903	5,006	-
28 November				5,034	-
4 December 1965	91	1	5,450		-
6 December				6,175	-
7 December, until 08.00	106	2	6,183		-
7 December	133	20	5,652	5,805	-
8 December	18	100	6,109	6,217	-
9 December	106	17	6,087	6,210	-
12 December, until 12.00	134	14	6,111	6,259	-
12 December, until 24.00	134	14	5,650	5,798	-
15 December	133	20	5,454	5,607	-
17 December	134	14	5,904	6,052	-
21 December	133	20	5,480	5,633	-
23 December	163	19	5,435		-
27 December	224	27	4,193	4,444	-
29 December	213	27	4,191	4,431	-

Source: Laporan G30S/PKI di Daerah Kopur Siaga III/ 83 Malang-Besuki, "G30S/PKI tahun 1965", no. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia.

by the army.¹²² If the acts of recording prisoners occurred in different places, it indicates that the military was monitoring, if not fully aware, of the violence that was happening.¹²³

¹²² See Oei Hiem Hwie, *Memoar Oei Hiem Hwie: Dari Pulau Buru Sampai Medayu Agung* (Surabaya: Wastu Lanas Grafika, 2015).

¹²³ Not only in East Java, the military in Aceh also recorded 1,941 public deaths since early October 1965. Melvin, *The Army and The Indonesian Genocide*, 162–3.

Conclusion

Through the case of East Java, this article added a substantial proof that the army was structurally involved in the 1965–66 violence. At least two important instructions have been discovered in relation to the escalation of violence. First was the establishment of *Pupelrada* in mid-October 1965, which became a turning point for East Java's military resort commands (Korem) to have extra-judicial powers in executing the anti-communist purge in their area. The second was the release of the Pancasila Operation on 21 October 1965 by East Java's military commander, which clearly stated the use of civilians in the army's operation against the communists. These instructions for anti-communist purge in East Java came a bit late compared to other areas such as Aceh or Central Java, but this was not merely a problem of indecisive attitude of the commander or a technical limitation (shortage of troops). The delay should also be seen as a period of alliance shift – that the Brawijaya command needs to form new alliances (both at the top structural level and the grassroots) against the communists and to assure that it will be sufficient to start a massive purge in the province.

At the same time, the existence of a structural order to mobilize and organize civilian groups against the left in East Java confutes the previous assumptions that the gruesome bloodbath in this area was merely a civilian's wrongdoing or a running *amok*. It is true that the violence was already commenced by civilian groups right after the announcement that PKI was responsible for the 30 September Movement. From early until mid-October 1965, this violence seems to be unsystematic and rely mostly on the initiatives of local army commanders, Ansor, and other religious or nationalist groups. However, this situation transforms along with the release of Pancasila Operation on 21 October 1965 which clearly instructed the utilization of civilian groups to assist the annihilation of communists and leftists. The pattern of killings was very similar to those in Aceh and Bali, where people were firstly detained and then killed.

Even within this alliance between the military and civilians, the latter should not be seen as agentless individuals. The collaboration succeeded because these civilians also carried their own agendas during the violence. These agendas may stretch from organizational or ideological reasoning (for example eliminating political rivals or securing economic properties) to individual levels (for example act of revenge towards a communist neighbour or attempt to grab the neighbor's land). Added to these motives, are the rewards that the civilians obtained from their collaboration in 1965–66 violence. Rewards may take different forms, from properties to civil service employment and development projects. In short, civilians were gaining benefits from their supra-local attachment to the army. However, even with these rewards and motives, the violence would not have been highly extensive and gruesome if the army did not provide opportunities to do so. Combine with similar findings in Aceh and Banyuwangi, I can strongly conclude that participation of civilians in the 1965–66 was a result of the army's coordination.

This leads us to some insights on collaboration of violence that I have mentioned at the beginning of this article. Collaboration between military and civilians during the 1965–66 violence has a long historical connection to Indonesia's military political nature, modelling the guerrilla warfare during the Indonesian revolution. Although power relation and inequality exist in this collaboration, it could not be easily identified as a minority or subordinate group assisting the hegemonic power, as Weiss-Wendt & Üngör initially suggested. NU, the Catholic Party, or the student's union KAMI, for example, are clearly

not a minority – they were not deprived groups in social, political, and economic terms. However, towards the 30 September Movement and afterwards, there had been intense propaganda on the threat of PKI launched by elites of these rightist groups and factions in the military. The feeling of subordination and deprivation were constructed by this act, producing an imaginary idea that these religious and nationalist groups will lose their economic resources, political dominancy, and social power, if the PKI continued to exist. This imaginary reasoning, together with the army's structural order, succeeded in mobilizing large masses in East Java to move aggressively against the left. Collaboration in this case, was not purely based on the subordinate's group deficiencies, but also orchestrated by the hegemonic power by utilizing long existed resentment between the left and right.

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