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Reflections on the Indonesian Massacres in Cold War Historiography and Political Economy

Adam Hughes Henry
Australian National University

In a previous article for Genocide Studies International *(8.2), entitled "Polluting the Waters," an examination of the anti-communist propaganda campaigns and their relationship to the Indonesian massacres was offered. This follow up article presents provocative reflections on the manner in which the massacres have been treated within the anti-communist Cold War canon. The treatment of the massacres is an example of how ideological factors have not only shaped perceptions of this event, it has also falsified and diminished important elements of this history. The result has been to effectively excuse the perpetrators of the Indonesian massacres on ideological grounds leaving the victims to be forgotten.*

Key words: Indonesian massacres, Cold War, political economy, historiography, moral relativism, genocide

The Alleged Coup

On 1 October 1965, a group known as the 30 September Movement killed six Indonesian generals and one lieutenant. Under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, the Movement took over the national radio station to broadcast a brief message claiming they were protecting Indonesian President Sukarno from a right wing coup to be initiated by Indonesian Generals supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). These actions are considered very poorly planned, badly executed, and as events unfolded, doomed to quickly unravel. Furthermore, the mystery and confusion created by their claims and strategic actions made any factual statements about what had actually occurred on 1 October 1965 extremely difficult if not impossible to verify. Irrespective of this fact, Indonesian army propagandists and their anti-communist supporters quickly presented the actions of the Movement as a major communist conspiracy, which implicated the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and anyone else considered suspicious. Central to this rapid declaration of PKI guilt and communist conspiracy was the Indonesian army and sympathetic American, British, and Australian supporters—particularly in the embassies—who conducted a relentless propaganda campaign to undermine Sukarno and blacken the name of the PKI.

In charge of the army response was Major General Suharto, commander of Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat (KOSTRAD), who quickly reestablished army control. In the period following 1 October, under the authority and directives of Suharto, the Indonesian army constructed its propaganda and conducted one of the worst massacres of the twentieth century with their adjunct civilian and anti-communist militias (including in some cases criminal gangs). The victims of this mass slaughter were killed and imprisoned on the basis that they were either members of the

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PKI, secret members, or so-called sympathizers. In other words, there is no question that the overwhelming majority of the massacre victims all across the archipelago had nothing at all to do with the events of 1 October. Shaping the accepted Cold War history inside Indonesia, and in the West to this day, have been the numerous mistruths deliberately perpetrated by the propagandists during 1965–1966 to justify the actions of the Indonesian army. To unravel these propaganda falsehoods brings us face to face with serious questions over not only how the victors can write history, but also how the victims of political mass killings can be relegated to irrelevance.

Mass Killings

During the twentieth century there have been a number of major mass atrocities and genocides highlighting the terrible role of organized and systematic approaches to mass killing—each carefully studied. The Armenian genocide, Stalin's Purges, the Holocaust, Mao's China, Pol Pot's Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda have all become specialized areas of historical study and analysis. In comparison, the Indonesian massacres, East Timor, the Congo, or Sudan—while studied—often fail to elicit similar general reverence or outrage. The controversies and debates generated around such events have sometimes tended to obscure the historical reality that mass atrocities and actions, both benign and malevolent, leading directly or indirectly to the cultural, political, and demographic destruction of another group are legion throughout human history. As highlighted by the work of David Stannard, and more recently by Dirk Moses, the sociological and political responses to such events are often revealed by their subsequent historical treatment.[1] For example, the destruction of the indigenous people of North and South America by European invaders/colonists is surely the single greatest demographic catastrophe in human history, yet has been systematically justified and excused by countless Western historians despite a very clear genocidal element in this process.[2]

Mass atrocities and genocides elicit a range of reactions from historians and the public: (*a*) ethical indignation and moral outrage, (*b*) semantic arguments over the definition of genocide, (*c*) statistical arguments over the number of deaths, (*d*) genocide denial, (*e*) indifference to the victims, and (*f*) cultural/political justification. The treatment of the Indonesian massacres within the anti-communist Cold War history canon, therefore, might arguably be considered in the following manner: a minority historical and political assessment which has embraced (*a*) ethical indignation and moral outrage, (*b*) semantic arguments over the definition of genocide, and (*c*) statistical arguments over the number of deaths; and a majority historical and political assessment which has involved (*c*) statistical arguments over the number of deaths, and certainly (*e*) indifference to the victims and (*f*) cultural/political justification.

The deliberate corruption of Indonesian history by Suharto and the Indonesian army began almost immediately after the alleged communist coup of 1 October 1965. Saskia Wieringa highlights how the historical manipulations and propaganda of the Indonesian army became official history in Suharto's Indonesia—a place where the rule of force and fear protected its corrupt authority for decades.[3] Kate McGregor notes that this manipulated historical record became a self-justifying historical narrative for the New Order regime that encouraged its false cult and enforced its orthodoxies.[4] Wieringa highlights that the demonization of the "Gerwani" women through a false torture and mutilation story[5] was central to overall army efforts to marginalize the PKI and justify severe repression.[6] However, as detailed in my previous article "Polluting the Waters,"[7] this entire process of falsifying the history of Indonesia in 1965 for ideological

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gain was not only directly and indirectly assisted by the Australians, British, and Americans while the Indonesian army conducted wholesale massacres, but the political outcome was applauded, the victims of the massacres forgotten, and the Suharto regime became a favorite of Canberra, London, and Washington for decades to come. Within the authoritarian system of New Order Indonesia, questioning the official history of 1965 and openly speaking about the massacres was dangerous. As the documentary films *Shadowplay* and *The Act of Killing* demonstrate, the massacres have long been, and remain, a dangerous and explosive area of knowledge and inquiry. The family and friends of massacre victims and those that survived the cataclysm, have had significant obstacles in telling their story. These are after all figures that have been marginalized into the shadows of Indonesian history since 1965.

The basic facts about the Indonesian massacres are not obscure, nor are they difficult to comprehend. The difficulty in the anti-communist Cold War canon, as will be outlined, is to even consider the possibility of condemning the massacres and the perpetrators. Such information was obviously known to the Indonesian army and the Western Ambassadors, and (as the work of Richard Tanter highlights) even received reasonable media coverage during the period. The official CIA history about the post 1 October events concluded that

> in terms of the numbers killed the anti-PKI massacres in Indonesia rank as one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s. In this regard, the Indonesian coup is certainly one of the most significant events of the twentieth century, far more significant than many other events that have received much more publicity.[8]

In terms of the numbers killed, the official CIA history suggests that the Indonesian massacres should be ranked historically with the Soviet purges, the Nazis, and Maoist China as a phenomenon of state organized mass killing—all being prime examples of tyranny and terror within mainstream Western scholarly analysis. All of these historical events are also strongly connected to the various universal legal concepts within international law, such as crimes again humanity.[9] If these events are to be considered comparable a historical phenomenon, as the CIA history argues, we need to account for the differing reactions to mass killings. Clearly the reaction within Indonesia, Australia, Britain, and the United States to massacres carried out by the Nazis or Communists is very different from what occurs with regards to Indonesia, and later in West Papua or East Timor. The destruction of the PKI in 1965 and 1966 was ultimately delivered by organized wholesale massacres with Western backing for the Indonesian army. This destruction was greeted by enthusiasm in many quarters. Chomsky points out that the outcome of the Indonesian massacres "was greeted with undisguised euphoria here [in the US], across the political spectrum, and very much in public. It has to be read to be believed."[10] Certainly Australian ambassador Keith Shann, British ambassador Andrew Gilchrist, US ambassador Marshall Green, and their respective governments greeted the eventual demise of the PKI and Sukarno with satisfaction. If one mass atrocity, such as Rwanda, can be condemned but the outcome from a very comparable atrocity in Indonesia ultimately praised, this moves the historical debate beyond the realm of mere facts. Seeking explanations for such Western reactions requires exploration of other possible ideological and cultural factors.

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Ideological Considerations for Historians

Chomsky and Herman's concept of benign, nefarious, and constructive terror offers an ideological and theoretical framework to explain why the US government and media condemn certain atrocities while others, such as in Indonesia in 1965, can be ignored and applauded.[11] Benign terror can be defined as human rights abuses, terrorism, war crimes, and the like, unconnected to the US government and the corporate media, which remain relatively disinterested in the event. Nefarious terror are human rights abuses, terrorism, war crimes, and the like, committed by an official enemy where the US government and corporate media extoll the language of human rights and the moral virtues of the American condemnation. Constructive terror is the same or similar acts committed by allies or clients of the US. The actions of these client groups or allied governments are consistent with objectives favorable to US (or Western) foreign policy. Therefore, the language of human rights and morality is not employed; in fact, the political outcomes can be applauded. The Indonesian massacres would therefore fit the category of constructive terror. One weakness with such a framework for non-American scholars is that it is focused on the US and the operations of US corporate media. Yet in the realm of Cold War anti-communism, the US was clearly a most significant influence on the attitudes of close English-speaking allies. A major strength of the Chomsky/Herman approach to examining the US government and media treatment of mass violence and mass atrocities, is the inherent universality of the theoretical framework—all terror, human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, and related phenomenon are equal because they are *all* unjust and unethical. Any distinctions made between similar events are not done because some are better or worse than others, they are made based on political or ideological grounds.

The influential American Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis offers another ideological and theoretical framework, and has postulated philosophical and comparative concepts rejecting the notion of any 'moral equivalence' between the actions of the USSR, China, and the US, or Communists and non-Communists during the Cold War.[12] While an expert Cold War historian is presenting this framework as an argument, it implicitly rejects the notion of universal human rights on a case-by-case basis. For example, the actions of the Soviets and Chinese should not be compared to the actions of the United States, and presumably its allies, on a factual basis of what *actually* occurred only, but must be assessed through an ideological framework. In this regard Gaddis' rejection of "moral equivalence" places strict emphasis on the illegitimacy and immoral impulses of the Communists. This framework asks for philosophical acceptance that the actions of the anti-Communists are understandable in the circumstances, and for the most part even well-intentioned. Anti-communist excesses are unfortunate, but nevertheless acts of pragmatism need to be seen within a context of defending a greater moral basis or good.[13] It should be noted that Gaddis' argument of justification is already well embedded in various historical discourses in regards to the Cold War, particularly those of the US, UK, and Australia among many others. The justification narrative is also a recognizable ingredient in the history of Western colonial expansion, and Western political and nationalist development in settler societies in the context of relations between the settler/invader and indigenous peoples.[14] In another context, countless histories of World War II and the desperate struggle against Germany and Japan provide ample evidence of the phenomenon of ingrained moral relativism or justification within historical methodology. In summary, within the framework of

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Chomsky and Herman, indifference to the Indonesian massacres is explained as constructive terror, which brings about an outcome beneficial to Washington and its allies. The rise of Suharto is therefore praised by the US government and corporate media; the political outcome is paramount while the massacres become an irrelevance or inconvenient curiosity. This is an explanatory framework using an ideological and theoretical model to primarily examine US government and media reactions to various atrocities. Using the framework of Gaddis—an ideological 'moral' argument about Cold War—the anti-communist massacres in Indonesia would no doubt be considered unfortunate, perhaps even personally horrifying, but the greater good of opposing communism could still be justified. An oppressive right wing military dictatorship for Indonesia open to international investment and economic tutelage is preferable to an Indonesia under strong communist influence. The massacres ultimately required pragmatism because, within such a framework, the ideological enemy is assumed to be capable of doing worse if given the opportunity.

Historical Implications of Imperialism

Edward Said's *Orientalism* provides a literary and historical critique of Western thought regarding Asia and the Middle East.[15] The work is one of the foundation stones of post-colonial studies. Said highlights that the Western construction of an exotic and savage Orient eventually worked through an imperial gaze of highly disproportionate power relationships between East and West. By the eighteenth century the numerous peoples of the Orient did not meet Westerners as equals, but often as conquered colonial subjects or imperial curiosities. Within Said's framework, the idea of Asians behaving in inexplicable ways fits neatly into a well-established imperial ideology. The Indonesian massacres then become an inexplicable phenomenon linked to the culturally intangible DNA of exotic Indonesians. The idea of the massacres becomes connected to irrational Indonesians running amok and spontaneously killing each other in terrible numbers. John Roosa has noted that Suharto, under use authority the massacres were conducted, alluded to the concept of spontaneous mass killing to explain away the massacre phenomenon during that period.[16] The massacres were, with some exceptions, well-coordinated and controlled by the Indonesian army, and the worst cases were neither accidental nor spontaneous examples of mass violence.[17] Media reports from the period and diplomatic archival records show that the army under Suharto's authority was the prime mover in the slaughter; this was all obviously known to the Western diplomats at the time.

The groundbreaking work of David Stannard provides some other important historical perspectives on Western imperialism and how historians have written about this subject. He notes that, in the most profound ways, the destruction and subjugation of indigenous people was fundamentally embraced by the settler colonial project in South and North America. Stannard highlights that within European colonialism, in the New World and elsewhere, ruthless military force, ethnic cleansing, enslavement, genocidal practices, disease, starvation, assimilation, and repeated massacres against indigenous peoples were routine.[18] The end results, for example the eventual establishment of new nations like the US, Canada or Australia have been endlessly justified and excused. Such elements and concepts are very much a part of the Australian, British, and American historical experience of both Empire and settler colonialism on the fringes of the frontier. It is interesting to contemplate that diplomatic life for Western ambassadors from Australia, Britain and the United States in Jakarta during the 1960s could well have

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been seen as fighting the Cold War among the "natives" in the cultural and ideological frontier of alien Asia.[19] There is also the question of ingrained ethnocentrism and crude racism that are also connected to this process.

In the 1960s, the US military—from its highest to lowest ranks—routinely described the Vietnamese as "termites," "gooks," and "slopes," and the extraordinary Vietnamese civilian casualties of the war became body counts, statistics, or collateral damage. The ideological assumptions of Western anti-communism, as with the long history of Western Imperialism and settler colonialism, are clearly imbued with racial and ethnocentric overtones that have commodified non-Western cultures and territories, and devalued non-Western life. Within such a framework, the deaths of 500,000 to one million Indonesians—while sometimes uncomfortable—has generally elicited a very pragmatic response. When the Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt visited the US in 1966, he commented bluntly about Indonesian events stating that "with 500,000 to a million communist sympathizers knocked off . . . I think it is safe to assume a reorientation [in Indonesia] has taken place."[20]

Indonesia as a Prize

Within the historical anti-communist context of this period, Indonesia was also a strategic and economic prize to be won and exploited. This was because of Indonesia's potential for massive foreign investment, and that Sukarno was hindering foreign (particularly Western) access to its abundant raw materials. Again the destruction of the PKI and the fall of Sukarno are to be applauded, while the massacres and their historical significance are clearly diminished by such "economic" assumptions. The strategic and potential economic importance of Indonesia to nations such as Australia, Britain, and particularly the US, should not be underestimated. Since 1949, Indonesia had easily been the most significant strategic concern for Washington in South East Asia. The events in Indonesia during 1965–1966 altered the Cold War balance in the South East Asian region in favor of anti-communism. McGeorge Bundy, national security advisor for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson even suggested, in retrospect, that the United States should have withdrawn from Vietnam in 1966 after the anti-communist victory Indonesia.[21] The US economic objectives for Indonesia were also connected to very particular notions of economic development, or "modernization theory", built on the precepts of military control over the economy and the nation. Such concepts were central to much American social scientific thinking and were promoted vigorously by groups, such as the Ford Foundation, as a grand vision for *their* Indonesia.[22]

The economic factors that would determine a framework for *their* new and improved post-Sukarno Indonesia were not merely abstract philosophical notions; these were ideas and theories that would be eagerly implemented at the appropriate moment. That moment came in 1967, after Suharto had deposed Sukarno and assumed the presidency. The entire Indonesian economy would be reorganized along the lines designated by Suharto's Indonesian economists (trained in the US and dubbed the "Berkley Mafia"), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and transnational corporations (TNCs). After reshaping the Indonesian political landscape with army organized mass killings, Suharto and his pro-Western Indonesian technocrats refashioned the Indonesian economy. Of course this monument to modernization theory was not built on any national consensus, but as a direct consequence of the massacres and the political consequences therein. The Indonesian economy was deliberately opened to extraordinary, if not unfettered, levels of international investment and ownership

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(particularly from Japanese, American, European, and Australasian mining and oil interests). The new economic regime, endlessly praised by supporters in Australia, Britain, and America, preached that Indonesia's true path to modernization and national development hinged on the stability of Suharto's authoritarian rule, high foreign investment with near total access to Indonesia's abundant raw materials, the economic attractiveness of its cheap local labor force, and generous tax breaks for multinationals. Those at the highest levels, who perpetrated and oversaw the massacres did not face condemnation, they were rewarded with political power, great wealth and influence. For Japanese, American, European, and Australasian investors in the mining and oil sectors, the "new" Indonesia would prove to be very profitable indeed.[23]

The economic and political development of Indonesia within a framework acceptable to Washington and others was naturally more important than the massacres, as either a crime against humanity or even as a historical event, because the strategic imperatives of anti-communism had emerged victorious. Sukarno's nonaligned leadership and the political rise of the PKI were at the immediate core of Australian, British, and American concerns. This had been a long-term process and the calculating diplomatic reactions of 1965 were neither sudden nor out of character. This Western fear was connected to the serious possibility that the PKI might legitimately win power through constitutional means and that Sukarno would orientate Indonesia away from the West. These all can be considered issues of legitimate diplomatic concern for Canberra, London, and Washington to consider, yet the responses moved well beyond diplomacy or debate and into efforts to intervene in the internal affairs of Indonesia and pursue strategic gains.[24] Such then was the strategic and economic importance of Indonesia as a prize—it was considered appropriate to take advantage of the situation after 1 October 1965, even if PKI members, alleged sympathizers, and the innocent would be killed. Simpson highlights that

> Western officials, including US Assistant Secretary of State, George Ball, immediately recognized that 'If the Army does move they have [the] strength to wipe up [the] earth with [the] PKI and if they don't they may not have another chance.' . . . Since no Western intelligence agencies argued that PKI involvement in G30S extended to the rank and file, one can only conclude that their greatest fear was that the army might refrain from mass violence against the party's unarmed members and supporters.[25]

Then there is the question of the clear support the Indonesian army received from Western sources in terms of information warfare before and during the massacres. This was undertaken through black propaganda activities laying blame for the coup with the PKI and also through other clandestine activities clearly supporting the army as a post-Sukarno government in waiting. While the massacres were underway the Australians, British, and Americans even discussed with each other their ongoing information activities, aware that the purpose was to coordinate their efforts for this common goal.[26] All such decisions favored the Indonesian army—the same group carrying out and coordinating massacres the CIA described as being comparable to Stalin's purges or the Nazis. The deaths of 500,000 to a million human beings, and the imprisonment of perhaps one million more, are then marginalized and excused in the Cold War context because of satisfactory political and economic outcomes consistent with anti-communism.

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Diplomats and Cold War History

The actions of ambassadors Shann, Gilchrist, and Green have been excused as acting on an unpalatable yet an understandable range of strategic principles within the context of Cold War power politics. This does not underestimate the sentiment within certain sections of Indonesian society that helped provide willing hands for the killings, but it is likely an accurate reflection of how these diplomats might have understood their role in Indonesia during 1965. Yet their actions and attitudes toward the killings are also reflective of deeper ideological and cultural attitudes that have been outlined above. The anti-PKI initiatives of Shann, Gilchrist, and Green were all undertaken with the support of their respective governments. Their responses were certainly constructed not only in line with perceived national interests, but also firmly within the ideological and historical parameters of Western imperial culture and Anglosphere anti-communism. In this context, and in the one-dimensional world of "no moral equivalence", their actions can be lauded as sensible examples of skilled and professional diplomacy simply because it was aimed at Sukarno and the PKI. The massacres, their relationship with the Indonesian army, and the propaganda campaigns they oversaw being mere complications in the anti-communist victory. The ability of these diplomats to act in such a manner belied in the case of Shann and Gilchrist certain distress about their personal knowledge of the killings, but there is no evidence that Shann, Gilchrist, or Green wished to try and mitigate the scale of these atrocities or condemn the perpetrators—each carefully exploited this situation. Such is the power of the anti-communist canon that it becomes somehow inconceivable and almost unprofessional for Shann, Gilchrist, Green, or their governments to have acted in any other way. The combination of disciplined political ideology, the controlling discipline of bureaucratic culture, and the fragile nature of reputation and professional status is a potent recipe for bureaucratic obedience. Bureaucrats that are unable to carry out their duties in line with government policy and departmental instructions simply cease to be useful.[27] Certainly this fate did not befall Shann, Gilchrist, or Green in Indonesia or anywhere else in their long diplomatic careers. Canadian political philosopher John Ralston Saul offers an important corrective to this hollow notion of so-called professionalism. He defines immorality as knowingly doing something wrong of our own volition, but amorality as doing something wrong simply because structures and professional expectations demand it as a matter of course.[28] In light of the documentary record, it is doubtful that Shann, Gilchrist, or Green would have believed their actions in Indonesia in 1965 were wrong. Instead they appear to have reveled in being at the center of such key events.

For historians there is also the problem of untangling the propaganda from the fact, particularly when participants have only been too willing to continue the process of whitewashing the past. For example, key individuals have all attempted to justify themselves and manipulate the historical record well past the end of their professional careers.[29] In a 1987 interview conducted by Robert Martens (political officer at the US Embassy in Indonesia in 1965) with Green, Martens provided Green every opportunity to shape the historical record of 1965.[30] In his Indonesian memoirs, Green enthusiastically outlines various justifications for his actions and all of the key anti-communist allegations, many of which he was instrumental in helping to create or perpetuate through propaganda. His book is much like a "boy's own" adventure in the face of adversity against the exotic backdrop of Indonesia.[31] Green is not interested in telling the fullest truth about his own role in Indonesia during that period or about the massacres, but in

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justifying a Cold War narrative. As shown in the documentary *Shadow Play: Indonesia's Years of Living Dangerously*, the CIA's station head in Indonesia (1964–1966) Hugh Tovar does not acknowledge any significant CIA or US embassy activities prior to (or even after) 1 October, even when documentary evidence shows otherwise. He does though find humorous irony in the fact that the Indonesian army used Soviet supplied guns to help carry out the anti-communist killings.[32] Australian ambassador Keith Shann argued in 1985 that following 1 October 1965 the role of Radio Australia was not to contribute to "political instability" in Indonesia. He argued that "the proper role for Radio Australia [is] to develop and maintain friendship with our neighbours, rather than criticize our neighbours."[33] Australian diplomatic materials about the Indonesian coup were not released until 2008, twenty-three years after Shann's oral history interview for the National Library of Australia (NLA) in 1985. In the National Archives of Australia documents "Indonesia Political-Coup d'État of October 1965, 1838/280, 3034/2/1/8," Shann is mainly concerned with the possibility that Sukarno might somehow recover his authority and whether the Indonesian army would take the opportunity to deal with the PKI. Shann argued in 1985 that Indonesian stability was at the heart of his diplomatic approach after 1 October. If we reflect on the currently available Australian, British, and American documents, we find that Shann and his diplomatic colleagues were not in fact certain that Sukarno or the PKI were finished after 1 October 1965. This was precisely the reason for encouraging the army to take action. It was, therefore, the opportunity to contribute to (and exploit) Indonesian political instability that was really at the core of Shann's diplomatic approach after 1 October 1965.

There is continued secrecy within the Australian archives surrounding Shann's intelligence activities in Jakarta. In the 1985 interview Shann argued that for as close as he was to the Indonesian government and his own good personal relationship with Sukarno, he relied heavily on British intelligence given its "high quality."[34] This not only links Shann more closely to Gilchrist and the British Embassy, it is also a dubious explanation. As ambassador to Indonesia, Shann was a key player within Australian intelligence in South East Asia. As ambassador, he would have had a close relationship with Ken Wells, head of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service's (ASIS) Jakarta station. Shann's 1985 interview highlights a range of methodological problems regarding the Cold War. On the one hand he is retrospectively excusing his actions in Indonesia, on the other we still do not know the exact extent of what is being excused. His admission of having access to British intelligence information raises questions not only about his relationship with UK propaganda activities, but also about the role of ASIS. Yet there is an absence of any detailed documentary information within the Australian records about ASIS activities within Indonesia during or after the coup, its relationship with Shann, MI6, the CIA, or the Indonesian army. Given the scale of the massacres, the significance of them to Australian-Indonesian relations, and what is available in the US and UK archives, the absence of this information in Australia is a continued problem for historians interested in studying Cold War information warfare and the Indonesian massacres.

Blaming the Victims

Another issue is the continued and engrained moral relativism that in turn justifies blaming the dead victims. While *Pretext for Mass Murder* by John Roosa argues well that the Chairman of the PKI, Dipa Nusantara Aidit, had been personally involved in plotting for 1 October, and recent unearthing of materials in China seemingly supports

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aspects of this theory, there are many nuances in Roosa's scholarship. He acknowledges the continued unexplained curiosities and inconsistencies of the so-called coup, the important and perplexing organizational role of PKI member Sjam in the plot, and that Aidit kept his activities secret from the Central Committee of the PKI—in itself a rather curious fact. Some have seen in Roosa's scholarship confirmation of the "Communist coup" thesis, while ignoring the possibilities of a complicated, multifaceted, and simultaneous series of left wing and right wing intrigues during 1965, and indeed the numerous questions regarding Suharto's own role in 1965. But the implication is clear: if Aidit is involved then the Communists did mount a coup and are to be blamed for the consequences of 1 October 1965. However, this ignores two very basic elements: none of this was remotely confirmable in 1965, and crucially the overwhelming majority of victims continue to have no connections or knowledge of the 1 October 'coup'.

On 11 September 2015, a conference entitled "1965 and the Indonesian Coup: Fifty Years On" was held at the Australian National University (ANU) under the auspices of the university, the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT). The conference assembled many diplomatic and journalistic "eyewitnesses" to the experiences in Indonesia in 1965. One of the presenters, Geoffrey Miller, is worth considering. Posted to the Australian embassy from 1 October 1965, he openly supports the Indonesian government's position that the "PKI did it," but does not explain how he could have known this in 1965. Writing a pre-conference reflection on 1965 for the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA),[35] he excuses Suharto and mentions nothing of Shann's relentless propaganda campaign against Sukarno or the PKI (emanating from within the Australian Embassy in which he personally served). He writes at one point that "the great blemish on his [Suharto's] government, and the New Order, was of course the anti-PKI campaign." [36] While he concedes that the victims were overwhelming innocent, Miller writes that "the retribution [of 1965] was clearly terrible. Set against it must be the great improvements made by the Suharto regime in the lives of most Indonesians . . . ."[37] So yes, there were terrible killings of innocent people, but we must somehow weigh this crime against the fact that the perpetrators increased GDP and standards of living. It is perhaps not surprising that at a conference organised with the assistance of the DFAT, the role of Australian diplomacy in Indonesia in 1965—particularly the rich pickings available for Keith Shann—are not of any interest as a matter of philosophical and ethical concern. If it were, we may ask why it was appropriate to support the perpetrators of one of the great mass killings of the twentieth century, before, during, and after the event. Despite being arguably the most traumatic event in Indonesia's independent history, Miller writes that "it was a privilege to be present for part—a most dramatic part—of these historic events." [38] We might briefly pause here to speculate the reaction to similar admissions from any diplomat present in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia during any comparable dramatic and historic events.

Conclusions

While the Indonesian massacres had some connection to the Cold War, the events of 1 October 1965, and the September 30th Movement, this was only made more explicit because the Indonesian army and Western propaganda made it the most important justification and explanation for what occurred.[39] The idea that 500,000 to one million people and alleged sympathizers—without knowledge, let alone any connections to the events of 1 October 1965—can be consigned to the dustbin of history is effectively

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accommodated, excused, and justified within the standard anti-communist Cold War history narrative. Such ideological assumptions provide an intellectual framework where Shann, Gilchrist, and Green can be praised or excused for being diplomats who contributed to the "moral" anti-communist cause. Yet the basis of this framework clearly and knowingly diminishes the significance and horror of the Indonesian massacres as a major crime against humanity. This is not denial in any sense understood by scholars of genocide, human rights abuses, and mass atrocities—even the mainstream anti-communist canon acknowledges the Indonesian Massacres, the potential scale and brutality of the methods. However, the focus is not on the universality of crimes against humanity, but a pragmatic focus on the advantageous outcomes these mass killings helped to deliver for the anti-communist cause. Throughout the archives and post-event explanations from diplomats and spies, the victims of the Indonesian Massacres are either secondary or politically irrelevant. Instead of their own historical voice, they have morphed into mere footnotes for the more important and apparently more moral anti-communist Cold War story.

Adam Hughes Henry is an honorary lecturer, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU and a Visiting Fellow, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research, University of Canberra. He also teaches International Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Design, at UC. His book, *Independent Nation - Australia, the British Empire and the Origins of Australian-Indonesian Relations*, was published by CDU Press (2010). His second book, *The Gatekeepers of Australian Foreign Policy 1950–1966*, is published by Australian Scholarly Publishing (2015).

Notes

1. D.E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
2. Ibid.
3. Saskia Wieringa, "The Birth of the New Order State in Indonesia: Sexual Politics and Nationalism," in *Journal of Women's History* 15, 1 (2003): 70–91. See also Saskia Wieringa, "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, 4 (2011): 544–565.
4. Kate McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).
5. For more on the autopsies of the murdered generals on 5 October 1965 and the instructions of Suharto see Benedict Anderson, "How Did the Generals Die?" *Indonesia* 43 (1987): 109–134, see http://cip.cornell.edu/seap.indo/1107009317. See also Chris Hilton and Sylvie Le Clezio, *Shadow Play: Indonesia's Year of Living Dangerously*, directed by Chris Hilton (Australia: Ronin Films, 2001), www.roninfilms.com.au/feature/512/shadow-play.html.
6. Wieringa, "Sexual Slander." This women's movement traced its origins back to 1950 with the establishment of the Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar (Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women). It was concerned with women's rights, worker's rights, and poverty. In 1954, it changed its name to Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Movement), and by 1965 it had developed close associations with the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) with a greatly increased membership. Gerwani women were accused of torturing and mutilating the genitals of the kidnapped generals. This was a blatant piece of black propaganda, and the Indonesian army consistently used this story as part of its anti-communist campaign.
7. Adam Hughes Henry, "Polluting the Waters: A Brief History of Anti-Communist Propaganda during the Indonesian Massacres," *Genocide Studies International* 8, 2 (2014): 153–175.
8. United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Indonesia 1965: The Coup that Backfired*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1968), 71.
9. For example, see *The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity*, UN Doc. A/RES/2391(XXIII) (26 November 1968) www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/WarCrimes.aspx
10. Noam Chomsky, *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000), 166.

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11. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), 85–263.
12. John Lewis Gaddis, "On Moral Equivalency and Cold War History," *Ethics & International Affairs* 10 (1996): 131–148.
13. See Stéphane Courtois et al. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, trans. Jonathan Murphy (Harvard: Harvard UP, 1999); For an illustration of this phenomenon, using economist Amartya Sen's comparisons between mortality estimates in China and India, and their analytical treatment, see Chomsky, "Criminal Indictment and Self Adulation," in *Rogue States*, 176–178.
14. Stannard, *American Holocaust.*
15. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (UK: Penguin Books Limited, 2003).
16. John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'état in Indonesia* (Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 2006).
17. Ibid.
18. Stannard, *American Holocaust.*
19. As noted in an intriguing book review by Robert van Krieken, the work of Dirk Moses highlights the intellectual connections, similarities, and differences between the Nazi project in occupied Europe and the general history of European expansion particularly of the settler societies in relation to indigenous populations. This is certainly in the intellectual tradition of Raphaël Lampkin's analysis of the German occupation, or lebensraum, as a form of colonialism. See Robert van Krieken, "Review of A. Dirk Moses' *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*," *History Australia* 3, 1 (2006) http://journals.publishing.monash.edu/ojs/index.php/ha/article/view/437/449.
20. Henry Raymont,"Holt Says US Actions Protect All Non-Red Asia," *New York Times*, (6 July 1966).
21. Chomsky, *Rogue States,* 166.
22. For an examination of this phenomenon see Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S. Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008). For a critique of this process while it was being implemented in Indonesia by the New Order regime, see Rex Mortimer ed., *Showcase State: The Illusion of Indonesia's Accelerated Modernisation* (Angus & Robertson, 1973).
23. Apart from Simpson and Mortimer (above) see Inderjeet Parmar, "The Ford Foundation in Indonesia and the Asian Studies Network," in *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations and the Rise of American Power*, (New York: Columbia UP, 2013). See Nicholas Loubere, "What Makes a Tiger? Comparing Economic Growth in South Korea and Indonesia from 1945 through the Asian Financial Crisis," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 11, 1 (2011): 112–123. See also David Ransom, "Ford Country: Building an Elite for Indonesia," in *The Trojan Horse: A Radical Look at Foreign Aid*, rev. ed., ed. Steve Weissman (Palo Alto CA: Ramparts Press, 1975 revised edition), 93–116.
24. A.R. and G.M. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York: New York Press, 1995).
25. Bradley Simpson, "Accomplices in Atrocity," *Inside Indonesia* 99 (2010) http://www.insideindonesia.org/accomplices-in-atrocity (accessed 9 February 2016).
26. For some brief examples see "Quadripartite Discussions on Indonesia: Brief for Australian Delegates," November 1965, part 2, A1838/280, 3034/2/1/8, National Archives of Australia; "Indonesia Working Paper Submitted by Australian Delegation: Four Powers Conference on Information Activities in South East Asia and Oceania," *ICR: Special Information Committee Saigon*, 14–15 November 1966, A1838 563/6/6/9, National Archives of Australia; "Quadripartite Discussions on Indonesia. Brief for Australian Delegates," November 1965, part 2, A1838/280, 3034/2/1/8, National Archives of Australia; Keith Shann, "1340 Secret Radio Australia," *Radio Australia-Posts-Relations with Indonesia*, 5 November 1965, part 3, A1838 570/7/9, National Archives of Australia.
27. "Interview with the Hon. Kim Beazley Australian Ambassador to Washington," 20 October 2010 (Australian Embassy in Washington DC, USA).
28. John Ralston Saul, *The Doubters Companion: A Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense* (Toronto: Penguin Press, 1995), 22–23.
29. Simpson, *Economists with Guns,* 189.
30. See Charles Stuart Kennedy and Robert J. Martens, "Interview with Marshall Green," *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project* (12 May 1987) http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mfdip.2004gre04 (accessed 9 February 2016). Martens was the former political officer at the US Embassy in Indonesia in 1965 and worked under Green. In 1990, to journalist Kathy Kadane, he admitted to handing out lists of names to the Indonesian army; see Kathy Kadane, "A Letter to the Editor," *New York Review of Books* (10 Apr 1997). See also Thomas Blanton, *National Security Archive*

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Electronic Briefing Book No.52, (George Washington University, 2001) http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB52/ (accessed 9 February 2016).

31. Marshall Green, *Indonesia: Crisis and Transformation: 1965-1968* (Howells House, 1991)
32. Hilton and Le Clezio, *Shadow Play*.
33. K. Henderson, "Interview with Sir Keith Shann," 3 March 1985, NLA TRC 1857 (Canberra: National Library of Australia).
34. Ibid.
35. Geoffrey Miller, "1965, Jakarta: a Year of Living Dangerously," *Australian Institute of International Affairs* (2015) http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/1965-jakarta-a-year-of-living-dangerously/ (accessed 9 February 2016). Miller seriously suggests that the Australian embassy was in some ignorance of the mass killings: that information came in slowly, that no one had the ability to leave Jakarta to investigate, and so forth. When Miller's statements of "Australian ignorance" are compared with the archival materials available regarding Keith Shann—that Western embassies and intelligence services often shared information—and the amount of contemporary media coverage about the mass killings, Miller's statement is curious indeed. In brief see "Record of a Conversation with Marietta Smith," 9 November 1965, part 5, A1838/3034/2/1/8, National Archives of Australia; Keith Shann, "Telegram 1383 Shann to DEA," 12 November 1965, 6364/JA1965/10, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Canberra; Richard Tanter, "Witness Denied: The Australian Response to the Indonesian Holocaust 1965–1966" (paper prepared for the International Conference on Indonesia and the World in 1965, Goethe Institute, Jakarta, 18–21 January 2011), 8–15, 32–35; "Indonesia: Silent Settlement," *TIME Magazine*, 17 December 1965, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,834780,00.html; Keith Shann, "Telegram 1503 Jakarta to DEA," 19 December 1965, A6364/JA1965/10, National Archives of Australia; Robert Macklin, "The Killing Goes On," *The Age* (Melbourne,1966), cited in Richard Tanter, "Witness Denied," *Inside Indonesia* 71 (2002): 10–15. The idea that Shann and the Australian embassy were in ignorance of the mass killings is simply not historically credible.
36. Miller, "1965, Jakarta."
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. John Roosa and Joseph Nevins, "40 Years Later: The Mass Killings in Indonesia," *Counterpunch* (2005) http://www.globalresearch.ca/40-years-later-the-mass-killings-in-indonesia/1187.