

Witnessing State Socialism: The Lives of Indonesian Diaspora, Hungary-  
Czechoslovakia,  
1950s-1989

By  
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## Abstract

This thesis centers on the memory of a small community of Indonesian diaspora; reside in Budapest, Prague, and Brno. Once coming as students and/or the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) cadres in 1959 to 1963, they were part of the science, education, and cultural exchange program—mainly, but not strictly, initiated by states in the Eastern Europe and the Third World countries started in the 1950s. Following the 1965-66 communist massacre in Indonesia, these then students lost their Indonesian citizenship in 1966 for their affiliation with PKI and/or support for Sukarno. They were thus rendered stateless; under the auspices of the Socialist Hungary and the Czechoslovakia governments—and managed to get the citizenship of the two countries after the 1989 transformation.

This study is about their stories and experiences of living through state socialism. How was it like for them to witness state socialism? What are their memories of the some major events in the Long Sixties? How was their experiences of living through the transformation in the Hungary and (then) Czechoslovakia? How do they see themselves, and the societies they live in, change over times and events? What the experience of this small community can tell about the similarities and differences of both regimes; does it matter if one end up in one country or another? It draws upon oral history interviews with six émigrés and two second generation of this diaspora community; fragmented archival documents from different sources (personal archive, publications, non-governmental organization's archive, and National Archive); and related secondary researches.

It has two main part of findings—based on two periods; 1950s-1970 and 1989. For it entails a *longue durée*; the findings are thematic. It encompasses their slices of life; ranging from their

stories of migrating and integrating to their outlooks on some major political events, including the Hungarian Uprising, the Sino-Soviet Split, the Prague Spring, and the transformation. While trying to reconstruct their stories and life experiences, this study also tries to rediscover the connection between Indonesia-Hungary and Indonesia-Czechoslovakia—the moving of people, goods, and ideas between the countries; its flux and its rupture.

## Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude to the eight characters in this thesis for their willingness to share their stories with me—those are full of joy, funny, tragic, hope, despair, and all other emotions. I appreciate Balázs Trencsényi, my supervisor, for all the commentaries and list of references—and, for reminding me that I can do this research. His encouragement does mean a lot. Thanks also go to Stefano Bottoni, my second reader, for the questions that helped me to shape this research.

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Ayuningtyas has my heart—her “Just cry first. It’s okay to just cry. I’m here.” on the phone equals to a warm hug. Mara, you deserve the world! Riksa Afiaty; particularly, for being that one friend to be sarcastic about the world with!

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Best regards to BB—I cheer the fact that I get to know a significant puzzle of myself from sharing those bits and pieces with you; thanks! Loves for my lovely nephews, Agam and Abil—cute reminders that I can think about family beyond the past. Lastly, my little houseplants have all my admiration for being a metaphor for staying grounded. Looking after them, I grasp that I, too, can grow simply by sitting still with myself.

Budapest, June 2022

Sita Magfira

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## Introduction

### Historical Context

In the 1950s, a state-initiative friendship between socialist countries in the Eastern Europe and the Third World countries began; under the spirit of global socialism and decolonization.<sup>1</sup> This friendship manifested in various gestures, ranging from economy to academic and cultural programs.<sup>2</sup> People from Indonesia participated particularly in the science, education, and cultural exchange programs.<sup>3</sup> The relations between Indonesia-Hungarian People's Republic and Indonesia-Czechoslovakia is the specific historical context of this study. The genuine reason for choosing to focus on Indonesian relations with Hungary and Czechoslovakia was rather practical. Since it is a preliminary study on a topic that I envision to be a long-term project, this decision was more visible. Moreover, this is still an overlooked topic. Most studies are on Indonesia and Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> While there are different terms in referring to these two regions—East Central Europe and Global South, for example—I decided to use ‘Eastern Europe’ and ‘Third World’ because those are more fitting to the Cold War context. For further readings on the usage of the terms, see: Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, (New York, London: The New Press, 2007); “Second World,” *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Rob Kitchi and Nigel Thrift (eds.), (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009), p. 56; *Concepts of the Global South. Voices from Around the World*, Hollington, Andrea and Salverda, Tijo and Schwarz, Tobias and Tappe, Oliver (eds.), (Cologne: Global South Studies Center, 2015); see: Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) for references on world system theory—core, semi-periphery, and periphery countries; see: Oskar Halecki, “What is Eastern Europe?” *The Rise of Comparative History*, Balázs Trencsényi, Constantin Iordachi, Péter Apor (eds.), (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2021), pp. 299-310; Constantin Iordachi, “The Quest for Central Europe: Symbolic Geographies and Historical Regions,” *Regional and International Relations of Central Europe*, Zlatko Šabič and Petr Drulák (eds.), (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Among others, see: *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovksy, and Steffi Marung (eds.), (Bloomington: Indiana, 2020); *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation*, James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022). Talbot C. Imlay, “International Socialism and Decolonization during the 1950s: Competing Rights and the Postcolonial Order,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 4 (2013), pp. 1105-1132. *Alternative Globalizations* and *Socialism Goes Global* also elaborate a bit on the relations between this long-forgotten friendship and the rhetoric of former ‘Eastern Bloc’ is always not familiar with foreigners—that today’s governments mainly use to deal with refugee crisis.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that this mobility was not one-way. People from Czechoslovakia, for instance, travelled to Indonesia too. Here are some examples: A trip of Czechoslovakia puppeteers to Indonesia in 1956; a visit of SLUK (Slovak folksong and dance ensemble) to Indonesia in 1957; two postgraduate fellowships for Czechoslovaks in Indonesian university in 1959-1960—with joint funding between the two governments (see: Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury). It needs further research to unpack this topic.



relations.<sup>4</sup> At a speculative level, this, too, could lead to broader questions for further studies: 1) Was the specificity of these two countries as Soviet's satellites influential for the decision of the Indonesian government—and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as another main actor—in pursuing the relations? 2) Would it be the case that their specificities turn them as a model for Indonesia at that time? If so, was it because both could not be labelled as 'independent,' as Yugoslavia, for example, but still one could not consider that both countries were totally under Soviet's control—particularly by considering Sukarno's and PKI's moves towards Soviet during the 1950s until before 1965?<sup>5</sup>

This research will not answer above questions, but rather focus more on how different and similar was the regimes in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. As the result of the mobility, Indonesian Embassy in Prague record that there were 300 Indonesian students in the country from 1955 to 1963. The Embassy itself officially operated in 1957; the two countries signed a cultural agreement in 1958.<sup>6</sup> Around the same period, there was also an agreement between Indonesia and Hungary—although, the Indonesian embassy in Budapest does not have a record of the students number.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: Ragna Boden, "Cold War Economics: Soviet Aid to Indonesia," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, pp: 110-128; Robert C. Horn, "Soviet Influence in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and Obstacles," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 8, 1975, pp: 656-671.

<sup>5</sup> For further reading on Sukarno's and PKI's attitudes towards Soviet, see: Jeremy Friedman, "Asian Axis: The Indonesian Communist Party and the Struggle for Power in Sukarno's Indonesia," *Ripe for Revolution*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Národní archiv, Prague, stores an agreement dated back from 1956. However, in an interview, the Indonesian Embassy stated that the official first agreement was the one signed in 1958.

<sup>7</sup> When exactly is the agreement started between Indonesia and Hungary remains unclear but a document entitled *Persetudjuan Kebudayaan antara Republik Indonesia dan Negara-Negara Asing (1955-1961)* (1955-1961 Cultural Agreement between Indonesia and Foreign Countries) listed that the partnership included of 1) mutual exchange of scientific, pedagogical, and educational workers and students, 2) exchange of scientific cultural art publications and periodicals, 3) mutual visits and exhibitions of cultural and artistic groups and individuals, 4) exchange of other experts according to their needs and possibilities. The document show Indonesia's partnerships with four Eastern Bloc countries: Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, Romania, and Hungary. The partnerships are described as '*persahabatan*' (friendship) in the written documents.



Figure 1 and 2

Still from Sukarno's 1956 visit to Czechoslovakia where he received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Charles University and visited Kladno, an industrial town.  
(source: Tedoun Soenar, YouTube Channel)



Figure 3 and 4

Still from Sukarno's visit to Hungary in 1960. In the full footage, one can also see each country delegations had meeting and agreement signation. There is another footage in the archive in about the Indonesian trade delegation coming to Hungary visited *Sztálinváros* in 1954.  
(Nemzeti Filmintézet Magyarország Filmarchívum)



Figure 5

A piece on trade between Indonesia and Hungary dated back from 1953. It indicates that the economic exchange started even before the academic and cultural exchange.<sup>8</sup>  
(Hungarian Bulletin, 1953-01-01, 7. évfolyam, 133. szám)

<sup>8</sup> It needs further research to understand the precise foreign policy of Hungary to Indonesia—or rather Southeast Asia, in general—around this year. However, it might be helpful to draw a parallel with its policy to Latin America. Emőke Horvath argues that, in the beginning of Hungary foreign policy opening (1952-1955), the economic relation with the Latin America countries can be related to the international economic conference in Moscow (1952). Her analysis mainly based on sources indicating that the Hungarian delegation's, together with other countries' representatives, made constructive proposals to the economically underdeveloped countries—arguing that the implementation of this proposal would boost the economy of colonial and dependent countries. For more details, see: "Foreign Relations between Hungary and Latin America in the Early Years of the Cold War (1947-1959)," *East Central Europe*, vol. 49, 2002, pp: 1-22.

Aside from the States as the main initiators of this connection, there were also actors outside the officials. Left-leaning organizations, the International Unions of Students (IUS) and the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), for example, supported many students and youths from Indonesia coming to the Eastern Bloc.<sup>9</sup> From Indonesia's end, PKI also played an important role. Some PKI cadres came and stayed in Prague even before 1950, for instance. Many simply visited Prague and stopped by in Budapest before heading back to Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, prominent PKI leaders, like Musso, Aidit, and Njoto, spent some time in Prague in the late 1940s to early 1950s.



Figure 6  
The front gate of WFDY's headquarters in Frangepán u. 16, Budapest.  
(Personal documentation)

<sup>9</sup> IUS headquarter was in Prague, while WFDY headquarter was, and still is, in Budapest. For further reading about the postcolonial countries student unions participation in the IUS, see: Phillip G. Albatch, "The International Student Movement," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5, No.1, (1970): p. 162 and Jodi Burkett, "The National Union of Students and Transnational Solidarity, 1958-1968," *European Review of History*, Vol. 21 (2014): pp. 539-555. For accounts about the involvement of Southeast Asia youths, particularly Indonesians, in IUS and WFDY, particularly in 1945-1948, see: Larisa Efimova, "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast Asian Communists to Revolt? New Russian Evidence on the Calcutta Youth Conference of February 1948," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2009): pp. 449-469.

<sup>10</sup> See: Národní archive, KSČ-ústřední výbor 1945-1989.

A document in Národní archiv (KŠC-Ustřední výbor 1945-1989) records that in 1952 there was an Indonesian representative in WFDY, named Baharuddin.

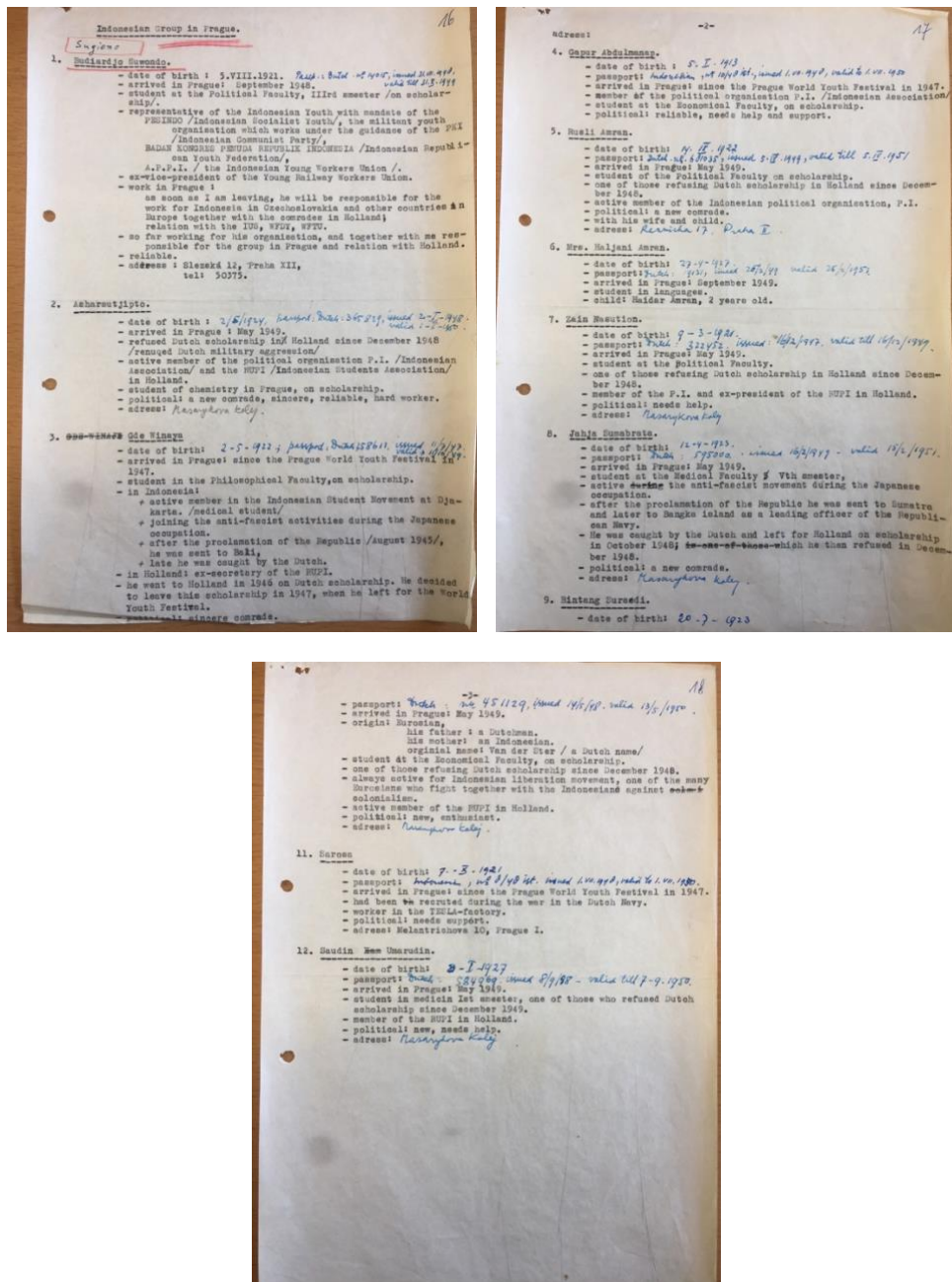


Figure 7, 8, 9

List of PKI's cadres in Prague and their detailed information; dated back in 1950.  
(Národní archiv, KŠC-Ustřední výbor 1945-1989)

The above documents inform that majority of those PKI's cadres were students; some were members/workers of organizations, including IUS and WFDY. One worked in the TESLA-factory.

It is worth noting that Gde Winaya, Gapur Abdulmanap, and Sarosa were in Prague since the 1947 World Youth Festival. Efimova's study discusses about the Indonesian youths' role particularly in the that festival in relation to a plan of organizing Southeast Asian colonial youth conference in Madiun, November 1947. However, due to the concern of the Dutch's attack, WFDY decided to move the conference to Calcutta on February 1948. Reason for the plan to have the conference in Indonesia was, as Efimova elaborates by taking Olga Chechetkina's account after visiting Indonesia in 1947, the importance of youth organizations in Indonesia that could not be compare to other Asia country.<sup>11</sup>

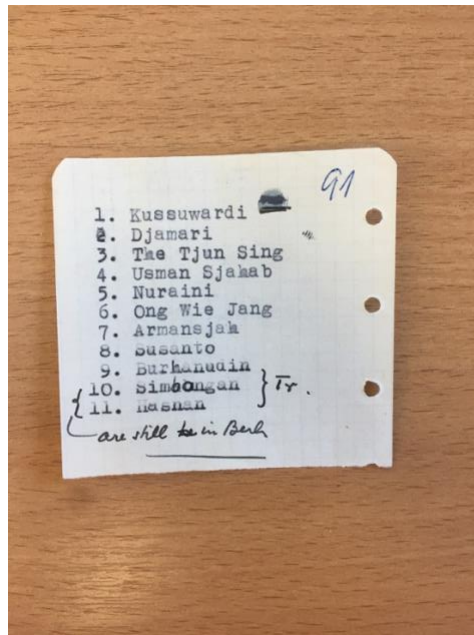


Figure 10  
List of PKI cadres' in Prague on August 1951.  
(Národní archiv, KSČ-Ústřední výbor 1945-1989)

From figure 10, one could examine the diversity of those PKI cadres' ethnicities from their names. For example, Kussuwardani, Susanto, Djamari are typical Javanese names; The Tjun Sing and Ong

<sup>11</sup> Larisa Efimova (2009). Meanwhile, it needs further research to understand the position of Indonesian youths in different World Youth Festivals, such as the 1957 Moscow festival.



Wie Jang are Chinese (probably came from Java); Simbongan is Batak (most likely from North Sumatera). Usman Sjahab could be someone with Arab descent; Burhanudin could be Buginese (most likely from South Sulawesi). This ethnic diversity also appeared in the PKI members of the 1955 Indonesian ‘Constituent Assembly.’ Although Javanese and Sundanese were still majority, there were, among others, one Balinese, two Chinese, two Ambonese, one Papuan, two Minang, one Minahassa.<sup>12</sup> Aside from this ethnic diversity query, it is also important to put Java and non-Java context in this regard. Java was PKI’s main base; Masyumi was prominent in Sumatra. Meanwhile, in Sulawesi there was PRRI/Permesta rebel.<sup>13</sup> By having this diversity of the communist cadres, one could question 1) How did the party use it to counter reactionaries’ narrative (like Masyumi’s) about PKI’s exclusivity to Java 2) How did the party use it to play with PRRI/Permesta’s narration about PKI had been dominated the national government—as in Jakarta? 3) How much of it was the party’s effort to prepare its non-Java’s cadres—including by sending them abroad to (presumably) study?

Zel. *Indonesie* *B* X-~~344~~ *144*

TELEGRAM					
Druh	Dodací číslo	Císlo výpravě	Vypraven		
CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMMUNIST PARTY CZECHOSLOVAK PRAHA=					
Přiját 86 1/12 1614TEX					
		Dáno: - 1. XII. 1962 Č.: 21808		XI	
Císlo	Podací úřad	Počet slov	Den	Hod.	Služební údaje - dopravní cesta
NC59	DJAKARTA 26 1	1815	VIA	HOLLRADIOPTT=	
DECIDED TO SEND COMRADES AIDIT AND NJOTO TO PRAGUE STOP ARRIVAL PRAGUE DECEMBER 14 = CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMMUNIST PARTY INDONESIA SUDISMAN+					
<i>namer. s. B. - telefonicky rozhodnuti: 1720 ab upravit nato. zastupitelstvi strany, 20 na celostani konferenci ktery z viny nese.</i> <i>P. K. Holman</i>					
709 F (II-1961) Používejte dopravní cesty VIA RADIO-PRAHA					

<sup>12</sup> For detailed info on this, including where they lived, see: “Member Profiles,” *Konstituante.Net*, [https://www.konstituante.net/en/members/5--member\\_profiles.htm](https://www.konstituante.net/en/members/5--member_profiles.htm).

<sup>13</sup> On magisterial work on Masyumi’s history and its afterlife, see: Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masyumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015). For further reading on PRRI/Permesta, see: Audrey R. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: And Getting Better All the Time: Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

Figure 11

A 1952 telegram about the coming of Aidit and Njoto to Prague. One document in the archive mentions that in 1957, Aidit requested equipment for a film studio in Jakarta through party delegations (Anwarkadir and Kasbun). Those equipment arrived in Jakarta on October 18, 1958 via another party cadre: Suhardjo.  
(Source: Národní archiv, KSČ-Ústřední výbor 1945-1989)

It is, too, worth to learn the affect of this transnational relations in a less political/ideological sense—how common people during that time period cheered and deployed the connections. In 1956, Kuo Chao Hsian wrote a letter from Temanggung, a small city in Java, to the Ministerstvo školství a kultury, in Prague. Hsian asked whether it was possible for the ministry to send their publications in double amount to a specific address in Semarang. Working as a teacher, Hsian wanted to put those publications in in Chung Hwa school library; hoping that students could easily access them and got to know better about Czechoslovakia.<sup>14</sup> In the same year, Phang Kwie Sing, a 16 years old boy from Magelang, another small town in Java, addressed his letter to the same ministry; expressed a similar need. No records on whether or not Chao Hsian and Kwie Sing got those publications; but, still, it was an intriguing enthusiasm and efforts from their sides.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For related reading on Chung Hwa school, see: Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917-42*, (Singapore: ISEAS Publication, 1976).

<sup>15</sup> Based on documents in the Národní archiv, there were shipments of books, films, and records from Czechoslovakia to Indonesia. Examples of shipped books: *People, Work, and Trade Union in Czechoslovakia*, *Puppetry in Czechoslovakia*, and *Red Glow Over Kladno*. For detailed records on this publications, see: Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury.

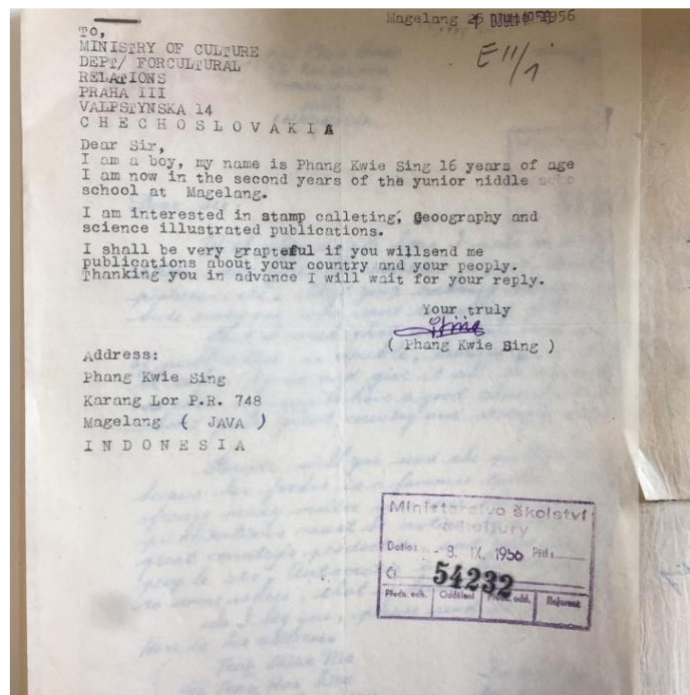
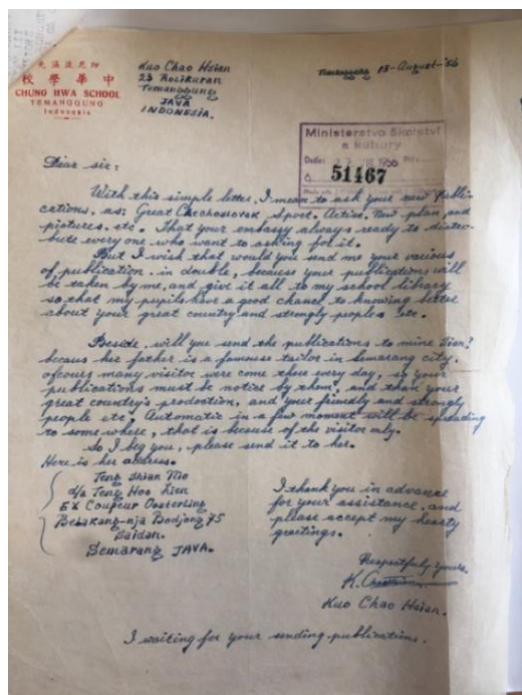


Figure 12 and 13  
The two letters from Java asking for publications from Czechoslovakia.  
(Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury)

On the other way around, Indonesian cultural productions were also disseminated in the Czechoslovakia. As an example, Miroslav Opl t translated Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Di Tepi Kali Bekasi* and *Naše Vojsko* published it in 1962. Meanwhile, in Hungary, Magda Zálan translated Pramoedya's *Inem*; Nagyvilág published it in 1964. György Gömöri also translated Chairil Anwar's *Krawang-Bekasi* in 1960; Anna Máthé translated his *Aku* in 1962. Pramoedya was a significant member of the communist-leaning People's Institute of Culture (LEKRA) in the 1960s; Chairil was member of *Angkatan 45* (Generation of 1945)—those writers who were coming of age in the years of the revolution and glorifying the newly created nation.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For a brief summary on the history of Indonesian literature, see: Hendrik M.J. Maier, "A many-headed machine," *Inside Indonesia*, <https://www.insideindonesia.org/a-many-headed-machine>.



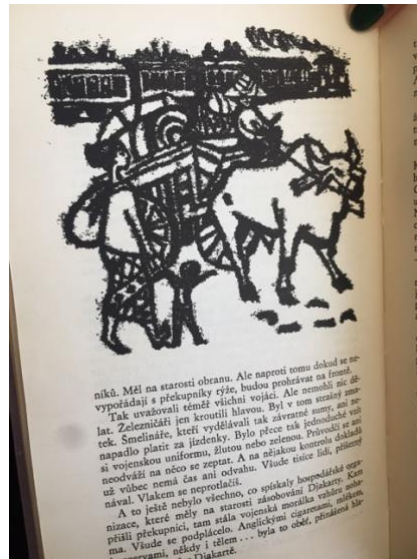
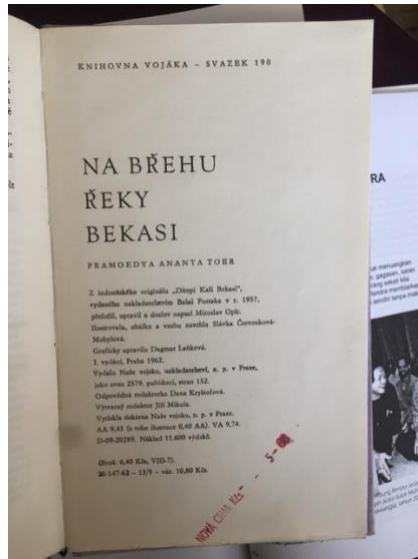


Figure 14 and 15  
A copy of Pramoedya's *Di Tepi Kali Bekasi* translation.  
(Personal documentation)

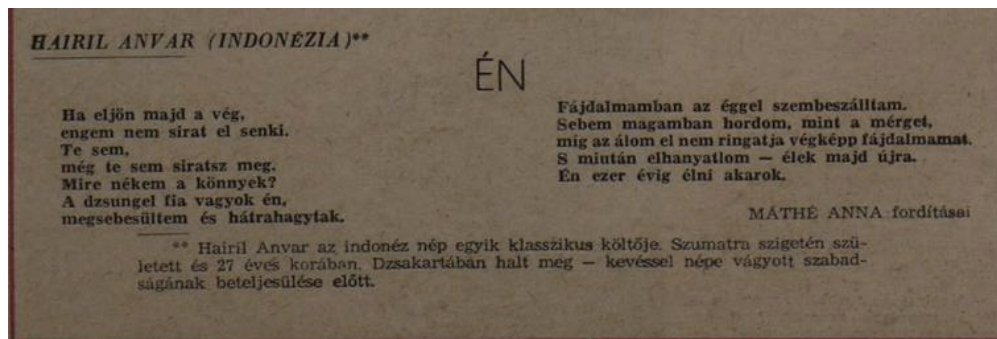


Figure 16  
The Hungarian translation of *Aku (I)* in *Utunk* (40. szám, 1962).

ÚJ LÁTÓHATÁR	
IRODALMI ÉS POLITIKAI FOLYÓIRAT	
GOMBOS GYULA: A senki földjén	177
ANDRÁS SÁNDOR: Két vers	186
DERECSEY KÁROLY: Dél-Korea	188
FERDINANDY GYÖRGY: Gyerek	197
CS. SZABÓ LÁSZLÓ: A szétszaggatott Orpheusz	199
CHAIRIL ANWAR: Krawang-Bekasi	208
ZÁDOR ISTVÁN: Nagy Imre és az új szakasz	209
BAKUCZ JÓZSEF: Nagy szalmák törvénye	216
PARANCZ JÁNOS: Verseik	217
★	
DOMAHIDY MIKLÓS: Baleset	221
FIGYELŐ	
NEMZET NAGY TANÁRA	248
SCHOPFLIN GYULA: Vidám temetés	249

KRAWANG-BEKASI	
Mi, halottak Krawang és Bekasi között észrevesztünk,	
hajnali felé, "Mertek!"	
De nem vagy még, hi van halálra vágyunk dühöngve.	
Ki nem követi a (Krawang) felé halni indult katonákat?	
— Az éjszaka csodálatos szélnek hozza.	
Mikor éltél a szél, csak az éjszaka a halál egyenlőség.	
Fülsz halottak hangjait, Cseppjeiket már por lap.	
Emlékeztetnek a emlékeztetnek.	
Mi más meggyűző, ami lehetett.	
De a emlékeztetnek halálra vágyunk.	
Bár mindannyiunk halálra vágyunk.	
Nincs helyesebb a mi, még nem tudjuk halálra vágyunk dühöngve.	
Mi más csak elhalni tudunk vágyunk.	
De emlékeztetnek halálra vágyunk.	
Nekünk kell emlékeztetnek halálra vágyunk.	
Hogy élnünk a halálra vágyunk, a gyönyörű, és a jövedel.	
Adott nekünk, vagy csak halálra vágyunk.	
Meg nem mondhatjuk azt mi.	
A mi most halálra vágyunk.	
Az éjszaka csodálatos szélnek hozza.	
Mikor éltél a szél, csak az éjszaka a halál egyenlőség.	
Emlékeztetnek a emlékeztetnek.	
Fülsz halottak hangjait, Cseppjeiket már por lap.	
Vigyázzunk Krawang-Bekasi felé.	
Halálra vágyunk.	
Halálra vágyunk.	
Mi, a halottak, erre kíváncsiak.	
Adott nekünk a halálra vágyunk.	
Halálra vágyunk a halálra vágyunk.	
Emlékeztetnek a emlékeztetnek.	
Halálra vágyunk a halálra vágyunk.	
Ki nem követi a (Krawang) felé halni indult katonákat?	
Csodálatos György fordítása indult katonák.	

Figure 17 and 18  
Chairil's *Krawang-Bekasi* in *Új Látóhatár* (3. szám, 1960)

In the Hungarian context, while the Pramoedya's work was in *Nagyvilág*—a mainstream literary journal—, the case of Chairil's works is rather intriguing. Both *Utunk* and *Új Látóhatár* were rather periphery publications. *Utunk* was a Transylvanian Hungarian journal; *Új Látóhatár* was a 1956 left-wing exiles (based in Munich) journal. Those founded *Új Látóhatár* was left-wing intellectuals who went to the 1956 revolution; but the journal was not a more radical anti-communist regime publication. Hence, their decision to translate Chairil's work seems to resonate quite well with their politics. This finding shows a limited transfer of Indonesian literature into the Hungarian context.

Amidst this traffic of people, goods, and ideas—as well as the growing number of communists across the country—there was a coup in Indonesia on September 30, 1965. It was followed by mass killings and imprisonments of the communist and their sympathizers, mainly from 1965 to 1966—PKI itself was banned on March 12, 1966. Additionally, Suharto established a new regime in 1967.<sup>17</sup> For their association with Sukarno and/or PKI, those Indonesian students, cultural workers, experts, or PKI cadres who were in Czechoslovakia and Hungary then became what we called in Indonesian as *eksil*.<sup>18</sup> Here I refer to them as émigré instead for the complexity of their reasons of not coming back to Indonesia.

<sup>17</sup> Among others, for an overview about the coup and mass-killings, see: John Roosa, *Buried Histories: The Anticommunist Massacres of 1965-1966 in Indonesia* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that the community are widely spread. Not only in the former Soviet Union and in the former Eastern bloc countries, but also in, among others, China, Vietnam, and Netherlands. Sino-Soviet split is one of the reasons for this scattered community.



Figure 14

News on MSZMP's newspaper about a coup attempt in Indonesia and how the press changed following it.

In the beginning, I wanted to focus on the Indonesian artists who went to both countries—gathering their stories and examining their works. I learned later that it was rather impossible to conduct that research because 1) It was hard to trace their works 2) Not only the number of artists were less than the students, but also most of them were distant from the Indonesian community—there was no clue how to get in touch with the possibly remaining ones. Some also died alone without family—left no one to learn about their stories.<sup>19</sup> Hence, I decided to rather work with the people that I met. If only I could pursue the initial plan, this might turn to be a different research.

<sup>19</sup> I gathered this information from at least two of my interviewees.



Figure 15, 16, 17

Still from Indonesian Fine Arts Exhibition at Ernst Múzeum, Budapest, in 1960. Figure 15 is Dullah's artwork. He is one of the prominent Indonesian realist painters. It is unclear who are the painters for figure 16 and figure 17. There were 200 works by 87 painters in the exhibition.  
(Nemzeti Filmintézet Magyarország Filmarchívum)

However, I found above footage. Farah Wardani, an Indonesian Art historian, on our correspondence stated that figure 16 could be the work of Itji Tarmizi. January 21, 1962 *Népszabadság* published that the exhibition presented, among others, works from Siti Rulijat, G. Sidharta, Basuki Resobowo, and Batara Lubis. Rulijat remains unknown; Lubis and Tarmizi are less known. Meanwhile, Dullah, Sidharta, and Resobowo are significant names with nationalist or communist affiliations. Examining the paintings, their different styles could link to the following questions: what styles were counted as progressive; who was selecting the works? On a different note, Národní Galerie, Prague, requested Indonesian paintings for their collection in 1957 without

specific preference of the artists.<sup>20</sup> Whether or not some of these paintings remain as collections of museums in Hungary and the Czech Republic is for further research to reveal.

Finally, this is a zoom in on the memory of a very small community of (then) Indonesian students and/or PKI cadres—now still reside in Hungary and the Czech Republic; with Hungarian and Czech citizenships. While numerous studies on this community focus on their memory of statelessness and relation with Indonesia, this thesis is about their stories and experiences of living through state socialism.<sup>21</sup> How was it like for them to witness state socialism? What are their memory of the some major events in the Long Sixties? How was their experiences of living through the transformation in the Hungary and (then) Czechoslovakia? How do they see themselves, and the societies they live in, change over times and events? What the experience of this small community can tell about the similarities and differences of both regimes; does it matter if one end up in one country or another? Those are the key questions of this research. In doing so, this study also rediscovers the moving of people, goods, and ideas between the countries; its flux and its rupture.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See: Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury.

<sup>21</sup> Among others, see: Modelia Novinta Desweriel, *How Indonesian Exiles in the Czech Republic Understand Their Statelessness and Eventual Citizenship* (Master Thesis), (Masaryk University, 2021); Afina Nurul Faizah, “Memories of Statelessness among Indonesian Exiles in Budapest and Prague,” *antro-pólus*, 3-4, 2020, pp. 74-129.

<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting that Hungary-Indonesia resumed the scholarship (Stipendium Hungaricum) agreement couple years ago. Meanwhile, it was still not the case with the Czech Republic-Indonesia. According to the Indonesian Embassy (based on an interview on March 22, 2022), the two governments have been discussing and planning about restarting the scholarship for these past years, but still have not come to a decision. There are still some Indonesian students in the Czech Republic now, mostly funded by universities (either Czech universities or Indonesian universities) or by Erasmus Mundus. Also, in 1991, an Indonesian artist, Hidayat, participated in Nemzetközi Grafikai Biennálé (Győr). Moreover, from Indonesia’s part, there is Darmasiswa scholarship from 2015 that offers Indonesian language study for all foreign students from countries with diplomatic relationship with Indonesia, including Hungary and the Czech Republic.

## Methodology

This study centers on oral history methods. At once, it could also be an ethnographic encounter. “Ethnography and oral history have two important and related features in common, one bearing on theory and one on method. Theoretically, each field is founded upon a progressive impulse to give voice to the voiceless, to value the lives that contemporary ideology renders deficient, trivial—or invisible.”<sup>23</sup> On the difference between the two, Lindsay French writes, “Oral historians focus on personal stories as a means of understanding the nuances of historical process, the positioned significance of historical events, and the perspectives of people whose stories are often *not* a part of standard historiography. They offer intimate insights into the past that we would not know otherwise and a kind of sensual detail that brings a little-known time into the present for those of us trying to understand history better. These are seductions for ethnographers as well, who may be less interested in what actually happened than in what can be understood about the people who tell the stories or in how individual stories are told and heard.”<sup>24</sup>

The nature of the memory, I must add, imposes certain methodological limitations. For instance, it was hard to keep the linearity of time. Hence, this work is rather thematic; it is a combination of bits and pieces of curated stories. I decided the thematic subchapters in chapter 1 and chapter 2 based on the availability of the data. For the time being, it is attainable to present and analyze them. While I prepare questions beforehand, the nature of the interviews were exploratory. Thus, there were always further questions during the conversations and more stories to gather. Mostly, the

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<sup>23</sup> Micaela Di Leonardo, “Oral History as Ethnographic Encounter,” *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Fieldwork in Oral History (1987), p. 3

<sup>24</sup> Lindsay French, “Refugee Narratives; Oral History and Ethnography; Stories and Silence,” *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 46, Issue 2, (2019), p: 268.

concept of time went blur as we conversed. Often, I needed to come up with the “when did it exactly happen?” question to keep the time period intact.

Conducting this research, I understand that, while they are powerful, stories, memories, and experiences could be a thorny topic in historicity.<sup>25</sup> For instance, “The questions ‘How historical is private life?’ and ‘How personal is history?’ may be asked by the narrator, by the historian, or by both; indeed the issue of what is private and what is public in a person’s narrative is often uncertain, especially if we are after the elusive theme of the history of private life.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, I also agree that “it is no longer sufficient to present memory as innocent empirical evidence, but to see it, necessarily, as a multi-authored, textual, and contextual events. Memories contain and are contained by a narrative which orders, links, and makes sense of the past, the present, and the future. At the same time, they contain para-narratives, which weave in and out offering a counterpoint here, a substance there. Placing memory, in all its multifaceted and multilayered dimensions, within the *longue durée* of a narrative suggests more than an act of creativity than a finite text, where the process of recall is as vital as the substance of remember.”<sup>27</sup> In light of that, I also conducted archival research and consulted secondary sources’ accounts. The logic is both to support and to complicate—rather than to negate—the oral history accounts.

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<sup>25</sup> For further reading on the power of stories, among others, see: Michel-Ralph Trouillot, “The Power in the Story,” *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). Also related to the topic, see: François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and experiences of time*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015)

<sup>26</sup> Alessandro Portelli, “Oral History as Genre,” *Narrative and Genre: Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative*, Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (eds.), (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p: 26.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (eds.), *Narrative and Genre: Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp: xiii-xiv.



In the attempt of getting the answers of the research questions, I understand that the background of my interviewees and I—be it political, cultural, class, ethnicity, age, gender—would always be influential. As an illustration, because of the significant age gap, an ‘automatic reaction’ of the interaction between the émigrés and I was to play ‘grandparents’ and ‘granddaughter.’ With this dynamic, at some points of the interviews, I would find myself holding back from getting answers—and rather accepting and trying to understand their silence and their digression.<sup>28</sup>

### A Note on Language

For the interviews; we conversed mainly in Indonesian language—unless if the interviewees are Javanese, then code-switching between Indonesian and Javanese happened quite often. For they are in their 80s-90s, they could use some archaic Indonesian words that I needed to clarify the meaning. One of the interviewee, daughter of an émigré, was born and raised in Hungary and learned Indonesian only at home. Code-switching between Indonesian and English happened often during conversations with her. The interviewees would also use some Czech and Hungarian words and it could take some time for them to find the equivalent in Indonesian or English. It was also very helpful to ask them to write down some names of institutions or terms in Czech and Hungarian in order to avoid misunderstanding.

For the archival research; language was definitely a barrier. This study focusses mostly on English language documents. I needed assistances in order to understand the Czech and Hungarian

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<sup>28</sup> On related topic, see: Alessandro Portelli, “Trying to Gather a Little Knowledge: Some Thoughts on the Ethics of Oral History,” *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp: 55-71.



documents. Hence, the unfathomed Czech and Hungarian documents related to this topic are both the shortfall of this research as well as the potential for further research.

### **Characters Introduction**

There are eight characters in this work. Five are based in the Czech Republic (four Prague, one Brno); three are based in Budapest. As a note, the Budapest-based characters consist of one family; a mother, a daughter, and a son. While it is certainly a jarring for the comparative aspect of the research, I decided not to drop their accounts.<sup>29</sup> It is for the reason that I find their voices are valuable still. Moreover, it gives a generational layer of this particular Indonesian diaspora. I could not manage to cover this layer for those in Prague and Brno because the children are detached from these specific memory of their parents.<sup>30</sup> The person in Budapest is a woman while all the subjects in the Czech Republic are men. Thus, there is a gendered layer to the memory. Another difference among them is ethnicity—one is Sundanese, two are Acehnese, the rests are Javanese. Meanwhile, all of them came from relatively middle-class Indonesian family; all could afford going to Indonesian universities before heading to Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

There are Asep, Susilo, Artawan, and Paloh in Prague; Agam in Brno. The mother in Budapest is Ainun. Wardani is her daughter; Bagaskara is her son.<sup>31</sup> While Asep has a slightly different story, the other four émigrés came to study in the Eastern Europe with different scholarships scheme. Ainun (as well as her late husband) and Agam got their scholarships IUS and WFDY. Ainun's late husband and Agam were members of PKI affiliated organizations. Susilo, Paloh, and Artawan got

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<sup>29</sup> I could not manage to gather different accounts outside this one family; another emigree who is based in Budapest has health conditions that does not enable him to give his accounts.

<sup>30</sup> Mainly because they are coming from inter-racial marriages and their association with Indonesia are only with the food and with (speaking a bit of) the language. It is not the case with the children of the emigree in Budapest for they are coming from an Indonesian couple.

<sup>31</sup> All are pseudonyms for confidential reason.

the scholarships following the agreement between the Indonesian and Czechoslovakia governments. On the other hand, Asep went to the Soviet Union in 1961 to study International Laws at the Patrice Lumumba University with the scholarship from the Soviet government.<sup>32</sup> He ended up moving to Prague in 1972 because of PKI's mandate.



Figure 18  
Some of Indonesian students in Prague (September 17, 1963)  
(Susilo's personal archive)

Apart from Artawan (who mentioned his support to Sukarno still), the rest identified themselves as '*orang kiri*' (leftist). However, not all of them decided to go to Hungary and Czechoslovakia during 1959-1963 out of ideological reasons. Some went to the region because of apolitical causes: Paloh was because his communist's brother heard about the scholarship opportunity and encouraged him to apply for it; Artawan was because he could not secure a scholarship from Japanese government.<sup>33</sup> It was as simply as there was this scholarship opportunity with not

<sup>32</sup> Based on a phone call interview on May 30, 2022.

<sup>33</sup> During that time, Japanese government offered scholarships as a means of 'restitution' for their occupation. When Ainun applied for it, however, the fund was no longer available (Interview on March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9). A letter issued by Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Biro Hubungan Luar Negeri dan Unesco (dated June 5, 1961; no. 1600/HLN/Pamp-61) informs that the scholarships covered particular study fields, such as, navigation, fishery, shipbuilding, electrical engineering, electrical telecommunication, textile, mining (coal and oil mining), agriculture, and banking/commerce. For further reading on this restitution topic, see: Peter Keppy, *The*

demanding requirements. Even Ainun who clearly stated her late husband's (and to some extent her) affiliation with PKI, informed that they picked Hungary because she learnt about Hungarian winning football team in a local newspaper: *Kedaulatan Rakyat*.<sup>34</sup> She then dug more about Hungary; guided by her curiosity—"how could a tiny nation managed to have a great football team?"<sup>35</sup> When there were scholarship offers to study in the Eastern Bloc, she suggested her husband to pick the country.

They lost their Indonesian citizenship in 1966. Indonesian Embassies conducted screening to examine whether or not they were members/affiliated with PKI; whether or not they supported Sukarno. A "yes" put them in a difficult position. They were thus rendered stateless; under the auspices of the Socialist Hungary and the Czechoslovakia governments. It took years for them before applying for the host countries' citizenship. "Because they are idealists. Right, mom? They always said, 'Next year, next year, next year, Suharto will not be in power anymore and we can come back,'" said Wardani reflecting upon her parents' decision.<sup>36</sup> Other emigres had the same reason: Suharto would not be in power for a long period. In the end, all of them applied for the citizenship following the transformation—and it even took another 9 years after 1989 for Suharto to resign.

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*politics of redress: War damage compensation and restitution in Indonesia and the Philippines, 1940-1957*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Based on interview on February 27, 2022, Kemenes Cukrászda, Várház krt. 9. *Kedaulatan Rakyat* is a Yogyakarta based newspaper; established following the independence in 1945. While Ainun could not remember the specific information that she gathered from the newspaper, it might be the case that she was talking about the Magical Magyars (Hungary national football team of the 1950s). For further reading about Magical Magyars, see: David Bailey, *Magical Magyars: The Rise and Fall of the World's Once Greatest Football Team*, (Worthing: Pitch, 2020).

<sup>35</sup> "Hungaria negeri kecil, kok bisa memang sepakbola?" February 27, 2022, Kemenes Cukrászda, Várház krt. 9.

<sup>36</sup> "Karena mereka idealis. Ya, ibu? Mereka selalu bilang, tahun depan, tahun depan, tahun depan, Suharto pasti jatuh dan kita bisa pulang." July 3, 2021, Fövám tér.

## Chapter 1: Living in State Socialism (1950s-1970s)

This chapter mainly entails the characters' memories of events roughly between 1950s-1970s. It focusses on these two questions: How was it like for them to come and live under state socialism? What are their memories of the some major events in the Long Sixties? While many of the presented stories focusses on how they dealt with the changes and how they overcame obstacles, it is important to keep in mind that, at the first place, this community was in a precarious state. Aside from their once condition of statelessness, some of them also lost family members and friends back home in the 1965-66 massacre. Artawan, for instance, described the psychological condition of the Indonesian students in Prague at that time, "One of the impact of the 1965-66 event was many of the students could not manage to continue their study. They could not cope with the situation. They were depressed."<sup>37</sup> Artawan continued by saying that he was lucky enough to manage finishing the study and continuing his life.

It seems that the rest of these then-students shared the same condition with Artawan. However, some would still struggle in responding to some topics in the interviews. As an example, Paloh would be hesitant to elaborate more about his political stance and to talk about his communist brother. It was also the case with Agam who would deliver vague speech when he started to talk about his missing communist brother. This uneasiness even presented in the second generation. Bagaskara, for example, would be very self-conscious when discussed about his family relation with Indonesia by repeatedly saying, "But, yeah, that was the past."<sup>38</sup> The silence and hesitancy could be their trauma responses. In the case of Bagaskara, it could also be his way of securing the

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<sup>37</sup> "Salah satu dampak negative dari peristiwa 65-66 bagi mahasiswa di sini adalah banyak yang studinya tidak selesai; ganti sekolah. Secara psikis tidak bisa mengimbangi gitu ya. Artinya, depresi." March 19, 2022, Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>38</sup> "Tapi, ya, itu sudah masa lalu ya." August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

family from the potential harm of discussing the topic, particularly because his older brother and family lives in Indonesia.

### **Migrating and Integrating**

In his speech at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International on November 12, 1922, Tan Malaka, an Indonesian Marxist said, “I come from the Indies; I travelled for forty days.” to dismiss Julian Marchlewski’s interruption when Malaka argued a more positive approach towards Pan-Islamism.<sup>39</sup> More than 30 years later, the five Indonesian émigrés in this thesis needed about the same days of travel to reach, not Petrograd and Moscow, but Budapest and Prague. “From Jakarta, I barely remember, we took ship for a while...and then changed to train. The train was via Peking. I still remember that...we crossed Siberia, Moscow, then went South arrived in Vienna. Then went to Budapest. It took us for about a month to reach Budapest,” said Ainun describing her and her late-husband’s journey to Budapest.<sup>40</sup> The year was 1959.

Paloh arrived in Prague in the same year. Different from Ainun, he spent most of the journey to Prague on a ship before changing to train. He told fantastic stories about his one-month journey, such as the experience in the Suez Canal: “From Algiers to Gibraltar, French military was watching over our ship because of the Algerian war. We were on a ship from a socialist country. They might think that we infiltrated or something. So we were being surveilled along the Suez Canal. The

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<sup>39</sup> It was Tan Malaka’s response to the theses drafted by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress: “It is necessary to struggle against the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian movements and similar currents that try to link the liberation struggle against European and American imperialism with strengthening the power of Turkish and Japanese imperialism and of the nobles, large landowners, clergy, and so forth.” For further reading, see: John Riddell (Ed.), *Toward the United Front: Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012): pp. 261-265.

<sup>40</sup> “Dari Jakarta, samar-samar, naik kapal sebentar saja... lalu ganti kereta. Keretanya lewat Peking. Saya masih ingat itu... (Kami) lewat Siberia, Moscow, terus ke Selatan sampai di Vienna. Lalu ke Budapest. Butuh waktu satu bulan untuk sampai di Budapest.” February 27, 2022, Kemenes Cukrászda, Vármház krt. 9.

French air force would spy on us. The ship also brought monkeys and cottons, aside from us. (It was) from Vietnam.”<sup>41</sup>

To them, the first struggle of arriving in Europe was the weather. Paloh shared his experience of arriving in a -19°C Finland without having any winter coat. It was because the Indonesian Embassy could not manage to provide the clothes for them. “They promised that we would get winter coats in Alexandria but that was not the case. They gave us money to get one, if I remember it correctly, and I did buy one but it was not warm enough for a -19°C weather.”<sup>42</sup> It was not until they arrived in Prague that the Indonesian embassy started to take care of the coat problem. He ended up getting a coat that made his Indonesian friends called him Stalin. It was in a similar style to Stalin’s. “I did think, ‘How to make it not like Stalin’s?’ but it was hard to do. So, I was like, ‘Whatever!’ I ended up wearing it only for half a year. After that, I got a new one.”<sup>43</sup>

Archive recorded the coat problem. Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí requested Ministerstvo školství a kultury (MŠK) to assist Indonesian students who was coming to Prague through Egypt to get warm clothes.<sup>44</sup> Attached with that 1959 letter is the list of the students and their measurements. Paloh was pretty sure that the list of names and measurements belonged to his group—saying someone working in the Indonesian Embassy, named Aziz, as the one prepared the list and measured the students. It is unclear who spent the money to solve the problem: Indonesian

<sup>41</sup> “Dari Aljazair sampai Gibraltar itu kita diawasi oleh militer Perancis karena waktu itu ada perang Aljazair ya. Kapal negara sosialis. Dikira kita menyelundup. Jadi kita diawasin sepanjang itu. Sebentar-sebentar kapal perang itu sorot ini kapal. Kita waktu itu bawa kera dan kapok. Dari Vietnam.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

<sup>42</sup> “Kita dijanjikan bahwa akan dapat (jas musim dingin) di Alexandria tapi kita gak dapat. Waktu itu kalau tidak salah dikasih duit dan saya sempat dapat jas tapi dingin -19°C.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

<sup>43</sup> “Saya pikir-pikir, ‘Bagaimana ini supaya tidak seperti Stalin?’ tapi susah. Jadi saya bilang, ‘Peduli amat!’ Akhirnya saya pakai (jasnya) cuma setengah tahun. Setelah itu, saya dapat baru.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

<sup>44</sup> Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury.

embassy or MŠK. Examining many recorded correspondents in the archive—those on the topic of visa and tickets, for instance—in which the Indonesian government asking the Czechoslovaks government to cover for the students, most likely it was the same for this coat question.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 19 and 20 show two pages from a document. Figure 19 is a list of Indonesian students and their measurements. Figure 20 is a clothing measurement chart with a diagram of a coat and a table of measurements.

**Figure 19: Student List**

Name	46	60	69	71
Sukadi	46	60	69	71
Sugimin	48	60	70	95
Rosfian Ansjah	44	58	63	94

**Figure 20: Clothing Measurement Chart**

Size in cm.  
1  $\phi$  = circumference

12	12	0	12	9	Remarks
10	30	34	73	22	Spring coat is needed.
9	27	25	71	23	
10	27	25	78	22	
12	29	27	76	23	
12	28	25	80	23	Spring coat is needed.
12	27	25	60	22	
12	28	27	74	23	
12	29	24	71	23	

Figure 19 and 20

The list of the Indonesian students and their measurements. At least two of the identified names (Sukadi and Sugimin) are typical Javanese names. While the letter refers to winter coats, there are several remarks in the document indicating that the students needed spring coat.  
(Národní archiv, Ministerstvo školství a kultury)

Back then, they needed to be in a quarantine before moving in to the living spaces. Artawan shared his experience of being in a week quarantine period. He underwent various medical examinations to make sure that he had no health conditions. According to him, those who had medical problems needed to get treatment and could not start their study before recovered. He managed to pass the medical examination. Some of his cohort could not. One could sense a slight feeling of proud in his tones while talking about it; that he was ‘clean enough’ to go straight socializing. “Those who had medical conditions needed to get treatments. They needed to be clean; having no intestinal

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

worms and bacteria that unknown here in Europe. All needed to be clean. They were very strict; very careful about it.”<sup>46</sup> Ainun shared similar story of taking a medical examination once arrived in Budapest. She specifically referred that the exam was important to identify tropical diseases, such as malaria, that they might bring from home. She also emphasized how the Hungarian state took a good care of those diagnosed with such diseases.<sup>47</sup>

Language was their first means of integration; not only to blend well with the society, but also to study. It was uncommon to have English-taught programs in Hungarian and Czechoslovak universities back then. All of them took language classes for about a year before pursuing different degrees in the universities. Ainun said that her husband and her mostly learned Hungarian in their dorm; together with students from all over the world. Following that, she went studying medical in the Semmelweis University.<sup>48</sup> Even after studying Hungarian for a year, she still needed to work through the language gap by consulting dictionaries during study: Hungarian to English, English to Indonesian.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Yang punya penyakit harus diobati segala macam. Semuanya dibersihkan supaya gak ada cacing-cacing dan bakteri-bakteri yang tidak dikenal di Eropa. Semuanya harus bersih. Jadi waktu itu ketat; tidak sembarangan.” March 19, 2022, Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9. From an interview on August 30, 2021, Agam also shared his experience of arriving in the Soviet Union. The medical examination showed that he had pneumonia. As a result, he needed to spend about 7 weeks in a hospital and three months in a sanatorium.

<sup>47</sup> Based on phone call interview June 6, 2022. Here is her exact wordings: “Karena yang terang penyakit-penyakit dari Asia itu di Eropa belum tentu ada. Misalnya, malaria. Di Indonesia banyak. Demam... Di Indonesia banyak nyamuk, itu yang menyebabkan penyakit malaria. Sedangkan di sini gak gitu. Jadi diperiksa betul-betul. Tapi kalau sakit, bukan yang kamu pulang saja, tapi dipelihara sampai sembuh. Negara yang tanggung. Malah dikasih uang saku.” (Because it’s clear there’re disease from Asia that they did not have here in Europe. For example, Malaria. There were many malaria cases in Indonesia. Fever... We had many mosquitos back in Indonesia, those caused malaria. It was not the case here. So, they really examined it. But it was not like, ‘you had diseases and then you needed to go back home.’ They took care of you until you were fully recovered. The State paid all the expenses).

<sup>48</sup> While Ainun studied medical, her husband pursued electrical engineering at BME (Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem).

<sup>49</sup> Based on interview on March 28, 2022, Hey Bao, Várház krt. 14.



Paloh had a quite similar story. Still he found it difficult to learn chemistry in Czech even after taking the language class for a year in Ostrava. “I did not know what was written on the blackboard—I just wrote them down. My Czech friends were very nice. They explained it to me... I could not speak the language but managed to get the tasks done. (It was also) hard for me to comprehend what the professors said.”<sup>50</sup> Starting from 1961 (until 1974), there was *Universita 17. Listopadu*, modelled on the Patrice Lumumba University, providing institutional support for all foreign students in Czechoslovakia, including language learning opportunities at regional training centers.<sup>51</sup> There is no available specific information regarding such institutional support in the Hungarian case. Susilo, Agam, and Artawan went to a same language training center in Dobruška following their arrival in Prague in 1963.<sup>52</sup> Artawan said that, while Czech language was the main subject to learn, they also studied other subjects, such as math, chemistry, and history. “It was like a kind of matriculation period,” he said.<sup>53</sup> Students coming to Czechoslovakia could decide whether they wanted to pursue their degrees in different universities or stayed in the *Universita 17. Listopadu*. Those deciding to stay could pursue courses taught in English and French (particularly at science and humanities faculties).<sup>54</sup> Susilo, Agam, and Artawan decided to go to different

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<sup>50</sup> “Kita gak tahu apa itu yang diajarkan—pokoknya kita tulis apa yang ditulis di papan tulis. Kawan saya, orang Ceko, itu baik-baik sekali orangnya – menjelaskan... Saya kan gak bisa bicara sama sekali tapi apa yang disuruh itu saya selesaikan semua. Saya gak tahu apa yang dibilang sama profesor itu.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

<sup>51</sup> For further reading on the University of 17 November, see Martha Edith Holečková: *Příběh zapomenuté univerzity. Universita 17. Listopadu (1961-1974) a její místo v československém vzdělávacím systému a společnosti* (The story of a forgotten university. The University of 17 November (1961-1974) and its place in the Czechoslovak education system and society). According to Holečková, the university did not only provide them with language learning supports, but also supported them to adapt to the local conditions and assisted them with the resolution of any conflicts.

<sup>52</sup> Regarding the language center, a document in the archive also recorded about a request to send two groups of Indonesian students. One to Teplice and another to Holešov: Prague, Czech Republic, Národní archiv, MŠK, Ministerstvo školství a kultury, 49.461/61-VII/2.

<sup>53</sup> “Itu semacam matrikulasi.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>54</sup> In “Students from the Third World in Czechoslovakia: The paradox of racism in communist society and its reflection in film,” Tereza Stejskalová mentioned the university provided both Czech and Slovak tuitions. She also mentioned that it helped students through clubs, such as the Youth Friendship Club, “where exhibitions, lectures, seminars with Czechoslovak specialists and meetings between Czechoslovak and foreign students took place. The club organised sightseeing trips and visits to the theatre, cinema, etc.” see: Tereza Stejskalová (ed.), *Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovakia Films, and the Third World*, (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), p. 55.

universities. Susilo went to Charles University to pursue Early Childhood Education, Agam went to Vysoké učení technické v Brně, and Artawan studied at Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze.



Figure 21 and 22

Susilo and another Indonesian student performed in a 1968 Christmas event at Universita 17. Listopadu.

In another picture, students from different places were posing in front of Universita 17. Listopadu (1969).  
(Susilo's personal archive)



Figure 23

International students were taking their language class at a training center in Dobruška  
(Agam's personal archive)

Food could be another topic of blending in. Ainun told me a memorable story related to it. She managed to bring a big stone mortar (*ulekan*) from Yogyakarta to Budapest without her husband knowing it. She simply wanted to make sure that she could make a specific Indonesian chili sauce (*sambal*). Jokingly, she said, if only her late husband knew about it along the journey, he would throw it away. He figured it out once they arrived in Budapest; said it was the reason for their very heavy luggage.<sup>55</sup> Most of the emigrees, with conservative Islamic family backgrounds, would also talk about their experience of eating pork and drinking alcohol.<sup>56</sup> Artawan, for example, shared how his Hajj mother would ask whether he kept praying and not consuming pork and alcohol in her letters. He, of course, lied to her about it in his replies—for the complexity of feelings and familial bond that really familiar to me.<sup>57</sup>



Figure 24

The mortar that Ainun brought to Budapest back in 1959. The family still use it today, mainly when they make Indonesian feast.  
(Personal documentation)

<sup>55</sup> Based on interview on May 28, 2022, Hey Bao, Várház krt. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Some of the emigrees with Javanese ethnicity would refer themselves as '*abangan*.' It was Clifford Geertz who popularized the trichotomy of *abangan-santri-priyayi*, with *abangan* as the Javanese who accept Islam as their formal religion, but their ideas and practice are guided by Javanism (the syncretism of ancient Javanese animism, Hinduism/Budhism, and Islam. See: Geertz, *Religion of Java* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>57</sup> Based on interview on March 26, 2022, Florenc Bus Station.

I could also recall that one of the first questions that they asked me in our first meetings was whether or not 1) I am a Muslim 2) I eat pork and drink alcohol. I find the questions pretty amusing because more than 60 years has passed since they left Indonesia. It is, too, not peculiar to find people who identify themselves as Muslims consuming alcohol and, even, eating pork, despite the rise of Islamic ‘fundamentalism’ in the country following the collapse of Suharto’s regime.<sup>58</sup> To my answers, they would respond variously—and funnily, like, “There you go modern girl!”, “Let’s grab some *pivo* then!”, “There is this Chinese restaurant nearby with a very delicious pork menu! Want to go there?” I remember Ainun’s response quite clearly: “Good, good!” said her, giving her two thumbs up. She then spent about 20 minutes talking about *kolbaz*—her husband and her first experience of eating it, which brand is her favorite, and her most favored way of serving it (with hot rice and veggies!)—*palinka*, and different types of Hungarian wines.



Figure 25

Some Indonesian students in Brno on the 1966 Eid celebration.

According to Agam, he is the only remained student staying in the city.

Národní archiv also keeps a letter from the Indonesian Embassy in Prague to MŠK asking for its assistance to get the students a day off on Eid.

(Agam’s personal archive)

<sup>58</sup>For further readings about the conservative turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia, among others, see: Martin Van Bruinessen, “What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and the Conservative Turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Singapore working paper (2011).

There are records about the need of assistances for Indonesian students to board in dormitories at Národní archiv.<sup>59</sup> However, there were no details of specific assistances that needed as well as problems that they faced while living in the dorms. The emigres, too, did not recall any problems of their dorm life during the interviews. All of them shared happy memories about it; mostly about the vibrant life of sharing spaces with students coming from different parts of the world. The men in Prague even shared pieces of their dating life back then; of having and navigating inter-racial relationships. All of them have wives coming from Moravia region. Some comically said that as Indonesians it was hard for them to get ‘city girls’; they ended up with those from the countryside.



Figure 26

International students, including Agam, at a dance party back in the 1960s. The Beatles poster in the background is iconic—especially by considering that Sukarno was against Beatles music and ‘Beatlelism’ back in Indonesia; calling it as “a mental disease.”<sup>60</sup> In the Czechoslovak context, as well as in other Eastern Europe countries, people related to their songs as expressions of political freedom, particularly in 1968.<sup>61</sup>  
(Agam’s personal archive)

<sup>59</sup> Prague, Czech Republic, Národní archiv, MŠK, Ministerstvo školství a kultury.

<sup>60</sup> The exact wording is on this clip from CBS’s interview with Sukarno in 1965: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKKF8-RgjzU>. For further reading on the topic, see: S.G., Farram, “Wage war against Beatle music! Censorship and music in Soekarno’s Indonesia, *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 41 (2), 2007, pp: 247-277.

<sup>61</sup> For further readings, among others, see: Tony Mitchell, “Mixing Pop and Politics: Rock Music in Czechoslovakia before and after the Velvet Revolution,” *Popular Music*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1992, pp: 187-203; Kenneth L. Campbell, *The Beatles and the 1960s: Reception, Revolution, and Social Change*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), chapter 8.





Figure 27 and 28  
Pictures from summer time back in the 1960s—Susilo was having little picnics with friends.  
(Susilo's personal archive)



Figure 29  
Susilo's and (then) girlfriend in East Berlin on Summer 1970.  
(Susilo's personal archive)



Figure 30

Some Indonesian students were having foods at a student dorm in Brno. It was on Agam's wedding day.  
(Agam's personal archive)

## Othering

The year was 1968 when Agam and his late-wife got married. For the in-laws did not agree with the marriage; only the wife's aunt and uncle attended the vow as well as friends of both. "Yeah, it was complicated. But my wife chose me,"<sup>62</sup> he said; responding to the question whether it had to do with him being a brown man. Although other men did not share Agam's experience, this moral panics over inter-racial marriage was a recurring pattern. "The possibility of contacts between white and colored bodies most often focused on the potentially unsettling effects on Eastern European women—and the threat this posed to the socialist order."<sup>63</sup> There were many biracial babies born following the 1957 Moscow Youth Festival, for example, and, quite contrary to the socialist internationalism spirit, they were not 'celebrated.' Rather, people considered them as an indication of sexual 'looseness.'<sup>64</sup> James Mark also mentions about a survey in 1971 Poland and Hungary showed a majority majority did not consider interracial marriage a good idea. Partly,

<sup>62</sup> "Macam-macam itu pendapatnya. Yang memilih yang kan istrinya," March 27, 2022, Agam's residency, Brno.

<sup>63</sup> James Mark, "Race," *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation*, James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), p: 241. For further reading, see: Anastasia Kiyatos, "Pantomimes of Power and Race: Can the Socialist Subaltern Speak?" *Ubandus Review*, Vol. 16, 2014, pp: 24-44.

<sup>64</sup> See: Kristin Roth-Ey, "'Loose Girls' on the Loose?: Sex, Propaganda and the 1957 Youth Festival," Melanie Reid, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Atwood (eds.), *Women in Khrushchev Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp: 75-95.

because of the perception that the coloured students supposedly did not get that privilege. Meanwhile, almost a decade before, at the peak of Maoist panic in 1963-64 Hungary, “security service reports blamed the fear of war with the ‘yellow peril’ for a loosening of morals amongst female students.”<sup>65</sup>

Despite of the experience, Agam said that he never faced racism under State Socialism; he mainly reflected upon his dealings with the apparatus. “Never. They served everything well. No discrimination.”<sup>66</sup> Overall, all the emigres share the same sentiment—considering themselves got a great treatment from the states; functionally had the same rights as Czechoslovaks and Hungarians. “They took care of us; they gave us home. Once we finished our study, they helped us with works. They helped us; took care of everything... We only need to find wives by ourselves. Hahaha,” said Susilo.<sup>67</sup>

Could it be the case that these then-students cheer state socialism and consider it non-discriminatory—because, after all, they were under its guardianship? It was the socialist Hungary and Czechoslovakia who took care of them during their precarious moment since day one; when their country of origin ‘dumped’ them. For those in Czechoslovakia, Universita 17. Listopadu was mainly in charge. The students went to talk to the coordinator, a woman named Dr. Brbalova, after losing their Indonesian passports. They mainly needed help with residence permits, stipends, and living places. To which she replied that the Czechoslovaks government already knew about what happened and would take care of them. “It will take about 2 weeks to a month. No need to worry

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<sup>65</sup> James Mark, p: 242.

<sup>66</sup> “Gak pernah. Pokoknya diladeni secara baik pokoknya. Tidak ada diskriminasi.” March 27, 2022, Agam’s residency, Brno.

<sup>67</sup> “Kita diurusin; dikasih rumah. Kalau sudah selesai kerja, dikasih kerja. Dibantu; semua dibantu... Cuma istri harus cari sendiri. Hahaha.” March 18, 2022, Café Slavia.



about it. You have other things to worry about,” Artawan reenacted her words.<sup>68</sup> The university was mainly in coordination with MŠK to solve this Indonesian students’ problem. In about 2 weeks, they started to figure things out for the students.<sup>69</sup>

Have the care of the state lead them to shrink any unpleasant experience during that period?—that, at the end of the day, it was not a big deal. If so, it squares with the narrative of the state: that, rather institutionalized, racism was merely a matter of individual incidents.<sup>70</sup> While it is a fair judgment to say that racism appeared to have been infrequent during that period—particularly in comparison to the situation after the transformation—since the state openly condemned the ongoing colonial and imperialist project of the Western countries and promoted comradeship with people from the Third World, does not mean it did not exist. James Mark writes a detailed account about it; relating racism with the complexity of Eastern European’s ‘whiteness,’ the paternalistic project of anti-colonial white European, the way state socialism handled other minorities group, and its means of education about racial equality.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, “for the citizens of the socialist world, the presence of foreign students confirmed a somewhat paternalistic sense of economic and cultural

<sup>68</sup> “Sekitar dua minggu sampai sebulan. Jadi kamu gak usah khawatir. Dalam waktu itu kamu akan banyak persoalan lain.” March 19, 2022, Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>69</sup> I gathered this detailed information from an interview with R; *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> James Mark, p: 244.

<sup>71</sup> James Mark, pp: 221-254. Also see, Filip Herza, “Colonial Exceptionalism: Post-colonial Scholarship and Race in Czech and Slovak Historiography,” *Slovak Ethnology*, 2, 68 (2020), pp: 175-187; Alena K. Alamgir, “Race Is Elsewhere: State-Socialist Ideology and the Racialisation of Vietnamese Workers in Czechoslovakia,” *Race&Class* 54, no.4, 2013, pp: 67-85. On the topic of other minorities group, among others, see: C. Donert, *The rights of the Roma: the struggle or citizenship in postwar Czechoslovakia*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Anikó Imre, “Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: The Time of The Gypsies, The End of Race,” *Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), pp: 79-102. It is also worth noting that James Mark discusses about György Makai’s *Fajelmélet fajüldözés* (1977). Makai pointed out about the externalization of racial question within the Communist Youth members. They knew, for example, contemporary cases of racial discrimination across the world, but not aware of Hungary’s own traditions of anti-Semitism. See: James Mark, p: 249. For further readings on the Hungarian context, also see: James Mark and Péter Apor, “Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the making of a new culture of internationalism in socialist Hungary 1956-1989,” *Journal of Modern History*, 87, 2015, pp: 852-891.

superiority of their own societies: it was the rest of the world, after all, that came to learn from them.”<sup>72</sup>

However, it could also be important to note how this racism under State Socialism has been used to water down the political commitment and emancipatory possibilities of socialism—a growing tendency following 1989. In their article, Nikolay R. Karkov and Zhivka Valiavichaska, for example, argues, that decolonial theorists—such as Quijano and Mignolo—has tendency in giving no room for the historical specificity of state socialism as a project to oppose capitalism and colonial modernity. Decolonial theorists incline to argue that socialism and capitalism are the same system of modernity. Karkov and Valiavichaska, instead, argue that decolonial theories and state socialist historians who accept the complicity of state socialism’s in the logic of coloniality could learn from each other.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 31 and 32  
Agam and wife on their wedding day in 1968.  
(Agam’s personal archive)

<sup>72</sup> James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern European and the Postcolonial World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), p: 15.

<sup>73</sup> “Rethinking East-European Socialism: Notes Toward an Anti-Capitalist Decolonial Methodology,” *Interventions*, 20:6, 2018, pp: 785-813. On the topic of political commitment and emancipatory possibilities of socialism, see: Enzo Traverso, “Totalitarianism Between History and Theory,” *History and Theory*, Issue 5 (2017), pp: 97-118.

Meanwhile, the Budapest family has quite light-hearted stories. Bagaskara, Ainun's son who migrated to Budapest in 1972 for family reunification, shared story from his youth. He and his friends once went to a small town in the East part of Hungary for a little trip. They met a local old lady who was very warm; inviting them for lunch and hot drinks. She was particularly enthusiastic with Bagaskara—asking where does he come from. He then needed to explain in which part of the world exactly Indonesia is. “So, there was no, what is it, fear towards foreigners back then, and so on.”<sup>74</sup> Another one is about Wardani's born day. People at the hospital were dazzled by her dark hair and tanned skin. They handed her from one to another; admiring her physical features. Ainun wondered whether Wardani was the first brown baby born in that hospital. The fascination continued as she grew as a kid; many of Ainun's colleagues would volunteer themselves to take her around and to play with her for they admired her.<sup>75</sup>

Could those people's admiration (or wonder rather) towards both Bagaskara and Wardani be a form of exoticizing them?—and, it does not necessarily mean a bad thing. Or, at the very least, it did not seem to come from a bad intention. I, too, remember that Bagaskara's and Wardani's tones implied that none of them considered those as bad memories. Nevertheless, it might be useful to have a bird's eye view of orientalism in this particular region and time. Agnieszka Sadecka's discussion about ‘Socialist Orientalism’ in examining Polish travel writings on India could be a useful parallel on this topic—with ‘Socialist Orientalism’ as “an ambivalent position of having an ideological mission to fulfil, but at the same time they cannot resist following in the footsteps of their Western predecessors.”<sup>76</sup> Among other things, Sadecka elaborates how Gołębiowski and

<sup>74</sup> “Jadi tidak ada, apa namanya, rasa takut pada orang asing, dan sebagainya.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>75</sup> Based on an interview on July 3, 2021, Fövám tér.

<sup>76</sup> Agnieszka Sadecka, “A Socialist Orientalism? Polish Travel Writing on India in the 1960s,” *Postcolonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures*, 2015, p: 333.

Górnicki, two polish travel writers, while being aware of the stereotypes, still “cannot avoid the exotic, the strange, and the fascinating.”<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting that, in the Hungarian context, from the early 1960s, the work of Jenő Rejtő (P. Howard), mainly about Eastern Europeans ‘adventure’ back in the colonial Africa and Southeast Asia, were republished and became popular again.<sup>78</sup> Also, there was Konstantin Biebl in the Czechoslovaks’ context, for example; the communist avant-garde poet who went to the Dutch Indies in 1926. His works often visualizes the landlocked Bohemia and the tropical island in disorienting anew.<sup>79</sup>

On a different note, studies on race question under state socialism are generally pinpointed it on the tension between the outsiders—be it foreign students, exiles, migrant workers, or trained experts—and the host communities; with the Africans oftentimes experienced the messiest ones. Yet, complexity of ‘rivalry’ among racialized people did exists too; a quite overlooked topic. Recalling his university days, Artawan said that everything went smoothly. “About racial issues, during study period, we had no problems.”<sup>80</sup> Trying to give a vivid image of those days, he described how Indonesian students were very good in making friends. “We were very sassy, unlike, for example Vietnamese students; our interaction with the Czech students was good.”<sup>81</sup> We did not go down the rabbit hole of that comparison; but it was quite striking. Does it indicate an internalized code of conduct—that one needed to act in certain ways to earn their place in a circle? Does it somehow implicate a complex mental picture of being a ‘more ideal immigrant’?<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p: 382.

<sup>78</sup> For a more detailed account, see: James Mark, p: 230.

<sup>79</sup> See: Jan Mrázek, *On This Modern Highway. Lost in the Jungle: Tropics, Travel, and Colonialism in Czech Poetry*, (Prague: Karolinum Press, Charles University, 2022).

<sup>80</sup> “Mengenai rasial itu, waktu kami belajar, di kampus gak ada masalah.” March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>81</sup> “Soalnya kita, kalau dibanding student dari Vietnam, misalnya, itu sangat grabyak dengan yang lain. Bergaulnya baik, antara mahasiswa Indonesia dengan mahasiswa Ceko.” March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>82</sup> To understand more about this complex, see, for example: Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

## Transnational Solidarity

Just like in any other studies of the sixties and student movements, Vietnam war is inevitable topic.<sup>83</sup> As students, these five people had participated in anti-war protests in one way or another; be it in official state-organized ones or in a more independent-initiatives. It is worth noting that some local students and citizens found that the official state solidarity forms were limiting. At once, this transnational solidarity moment also became the point where they started to criticize state socialism at home.<sup>84</sup> Hence, they organized their own initiatives; outside the state's ones. In Hungary, there were nuances of this unofficial transnational solidarity movement. It was ranging from those ELTE students who offered 250 liters of their blood for the Vietnamese in 1967—which was welcomed by the state for it was still within the political language provided by the regime—to a number of those “who had been involved in organizing radical Vietnam solidarity and small public rallies”—and ended up on trial as Maoist in spring 1968.<sup>85</sup>

Speaking of participation in the movement, Artawan, with some Indonesian students, for example, would work together with students from various part of the world to participate in ‘less official’ protests. Having musical band at that time, they would usually play some music in the protests as act of solidarity. “After other students doing some agitation in the Vietnam war protest, our band would usually perform... We would also pass resolutions; organized charity nights and many

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<sup>83</sup> See: M. Klimke and J. Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); M. Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>84</sup> Among others, see: Paulina Bren, “1968 East and West: Visions of Political Change and Student Protest from across the Iron Curtain,” *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney (eds.), (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), pp: 119-135.

<sup>85</sup> James Mark, Péter Apor, Radina Vučetić, and Piotr Osęka, “‘We Are with You, Vietnam’: Transnational Solidarities in Socialist Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 50, No.3, 2015, p: 460. In general, the article gives a good overview of the topic. Also, for further knowledge on the Hungarian case, see: Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring (eds.), *Europe 1968: Voices of Revolt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp: 174-177.

others.”<sup>86</sup> After sharing those previous lines, Artawan retrospectively said that he is not sure how effective those actions were. “But, yes, I felt that I contributed something; as much as I could. Joined meeting, signed resolutions,” he concluded.<sup>87</sup> Although he could not remember the details of those initiatives, he recalled that he was very much involved during 1965 until early 1967. Afterwards, following the split of the Indonesian student union in Prague, he did not join in such movement any longer.

On the other end, most of the emigrees shared that their main involvement with the Vietnam war protest was through the official ones. Susilo’s memory of joining a state-organized protest could be an illustration of their participation. It was on the annual 1<sup>st</sup> May celebration in 1965—he and other Indonesian students dressed up in ‘Indonesian attires’ as suggested by the official and gathered together with other students from all over the world.<sup>88</sup> They brought banners condemning imperialist project; expressed solidarity with the people in Vietnam. He recalled this in a good-light; mostly talking about how nice it was to have students from different places coming together to protest on something—and to have the state organized in a diligent manner. In the same year, slogans commented on the everyday problems of students and criticized Soviet and the Communist-Party started to emerge at the *Majáles* festival and were considered inappropriate. It was in the following year that the Czechoslovakia state even needed to spread the festival over two

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<sup>86</sup> “Kita mengadakan performans setelah mereka agitasi mengenai perang di Vietnam... Kita juga mengeluarkan resolusi-resolusi; mengadakan malam amal dan segala macam.” March 19, 2022, Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>87</sup> “Tapi, ya, saya merasa saya itu cukup ada andil; sebisa saya. Ikut rapat, tanda tangan resolusi,” March 19, 2022, Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>88</sup> Not particularly related, but this article could be helpful to understand the logic behind the ‘national attires’: Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1994, pp: 414-452.

weeks as well as scheduled it as late as May 15 to avoid clashes with the official May Day parade—although still it did not go as planned.<sup>89</sup>



<sup>89</sup> See: Michael Polák, “Street Politics: Student Demonstrations in Prague in the 1960s and the Disintegration of the ČSM University Structures,” *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. VIII, 2020, pp: 45-72. Also, see: Milan Hauner, “Czechoslovakia,” *Students, University, and Society*, Margaret Scotford Archer (London: Heinemann Education Books, 1972).



Figure 33, 34, 35, 36

Some photographs from 1965 1<sup>st</sup> of May celebration—one can easily recognize the banners as well their attires. Some men wore *songkok*—that ‘typical hat of Sukarno’—and batik. Meanwhile, some girls even dressed up in traditional attires, like wearing Balinese dress or kebaya and sarong.  
(Susilo’s personal archive)

Their other means of participating in the transnational solidarity at that time was by joining conferences—to participate in the discussions about on-going issues around the world. Asep specifically mentioned two conferences of WFDY that he, and other Indonesian students, attended: the 1968 conference in Sofia and the 1973 conference in Berlin. Particularly he recalled that although it was during the time of Sino-Soviet split, the commitment of the youths to support people’s struggle around the world still managed to unite them. He specifically referred to the Vietnam case. “It was the solidarity toward Vietnamese’s struggle that kept people united.”<sup>90</sup> He could not remember the exact points of discussion on those conferences. WDFY documents show that Vietnam was the central topic on the 1968 conference, while the 1973 one touched upon the problem in Greece, Mozambique, Sudan, Laos, Korea, Palestine, Guinea Bissau, and Latin America.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> “Waktu itu solidaritas terhadap perjuangan rakyat Vietnam masih kompak,” August 30, 2021, Záběhllice.

<sup>91</sup> WFDY archive; 1968 campaigns and 1973 declarations and statements.



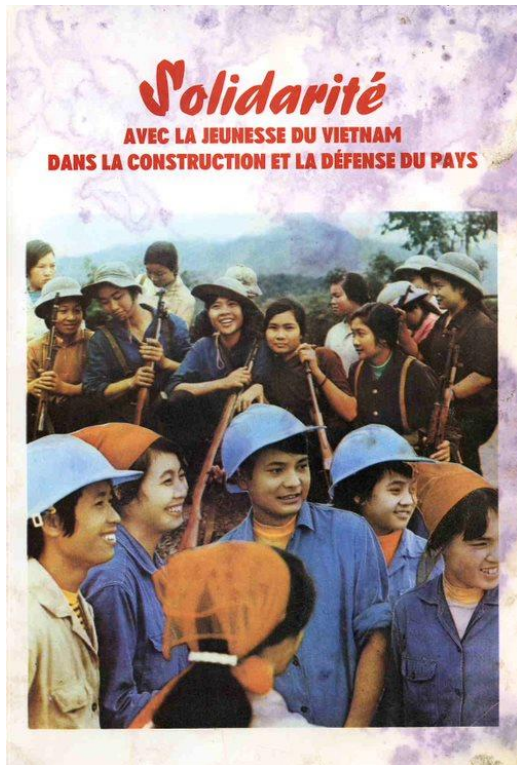
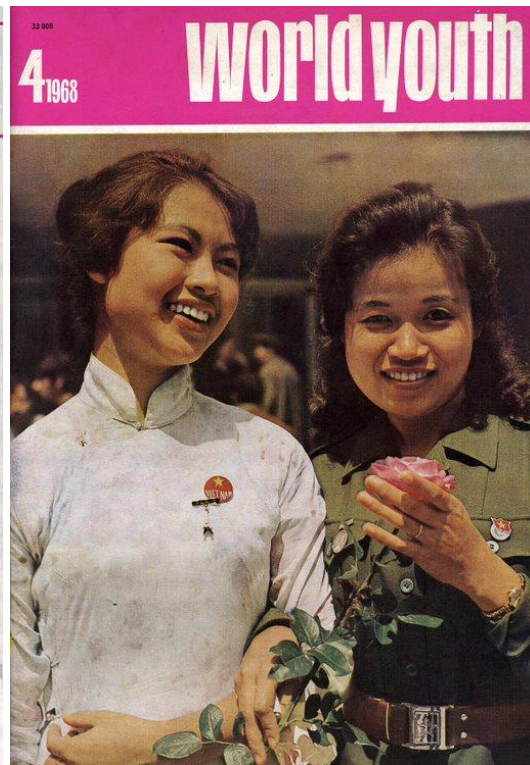
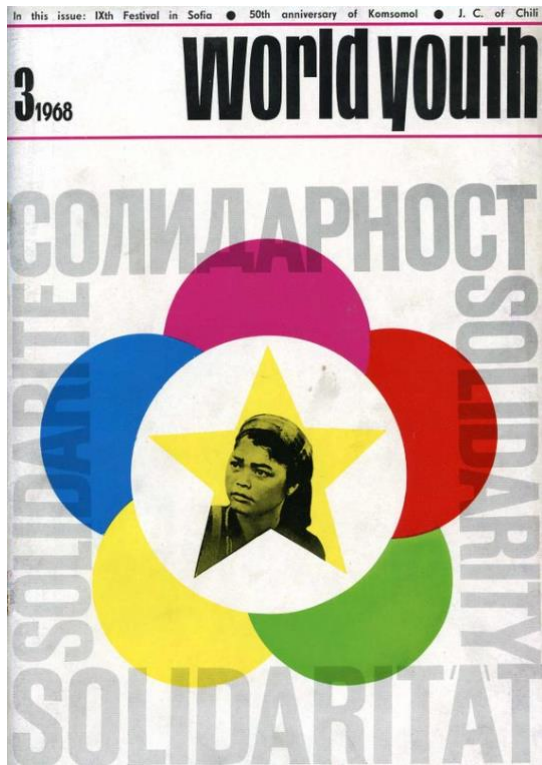




Figure 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42  
Publications from WFDY's Sofia and Berlin conferences that Asep attended.  
(WFDY archive)

In the heat of Sino-Soviet split in 1973 that divided the Indonesian leftists community, Agaim said to some friends who decided to go to Peking, “If you all want to go there, to go to Tiongkok, please do. We won’t. We will continue the struggle here to gain international solidarity for the Indonesian people.”<sup>92</sup> Aside from having certain people joined international organizations—labor, youth, student organizations, for example—these conferences were one of their means to gain solidarity on the Indonesian issue. The aim was to particularly overthrow Suharto. However, in case of WFDY, for example, there is only one resolution dated back from February 15, 1966 stating its solidarity to the Indonesian progressives and communists that faced US-backed violence and killings. No other available documents in the archive proved that this Indonesian problem was at the center of attention of the organization.

<sup>92</sup> “Kalian kalau mau ke sana, ke Tiongkok, silakan saja. Kami tidak. Kami akan berjuang di dunia internasional untuk menggalang solidaritas dengan perjuangan rakyat Indonesia.” August 30, 2021, Záběhllice.



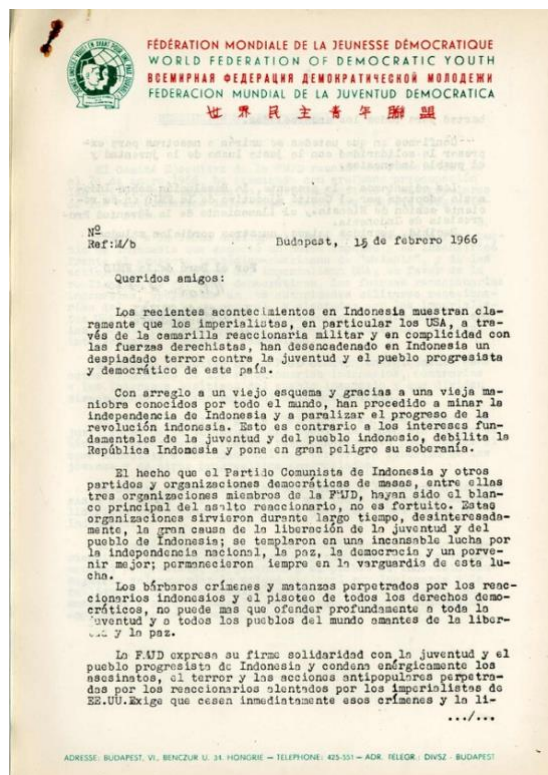


Figure 43  
WFDY's 1966 resolution about the violence in Indonesia.  
(WFDY archive)

## Sino-Soviet Split; Its Odds and Ends

Sino-Soviet split is an important topic as it contributed to the complexities of the political situation in Indonesia that culminated in the 1965.<sup>93</sup> “Before 1965 happened, there were quite many people that aligned with Peking. They wanted armed struggle. But, we’re not,”<sup>94</sup> Ainun shared her (and her late husband’s) stance. Although Ainun never clearly stated her direct affiliation with PKI, her husband was part of the affiliated organization.<sup>95</sup> He was an active members of *Consentrasi*

<sup>93</sup> For further reading on this topic, among others, see: John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

<sup>94</sup> “Sebelum 1965, cukup banyak yang ikut Peking. Mereka bersimpati dengan perjuangan bersenjata. Kalau kami tidak.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>95</sup> In one of the interview, she informed that she first learnt about PKI from her husband—“Saya dengar PKI karena Bapak.” (I learned about PKI from my husband). February 27, 2022, Kemenes Cukrászda, Várház krt. 9. Also, in all of the interviews, her daughter, Wardani, accompanied her. Anytime I asked further questions on the political matters

*Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia* (CGMI); an organization of university students linked to PKI. During our conversation, she implied that the growing faction in PKI, which believed the necessity of the armed struggle and started the training among the peasant and the youth, contributed to the turmoil.<sup>96</sup> When she talked about it, one could sense disagreement in her tone; she and her late husband did not think armed struggle was the answer.

This split is also significant because it divided this particular Indonesian community. People started to argue about which was the best revolutionary road; then decided to pick sides. The dream was to fight Suharto's regime. The situation caused movements and division of people; those leftists (or PKI cadres rather) left Soviet and its allies, including Hungary and Czechoslovakia, for China (and Bulgaria; even Vietnam).<sup>97</sup> Some took the other way around.<sup>98</sup> In his research, Hill mentions that, based on some PKI cadres, "the PKI delegation in Beijing had sent written instructions to party members in Moscow, which included lists of specific names of

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related to PKI, Ainun would try to answer as best as she could. Oftentimes, her daughter would join in mentioning that the late father might be the best person to answer it.

<sup>96</sup> In his speech on June 29, 1963 D.N. Aidit, the general secretary of PKI (1951-1965/66), did mention the importance of armed peasant for revolution. He suggested the necessity to work together with the Indonesian military considering its anti-fascist, democratic and anti-imperialism nature. He, too, stated that the military shared Indonesian Socialism dream. See: D.N. Aidit, *PKI dan Angkatan Darat*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Pembaruan, 1963), <https://www.marxists.org/indonesia/indones/1963-AiditPKIdanAD.htm>. Meanwhile, in his speech on March 17, 1964, he underlined the importance of Indonesian air force in the armed struggle by considering the specificity of Indonesian geography See: D.N. Aidit, *Revolusi Angkatan Bersenjata dan Partai Komunis (PKI dan AURI II)*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Pembaruan: 1964), <https://www.marxists.org/indonesia/indones/1964-AiditRevolusiAngkatanBersenjata.htm>.

<sup>97</sup> I gather the account about people moved to Vietnam from an interview with Asep (March 25, 2022, Mečíková). The exact wordings were: "Kemudian ada juga yang ke Vietnam. Di Vietnam katanya kita akan belajar perjuangan bersenjata. Tapi kenyataannya tidak juga." (Also, there were some who went to Vietnam. They would have an armed struggle training there. But, it turned out, that was not the case). For further reading on the Albanian case, see: Hill, "Indonesia's exiled Left as the Cold War thaws," *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 44, no.1 (2010), pp: 32-38.

<sup>98</sup> There were some well-known figures that took this route, including Utuy Tatang Sontani, Kuslan Budiman, Rusdi Hermain (son of the former Indonesian ambassador to Cuba, AM Hanafi), and Agam Wispi. While the rest went to Moscow, Agam Wispi went to East Germany. See: David T. Hill, "Indonesian Political Exiles in the USSR," *Critical Asian Studies*, 46:4 (2014): pp. 621-648. Hill also writes, based on an interview with Waloejo Sedjati, that the number of Indonesian students staying in the Soviet Union remained only several dozen. That was a significant decrease of number considering that the Indonesian student population in Soviet during its peak was approximately about two thousand.

those had been called to China.”<sup>99</sup> He writes that those deciding not to go to China included a mixture of PKI cadres who followed the line of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist ‘parliamentary road,’ together with non-party leftists, Sukarnoist/nationalists, and those who simply opposed Suharto’s regime.

Examining the pattern of the community in this research, one could say that, overall, Hill’s elaboration is accurate. However, still, there could always be an anomaly. Take Agam as an example. Coming from Sigli, a small town in Pidie regency (Aceh), he sympathizes with Maoism. He was the chief of the local branch of *Pemuda Rakjat*; a youth wing organization of the communist party. He thinks an armed struggle was vital, considering the heat of the Cold War and the liberation struggle in the third world. He compared Indonesia and Vietnam; how much he adored the Vietnamese struggle and referred to the unpopularity of the armed struggle within the Indonesian communists as one of the causes of their defeat. “Hahaha. Yes, that is Uncle Ho’s picture. Uncle Ho. I liked Uncle Ho and Mao,” giggly he responded when I found Ho’s picture in his photo album.<sup>100</sup> However, life kept him in Brno instead; starting a family and getting a job. Before going to Czechoslovakia, Agam even spent some time in China for a *Pemuda Rakjat* visit. He recalled good things from the visit—saying that he was impressed by its “people oriented development” and “the people’s working spirit.” He found it more lively in comparison to the “bourgeois oriented” Soviet and Czechoslovakia.<sup>101</sup> At some point during our conversation, he

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<sup>99</sup> See: David T. Hill (2014), p: 637.

<sup>100</sup> “Hahaha. Iya, itu gambar Uncle Ho. Uncle Ho. Saya suka Uncle Ho dan Mao.” September 5, 2021, Agam’s residency, Brno.

<sup>101</sup> Based on an interview on March 27, 2022, Agam’s residency, Brno. I suggest readers to consult following text for a different perspective: Keith Foulcher, “Bringing the world back home: Cultural traffic in Konfrontasi, 1954-1960,” Jennifer Lindsay (ed.), *Heirs to the World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965*, (Leiden: KITLV Press), pp: 31-56. Foulcher touches upon Indonesia’s Cultural Missions to China. While many return to the country with positive impression about China, some were not, such as, Ramadhan KH (a poet and novelist) who reported that there was a profound unease there.

indicated that he was in touch with the Albanian group; but did not give further descriptions aside from mentioning about working on some publications.<sup>102</sup>



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<sup>102</sup> Based on an interview on March 27, 2022, Agam's residency, Brno. The Albanian group published *Indonesian Tribune* and *Api Pemuda Indonesia*; Radio Tirana broadcasted in Indonesian twice daily starting from March 1967—it discontinued in 1991. It is also worth noting that following the Sino-Albanian split in 1978, some of the Indonesian communists left Albania. See: Gjon Boriçi, "The fall of Albanian–Chinese relations 1971–1978," *ILIRIA International Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2016), pp: 107–118; Anne-Marie Brady and Hiromichi Higashi, "Are we real friends? Albania–China relations in the Xi Era," *Sinopsis: China in Context and Perspective*, <https://sinopsis.cz/en/are-we-real-friends-albania-china-relations-in-the-xi-era/>. There was news about the denouncement of Indonesian communists—for the Indonesians had failed to endorse the anti-Albanian campaign and had been suspected of giving aid and comfort to the Albanians and Chinese. See: Harry Schwartz, "Reds in Indonesia Aloof on Albania," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1962.



Figure 44 and 45  
Some photographs from Agam's visit to China in 1963.  
(Agam's personal archive)



Figure 46  
Agam with his Ho Chi Minh's picture. He brought the album from Sigli when he went to Czechoslovakia. There are a lot of other pictures in the album, mostly pictures of his family and comrades.  
(Personal documentation)

It was a different story for Asep. He leaned toward the Soviet Union when it comes to the split. His primary reason was more practical; unlike China, Vietnam, and, to some extent, Malaysia, Indonesia is a large archipelago. The communists' strong base was not highlands and jungle. It

would be tough to have a strong-armed struggle in such a geographical landscape. The Soviet-leaned PKI Overseas Committee posted him to organize its cadres in Czechoslovakia. The aim was to keep the party alive along the Soviet Marxist-Leninist ‘parliamentary road’ and to oppose the New Order regime by emphasizing the importance of international solidarity. Gaining solidarity was another reason for choosing Prague; a hub for many international democratic organizations. “There were many international labour union, youth, and students’ organizations here in Prague.”<sup>103</sup>

Asep informed that this group made underground publications (including *Tekad Rakjat*) and participated in several international conferences. This PKI Overseas Committee also worked with *World Marxist Review/Problems of Peace and Socialism*, a Communist monthly publication that appeared in 41 languages (including Indonesian, before 1965). Its headquarter was in Prague. According to Asep, in 1972, Tomas Sinuraja, the Overseas Committee’s leader of the Soviet-leaned PKI, recommended one of the party cadres to work in the journal’s editorial team’s members. Asep did not mention the person’s name when I asked; “We put one person in the editorial team members—the name—yeah, there was this person,” said him.<sup>104</sup> While it remains unclear who was that ‘one person,’ in 1968, 1969, 1972, 1974, and 1979 *World Marxist Review/Problems of Peace and Socialism* editions there were pieces on Indonesia—overall discussing the struggle of the communists following the 1965 as well as their calls for solidarity.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> “Di sini ada serikat buruh internasional, mahasiswa, pemuda, pusatnya di sini, di Praha.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová.

<sup>104</sup> “Kita di situ, kita masukin – adalah sebagai satu redaktur.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová.

<sup>105</sup> Here are the titles of the articles: “Political Prisoners in Indonesia (Letter from Djakarta)” (written by Sudono, 1968), “Again Reprisals in Indonesia,” (written by L.N., 1968), “Address to Indonesian Communists” (a document adopted by the international conference of communist and workers parties, 1969), “On Situation in Communist Movement of Indonesia” (written by T. Sinuraja, 1969), “Advancing under the Banner of Marxism-Leninism” (no writer information provided, first published in *Tekad Rakjat*, 1972), “Stop Repressions in Indonesia!” (no writer information provided, 1974), and “Maoist policy and China’s future” (written by S. Sudisman, 1979). One can access some editions of the journal from the Internet Archive: [https://archive.org/details/pub\\_world-marxist-](https://archive.org/details/pub_world-marxist-)



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TOMAS SINURAJA	
A HARC ÉS MEGPRÓBÁLTATÁS ÉVEI	
AZ ELLENFORRADALOM ELŐZMÉNYEI	
Az Indonéz Kommunista Párt (IKP) 1920. május 23-án alakult, a munkásmozgalom nagy fellendülésének idején, amikor az országos Októberi Forradalom győzelmének eredményeképpen hazánkba is eljutottak a marxizmus-leninizmus eszméi. A párt története elválaszthatatlan az indonéz dolgozók és a nemzetközi kommunista mozgalom életétől s harától.	
A párt későbbi fegyver az első sorokban harcolt a dolgozó nép érdekében. Az IKP — amelyet alapított, Ali Archam, Sardjono és Munawar Musso elvtársak vezettek — fiatalága és tapasztalatlansága ellenére 1926—1927-ben a holland gyarmatosítók elleni népi felkelés élén állott. A felkelést elfojtották, s a gyarmatosítók kegyetlenül megtorolták a kommunisákon és valamennyi hazafin. De nem aludt ki a fölkelés föllobbantotta láng, továbbra is megvilágította a szabadságharc útját. 1927-ben megalakult az Indonéz Nemzeti Párt (PNI — Partai Nasional Indonesia), amelyet alapította, Sukarno annak idején az IKP által megkezdett forradalmi harc folytatójának nevezett, s 1928-ban létrejött a híres „Ifjúság Ekkijé”, amelyben elhangzott a felhívás: fogjon össze valamennyi forradalmi antikolonialista erő! Mindezek a tények arról tanúskodnak, milyen nagy volt a befolyása Indonézia politikai életére a népi felkelés élén álló Indonéz Kommunista Pártnak.	
S bár a következő években illegálisába kellett mennie, s a terror következtében súlyos szervezeti nehézségekkel megküzdnie, a párt nem hagyta abba a harcot. Az indonéz és a holland maitrók felkelése a Hét Tartomány nevű holland című kiadvány 1933-ban a proletár internacionalizmus és az öbhatatlan szabadságharc nagyszerep megnyilvánulása volt. 1942—1944-ben, abban az időszakban, amikor a japán militaristák szállták meg az országot, új lendületet vett a függetlenségi mozgalom. A kommunisáknak a többi hazafival együtt kitartóan ellenálltak a megszállóknak, megszervezték a szabotázst az iparvállalatokban és a vasútnál, a parasztok (Singaparnában, Indramajuban és Tanah Karóban), a katonák (Blitarban), az értelmiség, a tanuló ifjúság és az egyesített halgatók megmozdulásait.	
Miután az indonéz nép felzababult a japán militaristák elnyomása alól és 1945. augusztus 17-én kikáltotta függetlenségét, az Indonéz Kommunista Pártra várt az a feladat, hogy megvédje az augusztusi forradalom vívmányait, befejezze a forradalom demokratikus, antiféudális, antimperialista szakaszát. Ez mindezekelől azt követelte meg, hogy a párt minden erejét mozgósítsa a harcra az állampártszabban jelenlévő burzsoá-komprádor elemek	

Figure 47 and 48

Table of content for the 1969 edition in English language where one could identify an article entitled “Address to Indonesian Communists”; Tomas Sinuraja’s writing in the Hungarian edition of the journal (*Béke és szocializmus*, 1972-06-01, 6. szám). Sinuraja mainly discusses about PKI, anti-communism in Indonesia, and the current task of the communist movement. In Indonesia, before 1965, the journal was under the name *Masalah-Masalah Sosialisme dan Perdamaian*.

Meanwhile, Ainun did not share any specific stories about her and her husband’s involvement with any Soviet-leaning organizations in Budapest.<sup>106</sup> The only information that I gathered from her was their involvement in events and publications of Indonesian Student Association (PPI) of Eastern Europe. She said that the publications mainly contained criticism on the Suharto’s regime. The association itself was divided following 1965; some students created a pro-Suharto association with the support of Indonesian Embassies.<sup>107</sup>

[review?&sort=-week&page=5](#). However, there were no complete pieces of the above mentioned articles; I gathered the titles by sorting through the available table of contents.

<sup>106</sup> While it is unclear what she meant by Soviet-leaning organization, it could be the case she referred to youth organizations or any organization affiliated with the party. For further reading on this topic, see: János Rainer M, “The Sixties in Hungary—some historical and political approaches,” *Muddling through in the long 1960s: Ideas and Everyday life in High Politics and the Lower Classes of Communist Hungary*, György Péteri and János Rainer M (eds.), (Budapest-Trondheim: 1956 Institute, 2005), pp: 4-26.

<sup>107</sup> Based on Paloh’s account (March 24, 2022) and Artawan’s account (March 19, 2022). For further reading on the dynamics PPI of Eastern Europe, see: Syafiq Hasyim, “Challenging a Home Country: A Preliminary Account of Indonesian Student Activism in Berlin, Germany,” *ASEAS: Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2014), pp: 183-198.

There are several points worth-noting related to their political stances. Both Ainun and Asep came from big cities in Java, each Yogyakarta and Bandung. Not only Java is the main island, but also those two big cities were, and still are, places with better infrastructure even within the island itself. In contrast, Agam was once a youth from a small region in Aceh; (now) a semi-autonomous Indonesian province. Although they did not consider their backgrounds were influential to their affiliations, still it might be somehow affect their political standpoints. As an illustration, Sigli was, and still is, a rural area that was less developed than Bandung and Yogyakarta. It could be a ‘better place’ for a radical outlook to grow. One could also consider the different political atmosphere in different parts of the country. Aceh has a long and complex history with the Indonesian nation-state, because of, among other things, the movement of Islamic state group there.<sup>108</sup> The communist oftentimes was under the pressure of the group’s white terror. Agam’s experience with the local government could be, a slight, but telling illustration. They declined to issue his passport due to his communist affiliation. He needed to go to Jakarta to process it with the support of the party.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Among others, see: Arndt Graf, Susanne Schroter, and Edwin P Wieringa (eds.), *Aceh: History, Politics, and Culture*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010) for an overview on the complex history of Indonesia and Aceh. For the Islamic state group, see: Yon Machmudi, “The Re-emergence of Indonesian Islamic State Groups: Their Survival and Modus Operandi,” *International Journal of Islam in Asia* 1 (2021), pp: 211-233. The article also touches the topic on Darul Islam’s support for the military propaganda of crushing the communists in 1965-66.

<sup>109</sup> Based on an interview on March 27, 2022, Agam’s residence, Brno.



Figure 49  
Agam and his comrades at 1962 *Pemuda Rakjat* Pidie conference.  
(Agam's personal archive)

Even those having no specific stances on the split keep their memory of it. “Why should we pick sides—Soviet or China? If we stand for Indonesia—(then we need to just stick to) Indonesian communism. The problem was, those aligned with Soviet would say that I supported China; those aligned with China would say I supported Soviet,”<sup>110</sup> Paloh recalled the division. While Paloh did not elaborate more on what he meant by ‘Indonesian communism,’ more likely he referred to ‘Indonesian socialism’ instead. It was, particularly in the context of 1950s until 1965, rather a vague notion. “The ideology promoted after 1959, called ‘Indonesian socialism,’ was simultaneously devoid of details and incredibly demanding, calling on all loyal Indonesians to

<sup>110</sup> “Mengapa kita harus milih Soviet, mengapa milih Cina? Kalau kita pro Indonesia—komunisme Indonesia. Tapi parahnya, untuk yang Soviet, saya dikatakan pro-Timur; untuk yang pro-Timur, saya dikatakan pro-Soviet.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

dedicate themselves entirely to a ‘just and prosperous society,’ without providing plans for how it would be achieved.”<sup>111</sup>

Artawan particularly remembered 1974 as the peak year of the division and movement within the community. “In 1974, many people in the group were under the influence of those who aligned with Peking... So, I am not sure how many of us stayed here, minus those who left in that year.”<sup>112</sup> One could not separate it with the growing tendency of the Soviet and its allies to resume economic relations with Indonesia under Suharto’s regime.<sup>113</sup> For those countries, it was to secure the repayment of its substantial debt—“between 1956 and 1965, Soviet and Eastern European economic assistance to Indonesia averaged more than \$120 million per year, more than 20 percent of all Soviet aid to the non-Communist world.”<sup>114</sup> For the Indonesian leftists, it was an ‘ideological betrayal.’ Artawan recalled readings some news about Czechoslovakia and Indonesia economy partnership back in the 70s. For the Hungarian context, in 1978, for example, *Hungarian Reviews* reported that Hungarian trading company, Gépexport, supplied hand tool and weighing-machine to Indonesia; indicating that the two countries managed to continue business as usual.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Kevin W. Fogg, “Indonesian socialism of 1950s: from ideology to rhetoric,” *Third World Quarterly*, 42:3 (2021), p: 475.

<sup>112</sup> “1974 karena banyak dari grup kita waktu itu yang terpengaruh oleh aliran pro-Peking... Jadi, tahun itu, yang masih tinggal di sini, berapa orang, dikurangi orang-orang yang keluar itu tadi, saya gak tahu pasti berapa jumlahnya.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>113</sup> In Soviet’s case, there were important parliamentary delegations exchange in 1973 and 1974 with the Soviet leaders showed interest in promoting economic ties and technical assistance and technical assistance. At once, there was no interest in the issue regarding the banned of PKI. N.P. Firyubin (Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister) and I. Grishin (Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade) visited Jakarta in early 1974 to work on the initiatives. Meanwhile, Jakarta Suharto’s regime expressed a willingness to cooperate on December 1974. For further reading, see: Robert C. Horn, “Soviet Influence in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and Obstacles,” *Asian Survey* Vol. 15, No. 8 (1975), pp: 656-671.

<sup>114</sup> Brad Simpson, “Indonesia’s ‘Accelerated Modernization’ and the Global Discourse of Development. 1960-1975,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 3, (2009), p: 472.

<sup>115</sup> For further reading on Soviet and Eastern Europe’s global economy vision, particularly in relation to the Third World, see: James Mark and Yakov Feygin, “The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Alternative Visions of Global Economy 1950s-1980s,” *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung (eds.), (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020). Also, see: Béla Kádár, “Structural Changes in the International Capital Exports,” *Acta Oeconomica*, Vol. 23 (1-2), (1979), pp: 85-93 for the Hungarian context in late 1970s.

In a larger context, despite of the official socialist view, in the mid-1970s following the *détente*, Eastern Europe countries did implement a more ‘realist’ policies that made sense in terms of ideology than ideology.<sup>116</sup>

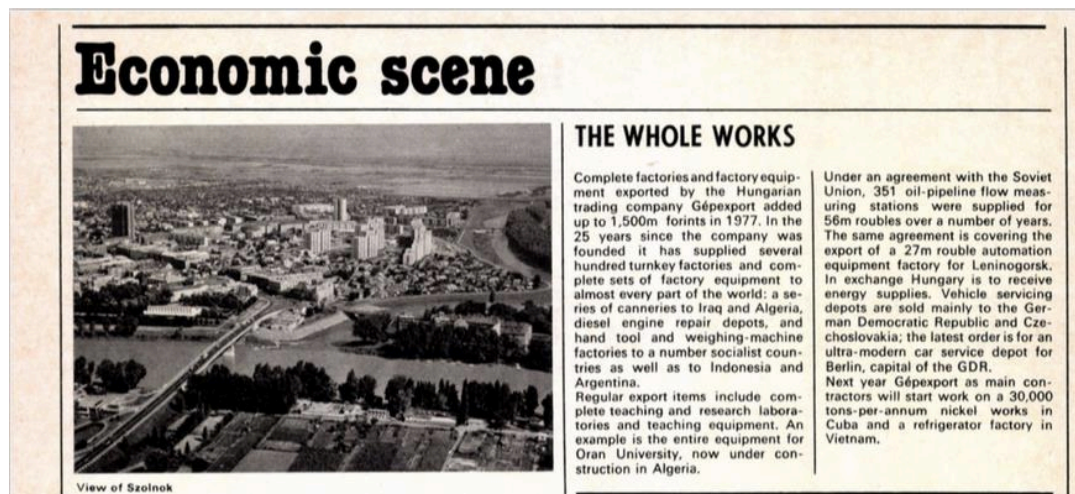


Figure 50

Report about the export. One could also examine Hungarian trade with the third world countries in general. (*Hungarian Review*, 1978-10-10, 10. szám)

On the other end, Sukarno’s signature rhetoric such as ‘anti-imperialism’ and ‘anti-colonialism’ were even conveniently employed by the Army in 1966—now almost under complete control of Suharto.<sup>117</sup> It might be the case that he targeted both Sukarno’s in-country masses and ‘sympathizers’ abroad.<sup>118</sup> While getting rid of the communists home, he did not show a crystal-

<sup>116</sup> For further reading, among others, see: Sara Lorenzini, “Comecon and the South in the years of *détente*: a study on East-South economic relations,” *European Review of History*: 21:2, 2014, pp: 183-199; Andre Gunder Frank, “Long Live Transideological Enterprise! Socialist Economies in Capitalist International Division of Labour,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 12, No. 6/8, 1977, pp: 297-348.

<sup>117</sup> For further reading, see: Hal Hill, *Indonesia’s New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-economic Transformation*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). Also, see: Daniel Dhakidae, *Geliat Cendekiawan dalam Cengkeraman Neo-Fasisme Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2003), pp. 246-247. On page 246 particularly, there are these exact wordings: “Orde Baru menghendaki suatu *tata-fikir yang lebih realistis dan pragmatis*, walaupun tidak meninggalkan idealisme perjuangannya. Orde Baru menghendaki diutamakan ideologi perjuangannya anti-kolonialisme dan anti-imperialisme.” (The New Order wants a more realistic and pragmatic logics, without leaving idealism behind. It wants to center the anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism ideology).

<sup>118</sup> Afterall, it was undeniable that Sukarno paved his way to have a great legacy. Within the country, people, at the very least, keep the memory of him as one of the ‘founding fathers’ and the proclinator of the independence. As a telling illustration, even today, it is not a rare experience of seeing picture of Sukarno at people’s houses, particularly around Yogyakarta and Central Java. His initiatives in the Third World movement and Non-Aligned Movement also gave him a certain position internationally and, as his successor, Suharto could be somehow under his shadow. For



clear anti Communist international gesture—particularly regarding Soviet and Eastern Bloc. “Among the leaders of the New Order, it seems that it is the PRC, rather than other Communist countries, that evoked an emotional reaction. In a foreign policy discussion seminar in 1970, for instance, the participants and speakers concentrated largely on the issue of the PRC and the Chinese. The Soviet Union and other Communist countries did not receive as much attention from Indonesian political public.”<sup>119</sup>

### 1,000 Indonesians Raid China's Embassy, Beat 9

**JAKARTA, Indonesia, Sunday, Oct. 1 (UPI)**—More than 1,000 club-swinging Indonesian youths attacked the Chinese Communist Embassy early today. They beat staff members, burned automobiles and smashed radio transmitting equipment.

The attackers demanded revenge for the short-lived attempt at a Communist coup d'etat two years ago in which six of the nation's leading military officers were slain.

The embassy attackers dragged nine Chinese employees out of their quarters and beat them as Indonesian troops looked on. The Chinese fought back with broken bottles and knives and severely injured at least three of the students.

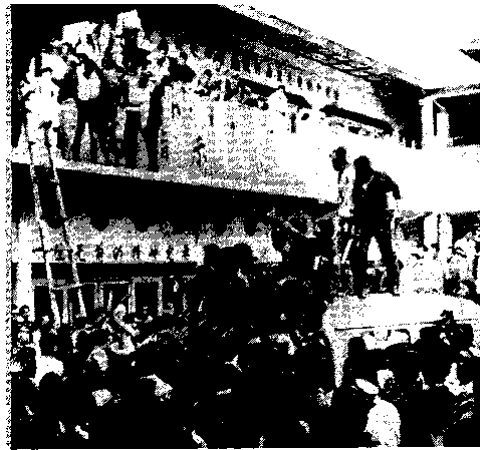
The attack lasted five hours.

**The New York Times**

Published: October 1, 1967

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### 6 Chinese Hospitalized as Indonesians Raid Embassy



Indonesian youths ransacking Chinese Communist Embassy. Several Chinese were hurt.

Shown in The New York Times  
**JAKARTA, Indonesia, Oct. 1**—At least six Chinese were in the hospital today after a violent demonstration by about 1,000 youths at the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta. For two hours, beginning at 5 A.M., the mob ransacked the embassy compounds and eventually set fire to one building. The damage was more extensive than that caused on April 15, 1968, in a similar demonstration.

Twelve embassy staff members were still in bed when the youths entered and began manhandling them. Indonesian troops later rescued the Chinese and took the injured to an army hospital. The mob made a bonfire of Chinese documents, books and a radio transmitter. Troops finally dispersed the youths by firing several times in the air. Last night the student radio

broadcast repeated calls for a gathering at student headquarters to commemorate the anniversary of the defeat of a Communist-inspired revolt two years ago. The students then marched to the embassy.

**HONG KONG, Monday, Oct. 2 (Reuters)**—China strongly protested to Indonesia yesterday over the attack on the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta, Hsinhua, the Chinese press agency, reported.

**The New York Times**

Published: October 2, 1967

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Figure 51 and 52

News on the violence towards Chinese on 1967 during the commemoration of “the defeat of a communist-inspired revolt” shows the prolonged anti-Chinese sentiment.

example, there was a comical story about Suharto’s visit to Cambodia in 1968 where Norodom Sihanouk kept on offering Sukarno’s favorite things to Suharto. See: <https://historia.id/histeria/articles/ketika-presiden-soeharto-dijahili-pangeran-kamboja-D80xe/page/1>.

<sup>119</sup> Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2022), p. 12.

The Chinese topic was, and still is, a complex narrative. It is hard not to include the deeply-rooted racism in the suspicion. Its root stem from the Dutch colonization period.<sup>120</sup> While, it was during the Suharto's regime that the *peranakan* Chinese experienced the most violent and visible discrimination, during Sukarno's era racism did exist.<sup>121</sup> *Star Weekly*, a *peranakan* Chinese weekly magazine, for example, published a telling illustration of it—criticism on the phenomenal 1955 Bandung Conference. By using humours, it showed the irony of anti-racism campaign in the conference while ethnic Chinese faced racism at once.<sup>122</sup> At once, it is worth noting that, on the same conference “the PRC pivoted toward cultivating friendship with formerly colonized countries in Asia and Africa.”<sup>123</sup> Moreover, in early 1960s, Beijing prioritized in befriending Indonesia for its involvement in the Non Aligned Movement—and this was intersected with communal politics and ethnic tensions. “The Chinese community in Indonesia was divided along the battle lines of the Chinese Civil War, which was fought between the Communist and Nationalist Parties... The political enthusiasm of the ethnic Chinese aroused suspicion from the Indonesian government, aggravated ethnic tension in Indonesian society, and destabilized Sino-Indonesian relations.”<sup>124</sup> *The New York Times* reported about this ethnic tension in their 1959, 1960, and 1963 editions—discussed about the banning of ethnic Chinese from engaging in business activity, the departure of great number of ethnic Chinese from Indonesia, and the anti-Chinese riot in some regions in Indonesia.

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<sup>120</sup> On the topic of how colonialism constructed racism in the context of Southeast Asia, among others, see: Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Routledge, 1977). See: Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917-1942*, (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005) for further reading about ethnic Chinese politics during the colonial time. On the discrimination during Suharto's regime, among others, see: Leo Suryadinata, “Indonesian Policies toward the Chinese Minority under the New Order,” *Asia Survey* Vol 16, No. 8, 1976.

<sup>121</sup> See: Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019); particularly chapter 5 and chapter 6.

<sup>122</sup> See: “Made Fun of Bandung Conference,” *Quotidian Amateur*, <https://quotidianamateur.wordpress.com/2020/04/24/made-fun-of-bandung-conference/>.

<sup>123</sup> Taomo Zhou (2019): p.9.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid: p. 4-5.

## JAKARTA CRITICIZED BY INDONESIAN REDS

Special to The New York Times.

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Monday, Nov. 23.—The Communist party stood alone today as Indonesia's only major political party that has failed to give full support to Jakarta in its dispute with Communist China over treatment of alien Chinese in Indonesia.

A manifesto issued by the party's politburo today charged Indonesia had taken actions contrary to the "spirit and soul" of a joint communiqué signed in Peiping last month.

Indonesia's three other major political parties—the Nationalists, the Orthodox Moslem Scholars and the Moslem Masjumi—have accused the Chinese Communists of trying to sabotage Indonesia's domestic economic policies.

The dispute stems from Indonesian regulations banning alien Chinese shopkeepers from conducting business in rural areas after Dec. 31. In West Java these aliens are being evacuated to the cities.

**The New York Times**

Published: November 23, 1959

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Figure 53

1959 news on the banning of ethnic Chinese from engaging in business activities and PKI as the only major political party which did not agree with the treatment.

## More Chinese Leave Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug. 10 (AP)—A total of 1,179 overseas Chinese affected by Indonesia's ban on trading by aliens in rural areas sailed for Communist China today. So far 41,000 Chinese have departed and several thousand more are expected to go.

**The New York Times**

Published: August 11, 1960

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Figure 54

Report shows ethnic tension in 1960.



## Peking Blames 'Imperialists' For Rioting in Indonesia

Special to The New York Times

HONG KONG, May 18—Communist China is blaming "United States imperialist" influence for current anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia.

Hsinhua, the Chinese Communist press agency, distributed lengthy accounts today of the Jakarta Government's measures to halt widespread attacks on Chinese-owned shops in Bandung, Cheribon, Bogor and other towns in central and western Java. It was the first mention of the anti-Chinese incidents in the Chinese Communist press.

Hsinhua reported in full Indonesian Government statements attributing the riots to "counterrevolutionaries."

The reference to "U. S. imperialist" influences was inserted by Hsinhua and was not attributed to Indonesian sources.

**The New York Times**

Published: May 19, 1963

Copyright © The New York Times

Figure 55

A news about Hsinhua, Chinese Communist press agency, talked about the US imperialist was behind the anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia.

In the early 1950s PKI had explicitly rejected Mao's armed revolution strategy—for Java had no remote bases to which a guerrilla army could retreat. Nonetheless, in 1960-65, members of the party and its mass organizations participated in military training for volunteer militias. According to Roosa, the party tried to prove to the military that the communists were more patriotic, reliable, and self-sacrificing than any other. On August 5, 1965, Aidit met Mao and mentioned that a 'military committee' had been established and the Communist party needed to arm the workers and peasants in a timely fashion.<sup>125</sup> Taomo Zhou writes that although "Beijing was aware of the

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<sup>125</sup> Roosa mentions the turn was related to the fact that, in early 1965, the party was stuck both in terms of gaining state power through the ballot (for the election was terminated) and gaining power through the bullet (since it has no organized armed forces). Moreover, it was also related to Sukarno's condition. Since early 1965, Sukarno was in danger of being overthrown, assassinated, or debilitated by health problems. That brought the party in a difficult

plan and at least did not object to it. But the Chinese leaders had no direct control over Aidit... Mao shifted the conversation to his own experience at the Chongqing Negotiations with the Chinese Nationalist Party. Given the historical background of the Chinese Civil War, Mao might have been making an oblique suggestion that Aidit should be prepared for both peace talks and armed uprising.”<sup>126</sup> Zhou argues that it is ill fitting to say that PRC was behind the 1965 coup for there is no enough evidence to prove it.

1965 was also the year of PRC demonstrates their enthusiastic endorsement of Sukarno. Preoccupied with *konfrontasi*, Indonesia was unable to host the second Bandung Conference—the Chinese leaders insisted that the conference should be back in Bandung after promising certain amount of money for the infrastructure.<sup>127</sup> Instead, Sukarno delegated the task to Ben Bella. The Algerian government then requested a deferral so that they would have enough time to construct the conference facilities—they postponed the conference until June. To compensate it, Indonesian instead hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference on April. Sukarno, intended the anniversary as a preview for the Algiers conference, was disappointed with the fact that only 36 out of 60 invited countries participated in it. Prominent leaders such as Nasser and Nkrumah were amongst those decided not to come. “The diplomatic sources believe that a number of countries in the Asian-African bloc are becoming increasingly cool toward Indonesia because of her growing cooperation with Communist China and because they do not share her quarrel with Malaysia.”<sup>128</sup>

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position because it was very dependent on the protection provided by Sukarno. Also, see: John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) for further reading on the topic.

<sup>126</sup> Taomo Zhou: pp. 162-163.

<sup>127</sup> For further reading on *konfrontasi*, among others, see: Budiawan, “How do Indonesians remember Konfrontasi? Indonesia-Malaysia relations and the popular memory of “Confrontation” after the fall of Suharto,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, No.3, 2017, pp. 364-375; John Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian, and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961-65*, (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 2000).

<sup>128</sup> Neil Sheehan, “Sukarno Tightens Tie to Asian Reds in Bandung Talk,” *The New York Times*, April 18, 1965.

Things just crumbled down as just before the scheduled opening of the second conference, Ben Bella was toppled by a coup on June 19, 1965. Not only the coup crushed Sukarno's revolutionary romanticism, but also put the end of the discussion of second Bandung which according to many Western scholars marked the beginning of the end of the internationalist movement in the Third World.<sup>129</sup>

Then September 1965 happened—Sudisman, the remaining CC PKI politburo, elaborated how the party could have fallen victim to the army's murderous repression. He denounced the party leaders, himself included, for building an above-ground party that had prioritized national unity over class struggle and nationalism over Marxist-Leninist doctrines. The easily defeated Indonesian communists after years of parliamentary struggle, proved that the success of struggle through peaceful way was an illusion. Sudisman then called for a smaller group of highly committed and well-trained cadres to lead an armed struggle along Maoist lines.<sup>130</sup> A small number of the remained Indonesian communists did organize underground insurgency in South Blitar, East Java, following the 1965—before being crushed by the military in 1968.<sup>131</sup> It seemed that they were also under the support of the “North Kalimantan People's Guerrilla Forces”

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid: pp. 149-150. Zhou also writes that *konfrontasi* brought complexities between Indonesia and China relations—“PRC was indignant toward Sukarno's expansionist ambitions as well as the Indonesian military's maltreatment of the of the ethnic Chinese guerrilla fighters and its provocation of ethnic violence between the Chinese and the indigenous groups during its campaigns.”

<sup>130</sup> Sudisman, *Otokritik Politbiro CC PKI* (The Self-Criticism of the CC PKI Politburo) (September 1966), [www.marxists.org/indonesia/indones/1966-SudismanOtoKritik.htm](http://www.marxists.org/indonesia/indones/1966-SudismanOtoKritik.htm). It is also worth noting that in his work, Roosa touches upon how the Indonesian Communist Party managed to not suffer any split from 1950 to 1965. However, the tension around the difference in means of struggle was high. In short, he underlines the cohesiveness of the party leadership team. Also, see: Vincent Bevins, *The Jakarta Method*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2020), p: 197 where he discusses about Maria “Joma” Sison who studied in Indonesia before the fall of Sukarno and concluded that the unarmed PKI was too vulnerable. He then founded the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP) which relied on the guerrilla groups rather than the PKI's tactics.

<sup>131</sup> See: Vanessa Hearman, “Guerillas, Guns, and Knives? Debating Insurgency in South Blitar, East Java, 1967-68,” *Indonesia*, January 2010. Hearman also discusses the topic of how Suharto's regime used this armed struggle narrative to legitimate the violence towards the communist.

(NKPGF), the Maoist-oriented group with predominantly ethnic Chinese member as well as small number ethnic Dayak people.<sup>132</sup> China also gathered hundreds of Indonesian communists who were left stranded there. Aside from taking care of their means of living, the Chinese government also put them in the Nanjing Military Academy to learn guerrilla-warfare strategies.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> See: Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Indonesian Maoists: Doctrines and Perspectives," *Occasional Papers/Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies* (1977).

<sup>133</sup> Utuy Tatang Sontani, *Di Bawah Langit tak Berbintang* (Under a Starless Sky) (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 2001): pp. 73-150.

## Soviet Is Critical of Indonesian Red Guerrillas

By HAYMOND H. ANDERSON

### Pravda Warns Time Isn't Ripe for Communist Take-overs in Developing Countries

MOSCOW, Sept. 14.—The Soviet Union affirmed today its opposition to armed uprisings by Communists to seize power in underdeveloped countries.

Pravda, the Communist party newspaper, condemned Communist leaders in Indonesia for a recent attempt to organize guerrilla warfare in East Java.

The paper protested that the plan had been an irresponsible adventure inspired by Communist China that senselessly cost the lives of thousands of Communists when suppressed by the Indonesian Army in July and August.

The new setback to the Communist movement in Indonesia, Pravda declared, confirmed the perils of the militant revolutionary policies advocated by Mao Tse-tung, the leader of the Chinese Communist party.

The paper recalled that the Indonesian Communist party, which had more than a million and a half members 10 years ago, had been virtually wiped out after a Peking-directed attempt to seize power on Sept. 30, 1965.

#### Linked to World Conference

Tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Communists were slain by Indonesian soldiers and civilians in reprisal for the 1965 uprising, and the party, which had gained broad influence, was eliminated as a political force.

The fatal decision by the Indonesian Communists to seek power in an armed uprising, Pravda said, was taken under the influence of Peking, which wanted to use Indonesia as a testing ground to prove Chairman Mao's theory on revolutionary struggle.

The paper contended that Mr. Mao's teachings of armed struggle had led to the destruction or isolation of a number of Communist parties in Southeast Asia.

The new attack on China's advocacy of revolutionary struggle appeared to be intended, primarily as ammunition against Peking in preparation for a world Communist conference here in November. Despite the controversy aroused within the Communist movement by the occupation of Czechoslovakia, there are indications that Moscow is determined to convene the meeting as scheduled.

There was speculation that the Pravda article was also intended to calm apprehensions stirred in the West by the Soviet military action against Czechoslovakia and to give assurances that Moscow did not plan to foment armed revolution in Asia, Africa or Latin America.

#### Take Evolutionary Approach

Discussions in the West of steps to strengthen military defenses against the Soviet Union as a result of the move against Czechoslovakia are believed to have troubled Moscow, which appears reluctant to be drawn into a new arms race.

The Soviet view on a Communist take-over is basically one of evolution rather than revolution. In conformity with Marxist teachings, Moscow believes that a proper stage of political and economic development must be reached before Communists can effectively seize and retain power.

The Soviet Union was more surprised than pleased by the Communist victory in China in 1949. The subsequent turmoil and the violent anti-Soviet policies of the Peking leadership seem to confirm the Russian view that China was indeed not ready for Communist rule.

The historical view toward Communist development has been reflected in recent years

in a chilly disapproval of armed struggle in Latin-American countries by revolutionary adventures such as that of Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia.

Pravda summed up the Soviet position toward armed Communist uprisings in underdeveloped countries with the following criticism of the recent efforts in guerrilla warfare by the Indonesian Communists:

"Disregarding the Leninist position that an armed revolutionary struggle can be successful only when it has been carefully prepared and is based on broad support of the masses, the [party] officials called on the Communists to go into

the jungles and to undertake actions against regular units of the army and the police." The only result of the undertaking, Pravda concluded, was that "the Communist movement in Indonesia suffered another disaster."

The New York Times  
Published September 15, 1968  
Copyright © The New York Times

Figure 56

News about Soviet's rejection on the guerrilla warfare in Blitar.

None of them manage to get back to Indonesia to fight, they got caught in the Cultural Revolution instead—hence, the prospect of returning back home faded. Also, as Deng Xiaoping started to navigating China away from political campaign toward economic development in the beginning of 1979; Jakarta and Beijing sought to normalize the bilateral relations. Following the reform,

many Indonesians, including those who migrated from the Soviet Union and its allies, left China for Western countries; mainly to the Netherlands since, born in the Dutch East Indies, it was easier for them to get the citizenship.<sup>134</sup> Some of the interviewees, like Asep, said that when visiting the Netherlands, following 1989 transformation, he met those comrades and they no longer discussed about Sino-Soviet split in heated discussion as in the old days. At the end of the day, those are only stories. “We’re friends; it was only a reunion.”<sup>135</sup>

Regarding this different political stances, it could be helpful to understand how people learned about Marxism-Leninism and Maoism back in Indonesia. In her piece entitled *Teaching Modernity: The PKI as an Educational Institution*, Ruth McVey elaborates on the Indonesian Communist Party's educational work—particularly on how it managed to teach peasants to conducted research into the village conditions. “It was understandable that Indonesian Communists formally recognized education as an important subject. Marxism as a movement of nineteenth-century European intellectuals who sought to bring the masses to a scientific understanding of their condition, placed great value on both theoretical study and the ‘making conscious’ of the working class.”<sup>136</sup>

McVey elucidates the party’s efforts in education starting from during the Dutch late colonization period until before September 1965. Although the party's focus was initially on the labour

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<sup>134</sup> In Zhou’s one could also find an account about Qian Qichen (the Chinese foreign minister) during his 1989 meeting with Murdiono (the Indonesian state minister) stressed that China had no connection with PKI and that only few dozen Indonesians remained in China – some had retired; other were employed—none were allowed to engage in political activities. Pp: 168-169. Also, see: Steven Erlanger, “Normalizing of Relations by China and Indonesia Ends a Two Decade Feud,” *The New York Times*, February 26, 1989, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/02/26/world/normalizing-of-relations-by-china-and-indonesia-ends-a-two-decade-feud.html>.

<sup>135</sup> “Ya teman aja, reuni aja.” March 25, 2022, Mečiková.

<sup>136</sup> Ruth McVey, “Teaching Modernity: The PKI as an Educational Institution,” *Indonesia*, No. 54, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (October, 1990): pp. 5-27.

movement during colonialization, its influence spread rapidly via the school system, mainly organized by Sarekat Islam.<sup>137</sup>

Almost all the émigrés went to those referred to as ‘wild school’; meaning schools outside the colonial government control, such as the Sarekat Islam school system and Taman Siswa.<sup>138</sup> They recalled that most of their teachers were communists. It was very formative for them to experience learning process with those teachers. Some that affiliated with the party also had been through short courses and cadre training exercises—like Agam and Asep. Those short courses and training were spaces where they learned the -isms. They recollected mainly having the translated version of Marx's and Lenin's works as reading materials.<sup>139</sup> They also studied specific subjects related to Indonesia, such as the Indonesian revolution and socialism in Indonesia. McVey presents a well-written account on this; describing a campaign to spread theoretical knowledge, mainly focussing on Marxist political economy, dialectical and historical materialism, and Aidit's work on Indonesian society and revolution.<sup>140</sup> Some who did not go through the party trainings, like Paloh and Artawan, informed that they got the materials from their relatives—Paloh from his head of

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<sup>137</sup> Sarekat Islam or Syarikat Islam (Islamic Association or Islamic Union) is a socio-political organization founded during the Dutch colonial era at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For further reading about this organization, among others, see: John T. Sidel, *Republicanism, Communism, and Islam*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

<sup>138</sup> Taman Siswa (founded in 1922) was a Javanese Educational movement during the Dutch colonial period. For further reading about the organization, among others, see: Ruth McVey, “Taman Siswa and the Indonesian National Awakening,” *Indonesia*, 4: pp. 128-149. In her article quoted in this paper, McVey mentions that Indonesians were coming to realize that giving their children ‘Western-style’ education was the only practical way to ensure them a better future. This realization was why many schools outside the colonial government control, like Taman Siswa and Sarekat Islam schools, started to flourish.

<sup>139</sup> For further reading on the topic of translation and transliteration of Marxism, see: Oliver Crawford, “Translating and Transliterating Marxism in Indonesia,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 55, Issue. 3 (2021), pp: 697-733; Lanjun Xu, “Translation and internationalism,” *Little Red Book: A Global History*, Alexander C. Cook (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>140</sup> As a side note, McVey mentioned in her piece that Aidit got admitted as the first foreign member of the Academia Sinica in 1963. The Chinese granted the award for his creative innovations in Marxist theory. After 1965, they declared that they had always warned Aidit that the party's strategy under him was ineffective and that the armed peasant struggle was the only road to power.

*Pelukis Rakjat* brother; Artawan from his PKI uncle.<sup>141</sup> “I got a booklet from my uncle—about Marxism theory. That’s from PKI—they made the booklet. It’s in red colour. I got it from my uncle—he was killed in 1965.” Artawan said.<sup>142</sup>

### **1956 Hungarian Uprising; 1968 Prague Spring**

Came to Hungary three years after Hungarian Uprising, Ainun mentioned that the atmosphere was still very tense. “Many people left Hungary in 1956. (When we arrived), it was still very dim here. Because there was that change... change...” she recalled.<sup>143</sup> She said that as foreigner, it was hard for her and her husband to learn from their local friends about 1956 Uprising. Even Wardani and Bagaskara said that growing up they barely heard stories about it from their friends. Again, they assumed it could be because, after all they are not Hungarians. They, too, empathized with the uneasiness of their friends in talking about it; tried to draw a connection between their friends’ and their own traumatic experience with Indonesia. “It must be hard for them to talk about it—and they could be very careful about who to share the stories with,” said Wardani after mentioning that one of her friends lost their family members in the years—and she learned about it after years of friendship.<sup>144</sup>

Discussing about 1956, Ainun shared her and her husband empathy with the Hungarians. She referred to it as the Hungarians’ struggle to determine their own socialism. In a wider context, the Uprising seemed to be a topic of political discussion back in Indonesia. *The New York Times* made

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<sup>141</sup> Based on separate interviews; each on March 24 and on March 21, 2022. *Pelukis Rakjat* (the People’s Painter) is a left-leaning art organization.

<sup>142</sup> “Saya dapat booklet teori Marxisme dari paman saya. Itu dari (Partai Komunis) Indonesia—mereka yang bikin. Bukunya merah begitu ya. Nah, itu saya dikasih sama paman saya—1965 dia mati.” March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>143</sup> “Banyak orang pergi tahun 1956 itu dari Hungaria, jadi sepi sekali. Karena ada perubahan... ada perubahan.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>144</sup> “Pasti susah bagi mereka untuk membicarakan itu—dan mereka bisa hati-hati sekali sama siapa mereka berbagi.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.



a report in 1956 about *Abadi*, a leading Indonesia's Islamic newspaper—the organ of Masyumi party—which criticized the Soviet-Indonesian joint statement. “The architect of the joint statement did not think twice before making their decisions. People who know communism firsthand are trying to get rid of it, while those architects, on the other hand, are proudly trying to invite Soviet influence into this country. We hope those who are unconcerned over the joint statement will learn from the current developments in the satellite countries.”<sup>145</sup> One certainly needs to also see this Masyumi's take in the light of the its anti-communist stance and long history of competition with PKI.

Moreover, on November 1956, there was a meeting in Delhi between India, Indonesia, Ceylon, and Burma to mainly discuss about Egypt—with Hungary was also on the agenda. “The prime ministers will have no difficulty in uniting in their communique, to be issued tomorrow or Wednesday, on a denunciation of the British-French and Israeli attacks on Egypt. But a good deal of interest will center on what they have to say about Hungary.”<sup>146</sup> This meeting resulted in a joint-statement calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in Hungary—Ali Sastroamidjojo was the representative of Indonesia. Following this, Ruslan Abdulgani, Indonesian foreign minister, said that “(Indonesia) agrees that Soviet troops should be withdrawn from Hungary to enable the Hungarian people to choose their own form of government... We now have the new information of the situation and we feel the presence of Russian troops hampers the free will of the Hungarian people, which consists not only of Communist groups but also of non-Communist groups.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> “Indonesian Reaction,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 1956.

<sup>146</sup> A.M. Rosenthal, “Asia Chiefs Meet On Suez, Hungary,” *The New York Times*, November 13, 1956.

<sup>147</sup> “Indonesian Chides Soviet on Hungary,” *The New York Times*, November 18, 1956.

On the other end, Susilo, Paloh, Artawan, and Agam were already in Czechoslovakia for few years when the Prague Spring happened. Artawan remembered clearly the moment when reformist ideas started to emerge in Czechoslovakia. “I supported the idea—I realized that the existing structure in the country, at that time, could no longer continue,” said him.<sup>148</sup> Hence, when Warsaw Pact invaded the country in 1968, he felt sad and angry deeply. Artawan imagined that a reformed Czechoslovakia would be better. The situation led him to write about 15 letters to different institutions; to express his disappointment. After sending the letter, he started to realize that it could be a clumsy move. Particularly, because at that time, he already had a family—the state could find him ‘annoying’ and sent him off the country. “If I was still single, I could easily go somewhere in case something happened. But I had a family already; one kid. If I needed to go out of the country, nothing I could do.”<sup>149</sup> After three months of waiting in a very concerned state, it was safe for him to conclude that nothing would come up. Years later, he checked on the Universita 17. Listopad records under his name following the 1989 transformation; found out that all of his letters were sent back to the university. The coordinator took care of them so he managed to stay trouble free.

Paloh remembered 1968 as a ‘great fighting.’ While saying that the invasion should be avoided, in retrospect, he considered that it could be the case that NATO would be in the country instead. “It was a question: who will win over Czechoslovakia? I think, the question remains unclear. But, still it was problem—Soviet should had not been done that.”<sup>150</sup> Agam and Artawan shared almost the same views. Meanwhile, Asep was still living in the Soviet Union at that time. He recalled he

<sup>148</sup> “Saya salah satu pendukung itu—dari mula saya sudah punya (pandangan) bahwa apa yang ada di Ceko waktu itu sudah tidak bisa diteruskan,” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>149</sup> “Kalau saya sendiri kan bisa pergi ke mana aja. Tapi saya kan punya keluarga, saya punya satu anak waktu itu. Kalau misalnya ada kejadian bahwa saya harus keluar dari Ceko, ya apa boleh buat ya.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>150</sup> “Problemnya itu dulu: siapa yang memenangkan Ceko? Sampai sekarang itu problem besar. Nah itu problem besar itu—itu didiktekan oleh Soviet waktu itu, harusnya gak gitu.” March 24, 2022, Garuda Restaurant, Horákové 686/12.

was at a student camp in Kyiv when the Prague Spring happened. Back in those days, he could make sense Soviet's logic behind the invasion. "They said that they needed to do it—in order to keep socialism in Czechoslovakia. We trusted that; thinking that was Soviet's solidarity towards Czechoslovakia."<sup>151</sup> It took some time for him to understand the complexity of Czechoslovakia at that time and to conclude that the invasion was not the answer. He then continued reflecting on Marxism-Leninism—"It seems that, while there are theories derived from Marx and Lenin, they could not address the realities. Historically, things develop and we need adjustments."<sup>152</sup>

While most of them disagree with the invasion, none were participating in any real attempts of creating 'socialism with human face.' It also seems that their disagreements were mainly channeled in less-public sphere—aside from Artawan's who sent those letters. Even in Artawan's case too, the uneasiness was very clear for him. It was most likely because they were in a place of having no other options instead of 'playing it safe'—cause they were already under the guardianship of the Czechoslovak state at that time. Unlike the Hungarian Uprising which the Indonesian government concerned about, it was not the case with the Prague Spring. It could be because of its own national political turmoil; it could be because, after the defeat of PKI and the changing of the regime, such discussion was no longer relevant. However, the Indonesian right-wing groups still utilized this issue for anti-communist propaganda.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> "Kata mereka, terpaksa Uni Soviet mengirim tentara untuk, apa namanya, menolong supaya Cekoslovakia tetap menjadi negeri sosialis. Kita percaya, itu kan artinya solidaritas Uni Soviet pada Cekoslovakia" August 30, 2021, Záběhlce.

<sup>152</sup> "Rupanya, teori-teori Marx dan Engels itu, begitulah, tidak menjawab situasi sebenarnya. Sejarahnya, timbul bentrokan-bentrokan dan kita butuh menyesuaikan." August 30, 2021, Záběhlce.

<sup>153</sup> See: John R. Maxwell, *Soe Hok-Gie: A Biography of A Young Indonesian Intellectual* (PhD Dissertation), (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1997), p. 264, footnotes 55.

## Chapter 2: Living through the End of State Socialism and Beyond

This chapter is about the characters' accounts of the year 1989; often times going back-and-forth before and after the year in order to understand the changes of the year in a comparative context. Generally, by reflecting upon today's conditions, most of them would recall period before 1989 in a brighter note—yet, they certainly have some criticism. How was their experiences of living through the transformation in the Hungary and (then) Czechoslovakia? How do they see themselves, and the societies they live in, change over times and events?

### Citizenship

“89 was a significant year! There was a big change in Hungary and for us personally, we finally decided to apply for Hungarian passports,” said Wardani.<sup>154</sup> While her two brothers migrated from Yogyakarta to Budapest in 1972, she was born in Budapest. After years of being stateless, the transformation changed the family's mind; they decided to apply for Hungarian citizenship. Wardani explained the reason for that, “The socialists were not in power any longer; they helped people like us. It then became a neoliberal state. It was wiser to just apply for Hungarian passports.”<sup>155</sup> On a separate occasion, Bagaskara mentioned that they did not know how the situation would go after the transformation. Thus, applying for Hungarian citizenships was the safest decision.<sup>156</sup> Most men in Prague also shared the same reasons; it felt safer to get Czechoslovakia's citizenship. Only Artawan had different reason: “I waited until the regime

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<sup>154</sup> “Tahun besar itu tahun 89! Karena di Hungaria dalam sejarah itu perubahan besar dan, secara personal, kami akhirnya mengajukan paspor Hungaria,” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>155</sup> “Sudah bukan sosialis yang berkuasa; yang bantu orang-orang seperti kami. Ini sudah jadi neoliberal. Itu lebih baik ambil paspor Hungaria,” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>156</sup> Based on an interview on August 14, 2021, Fővám tér.

change to apply for it because I did not want to become a socialist country citizen. Because, if I became its citizen, then I needed to follow all of its rules. I did not want too.”<sup>157</sup>

Artawan seemed very strategic about his position; without being a citizen, he was more at distance from any obligation and control of the state.<sup>158</sup> Meanwhile, being stateless, especially by considering his history, might give him more benefit from the state—for the state considered him as vulnerable and needed support. Could it be the case that some other emigres, at a certain degree, also share this logic? Did they decide to focus instead on the brighter side; the fact that state socialism was their guardian? It is also important to consider that, after all, despite the smoothness of the transformation in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, in comparison to Romania, for example, still, it was a major change. Feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness about the future was in the air. Did they make this big decision about their citizenships as a way to cope with the change; to help them felt in charge of their life?

For Artawan, his family’s story also played a big role. His wife comes from a small city in Moravia with a middle-class family background; most her family members have university degrees. Her relatives, a couple, were working as the head of a hospital and as a party’s administrative. They had positions before normalization. Yet, they did not agree with the Soviet’s occupation in 1968—and, for their stance, both were fired from their positions. Because of their anti-Soviet views, none

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<sup>157</sup> Karena saya gak mau menjadi warga negara sosialis. Karena kalau saya warga negara sosialis, saya harus nurutin semua semua yang dia perintahkan ke saya. Dan saya gak mau.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>158</sup> For further reading on the Czechoslovaks’ everyday life during normalization, among others, see: Rosie Johnston, “Worlds of Ordinarity: Oral Histories of Everyday Life in Communist Czechoslovakia,” *Human Affairs* 23, 2013, pp: 401-415. In general, Johnston tries to argue that the domestic life was not an escape of politics, but was in itself politicized even during the normalization. Also, see: Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) where she suggests that ordinary citizens’ lives and experiences of late communism have been overlooked by historians, who have been focussed on researching dissidents and civil society instead. She also elaborates that ordinary people did not have the same concerns as dissidents during that period.

could manage to work in government offices; it remained until 1989. “Imagine, they then needed to work as labours in a railways station—became those who switched the railroad steels. Their skills were not for that kind of work. That’s one tragic story. Another thing, their child. At that time, the kid was about to enter high school. But this kid could not enter school in their town; needed to go to a school that was 120 km away from the parents’ house. Like, how could that happen? This kid did nothing,”<sup>159</sup>

Encountered the story, Artawan realized that state socialism should not last. In our conversation, he, too, tried to make a link between the socialist regime and Suharto’s anti-communist regime. “What kind of system was that? It was just like Suharto’s—who killed people and punished all their kids and grandkids. Non-sense.”<sup>160</sup> Back in Solo, Java, Artawan had communists family members; some went missing and killed. It was an affective statement and making a comparison was natural in that setting. At the same time, it might be helpful to try seeing it objectively. While comparing the tragedy is unnecessary here, for both, his wife’s family member and his family’s member, did experience inhumanity, locating his statement in the specificities of each countries’ contexts could be better.

Both regimes conducted violence; yes. The telling difference between each country’s contexts is the way of addressing the violence. In today Czech Republic, for example, there is Memorial to

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<sup>159</sup> “Bayangkan aja kerja sebagai buruh kasar di stasiun rel—yang membagi balkon-balkon, satu ke sana, satu ke sini. Orang-orang yang tidak ada sangkut pautnya dengan kerjaan seperti itu. Itu satu hal ya yang menyedihkan. Hal kedua, anaknya, waktu itu sudah harus masuk SMA. Itu waktu itu tidak bisa masuk ke SMA di kota sendiri dan harus mencari tempat yang sekitar 120 km dari tempat tinggal orang tuanya. Bagaimana? Anak yang tahu apa-apa mengenai itu.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

<sup>160</sup> “Ini sistem apa? Ini seperti sistem Suharto, yang kalau membunuh orang, cucunya tujuh turunan juga harus dihukum. Ini apaan.” March 19, 2022. Working Holiday Expo, Praha 9.

the Victims of Communism to acknowledge it.<sup>161</sup> Archives are open for people to learn about the atrocities of the regime; many cultural and academic works discuss about it. That is not the case with the anti-communist violence in Indonesia. No state-owned archives give public access for the 1965-related documents. Yet, it does not appear that the post-authoritarian state institution carefully treat these documents with outmost care. As a result, some documents can be accessed or even brought from smaller archives, such as those located in military compound.

Jess Melvin's research on the military preparation for the 1965 massacre is built upon this this unintentionally leaked sources; handed over by local military officers in Aceh freely as they did not see anything sensitive in the documents.<sup>162</sup> Such case of unauthorized possession of the 1965 documents may signal the loss of interests in the massacre—or in the nation's past in general—on the government's part. As it has been the case, governments, national and most locals, only took action when this issues became, all of a sudden, public controversies involving red-baiting.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, despite the fact that it is getting easier for people to learn about the massacre through, by now, extensive amount of academic and cultural/artistic works, there is still no official acknowledgement, particularly from the national government's end.<sup>164</sup> Not to mention that the

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<sup>161</sup> Also, how in Hungary, for instance, the socialist period is often simplified and demonized for political expediency. It is no coincidence that the government party brands their liberal opponents as communists while presenting this as the image of communism. *Terror Háza*, built in 2002, is an example of this simplistic framing of the socialist past. See: <https://terrorhaza.hu/en> for detailed information about the museum. Also, see: Zsófia Frazon and Zsolt K. Horváth, "The Offended Hungary. The House of Terror as a Demonstration of Objects, Memorial, and Political Rite," *Mezosfera.org*, November, 2019, <http://mezosfera.org/the-offended-hungary-the-house-of-terror-as-a-demonstration-of-objects-memorial-and-political-rite-2002/> that describes and analyses how the museum emphasizes the demonization of socialism.

<sup>162</sup> See: Jess Melvin, *Mechanics of mass murder: how the Indonesian military initiated and implemented the Indonesian genocide: the case of Aceh* (PhD dissertation), (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, 2014).

<sup>163</sup> Ludicrously, the current Indonesian president himself was the target of this red-baiting. See: "Jokowi fumes over persistent PKI rumor," *The Jakarta Post*, March 6, 2018, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/03/06/jokowi-fumes-over-persistent-pki-rumor.html>.

<sup>164</sup> For further readings on the 65 related cultural/artistic works, among others, see: Andrew Weintraub, "The Act of Singing: Women, Music, and the Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in Indonesia," *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 53, 2021, pp: 1-44; "International People's Tribunal 1965," <https://www.tribunal1965.org/>; "To Catch the Heartbeat



right-wing groups maintain the red-scare in the country—and how, oftentimes, the government will use it to suppress dissidents.<sup>165</sup>

### **Social Welfare; Personal Wellbeing**

“During the socialist period, there was no homeless,” said Ainun in a deep voice.<sup>166</sup> The daughter joined in, “There were homeless too, mom. They were just not as visible and as many as today.”<sup>167</sup> Both then agreed that, especially before the 1980s, homelessness was not as a big problem as it is today. Later they talked about the public housing system under the socialist period in a positive tone; mentioning the workers’ hostel and the state socialist housing estates. Yet, Wardani stated, it was not perfect. “My father sent complaint letters to *Házkezelőség* frequently because of several problems in our apartment. He protested about the lack of a maintenance system. It was in 1970s.”<sup>168</sup> While the Budapest family bought their current place, at least two men in Prague are living in the panel apartments that their got from the Czechoslovakia government. Artawan has a story about housing—his panel apartment was not privatized even until 2011 because of the local government’s policy. For the nature of the housing, he and his wife had problem with their noisy neighbour and decided to bought another apartment instead of continuing staying there.

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of Those Below: Interviewing Martin Aleida on Indonesia’s Cultural Organisation Lekra,” *tricontinental*, <https://thetricontinental.org/interview-3-2020-martin-aleida/>. Regarding the acknowledgement, there has been local governments’ initiatives, such as in Solo and Palu. See: Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, “Working from the Margins: Initiatives for Truth and Reconciliation for Victims of the 1965 Mass Violence in Solo and Palu,” *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965: Causes, Dynamics, and Legacies*, Katherine McGregor, Jess Melvin, and Annie Pohlman (eds.), (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp: 335-356.

<sup>165</sup> See: Eduard Lazarus, “The Indonesian Left Is Stuck in an Anti-Communist Hangover,” *Jacobin*, <https://jacobin.com/2021/04/indonesian-left-anti-communism-omnibus-law-protest>.

<sup>166</sup> “Waktu zaman sosialis, tidak ada itu homeless.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>167</sup> “Ada juga, ibu. Cuma gak kelihatan dan banyak aja seperti sekarang.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>168</sup> Bapak dulu pernah kirim surat berkali-kali ke *Házkezelőség* karena berbagai masalah di tempat tinggal kami. Bapak protes karena tidak ada sistem pengecekan dan perbaikan dari negara. Itu di tahun 1970an.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.



Figure 57 and 58

Susilo's and Asep's panel houses complex—both located quite far from the city centre which was the pattern of this housing complex. None of them shared stories about their problems of staying in the apartments when I asked the questions.

(Personal documentation)

Regarding the housing system under state socialism in Hungary, a research group called *When is it time to act if not now?* writes, “Homelessness was never officially recognized during the decades of state socialism, which is not to say it didn’t exist. Homeless people were referred to as ‘layabouts’ and later ‘hobos’. There was no infrastructure to support them, with the only exception of the so-called House of Lords, a small run-down homeless shelter in Budapest with only 16 beds for men and 8 for women.”<sup>169</sup> The research shows how, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the large-scale subsidized housing system, which was a major source of political legitimacy for state socialism, started to decrease and more and more workers’ hostels disappeared. Near the end of the 1980s, the number of evictions was on the rise and homelessness became ever more visible—as the government started to close down workers’ hostel, for example, and hospitals, care homes, and mental asylum started to release homeless people.

<sup>169</sup> Ilona Cécsei et. al., “When is time to act if not now? Participatory Action Research about Housing Movements in Hungary,” *LeftEast*, July 26, 2018, <https://lefteast.org/par-housing-movements-hungary/>

Moreover, Ainun recounted, “Health care, public transportation, school, all was free.”<sup>170</sup> She considers that, in general, public goods and services were better in the socialist era than today. Wardani confirmed that, while also adding, “But there were many problems too. For example, health care. If we wanted to get a better service, we still needed to pay.”<sup>171</sup> On a different occasion, Bagaskara corrected his mother’s account: health care and school were free; public transit was not—although it was very cheap because of the subsidy. In 1988, Roberta and Larry Garner conducted research based on survey in Budapest and Torino where they found out that Hungarians were more satisfied with the city environment, public services, and the job situation and were considerably less worried about the sudden loss of security than Italians; but Hungarians were less satisfied with their purchasing power and tended to be more pessimistic about the future in general.

They anticipated a deterioration in Hungary’s already inadequate network of collective guarantees, such as public health, as well as predictable crises in the funding of education and public transportation. These developments, they thought, would likely raise the level of insecurity in Hungary.<sup>172</sup> “We still have free healthcare today. Transportation, too, is still affordable. The significant different is school. It is free only until high school; people need to pay for universities. Unless, those with great grades—they will get tuition waiver,” said Bagaskara, trying to make a comparison after 32 years of transformation.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> “Kesehatan, transportasi, sekolah, dulu itu semuanya gratis.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>171</sup> “Tapi ya banyak juga masalah waktu itu. Misalnya, untuk kesehatan, walau semestinya gratis, kalau kita mau dapat pelayanan yang lebih baik, kita harus keluar uang.” July 3, 2021, Fővám tér.

<sup>172</sup> For detailed readings, see: Roberta Garner and Larry Garner, “Socio-Economic and Insecurity in Socialist and Capitalist Political Economies: A Survey Study of Two European Cities,” *Science & Society*, Vol. 55 (1991): p.14-15

<sup>173</sup> “Sampai sekarang layanan Kesehatan tetap gratis. Transportasi juga masih terjangkau. Paling sekolah aja. Gratis sampai SMA; untuk universitas harus bayar. Kecuali yang nilainya tinggi, bisa gratis.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

Artawan, despite of his strong feeling over the state's violence, still recognized its social welfare's legacy.<sup>174</sup> "I am just glad that they did not drop the social welfare system away, even after transformation. It is smart that they did not give everything away to the privates."<sup>175</sup> On the other hand, he considered that the Czech Republic government should think about reducing the subsidy for the elders. "People like me, above 56 years old, do not need to pay for public transport, for example. I think it is enough if they give us only 70 percentage subsidy, or even 50 percentage—and we can cover the rest. It is also good not to spend so much of government's budget, especially I did not going out a lot, like once or twice only."<sup>176</sup>

Traveling is another topic. Most of them informed that, just like most Hungarians and Czechoslovaks, it was rather hard to travel to the Western countries before the transformation. They mainly would travel to other Eastern Bloc countries. While it was easier to travel to other countries in the Eastern Bloc, it did not necessarily mean that they would not encounter problems with the border police. Bagaskara, for instance, once went to Czechoslovakia with his friends and needed to spend hours in a police office because they did not accept his document which elaborated his stateless status.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> For further readings on this topic, see, among others: Tibor Valuch, *Everyday Life Under Communism and After: Lifestyle and Consumption in Hungary, 1945-2000* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2021); *The Routledge History Handbook of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century. Volume 1: Challenges of Modernity*, Włodzimierz Borodziej, Stanislav Holubec, Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.), (London: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>175</sup> "Ini tetap diadakan, bersyukurnya. Itu pintarnya, tidak dibubarkan; tidak semua dari swasta." March 21, 2022, Vysočanska.

<sup>176</sup> "Untuk para sesepuh seperti sama kita, dari umur 65 itu udah gratis. Jadi, menurut saya, kalau misalnya, mereka akan membuat kita cuma mendapat 70 persen bonus, atau 50 persen bonus. Menurut saya cukup itu, saya rela. Supaya tidak mengeluarkan banyak uang dari kas negara. Soalnya gak perlu, saya gak terlalu banyak jalan-jalan. Paling sekali dua kali." March 21, 2022, Vysočanska.

<sup>177</sup> Based on an interview on August 14, 2021, Fövám tér.

Susilo shared his experience of going to a group trip together with his wife and two kids. It was in bordered region between Czechoslovakia and Poland. The trip organizer would take them to Poland. Yet, he could not cross the border because all he had was only a slice of paper stating his statelessness status. “So, my family went to Poland, but I could only wait in the border; in a bar—drinking beer.”<sup>178</sup> One contrary account came from Artawan. He rather said that, in comparison to the Czechoslovaks, his stateless status made it easier for him to travel to the Western countries—saying that he was able to France, for example.<sup>179</sup> Amidst their mixed accounts, the majority said that they started to easily travel to the Western countries after 1989—and getting the citizenships of their host countries.

Growing up under State Socialism, Bagaskara said that the youths also wanted to experience the ‘Western Culture’ but because it was lack, mainly they could only imagine about it. Vinyl and music broadcasts on radio and tv was in rare occasions. Yet, he recalled that in the 70s, he could watch Rolling Stones and Cream on TV, for example. “Sometimes, they broadcasted those live concerts, particularly in the Western countries, here.”<sup>180</sup> He also told stories about having classmates who went to Yugoslavia for holiday—and that he would ask them to get some vinyl records for him. “Yugoslavia was more open because of their non-block politics. So, we would make list of things that we wanted from there and gave it to those going to Yugoslavia. Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath, blue jeans, many things.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> “Jadi keluarga saya bisa ke Poland, saya nunggu di warung bir di perbatasan.” March 18, 2022, Slavia Café.

<sup>179</sup> Based on an interview on March 21, 2022, Vysočanska. He also mentioned that for the Czechoslovaks, especially following the Prague spring, it was easier to travel to the West—as long as they had money and could manage to make a specific bank agreement.

<sup>180</sup> “Itu kadang-kadang televisi Hungaria mengambil acara live di luar terutama yang di Barat.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>181</sup> “Yugoslavia itu lebih terbuka karena betul-betul non-blok. Jadi kita bikin daftar pesanan barang yang kita mau dari sana—kita kasih ke yang mau ke Yugoslavia. Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath, blue jeans, macam-macam.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

He, too, said that in Hungary still there were already some Hungarian rock bands in the 70s—or even started in the 60s. Among others, he mentioned Omega and Illés. Some vinyl records were also available in the country—he, for instance, bought Beatles’ last album and Looking Glass’ in an antikvárium in front of the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum. It was common to listen to vinyl records together at school—mostly friends who recently went back from Yugoslavia would bring theirs. This cultural dynamics enhanced in the 80s. “Do you remember any particular protest around 89?” I asked him. “I remembered one big protest in front of the parliament. But the most memorable scene was many people brought fridges home; put it on their cars. Maybe they got it from Austria or somewhere else, because the border was already open at that time. It was a hilarious scene; there were these people with their fridges wandering around the city while some other people organized big protest in the city center.”<sup>182</sup> Neither Bagaskara nor Wardani said they participated in any protest—although back in their university days, for example, they had friends who already started protesting. Both saying that it was only for certain group; intellectuals. “We are just common people.”<sup>183</sup>

Wardani and Bagaskara were working in state-owned industries before 1989. Wardani’s working place went bankrupt in 1989. Bagaskara was working for another company. He watched many of his senior co-workers decided to undergo mutual termination and used the compensation to start businesses. Meanwhile, Bagaskara and the rests who chose to stay got their wages deducted up to 20 percent. Based on Wardani’s and Bagaskara’s account, state-owned companies either stumbled

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<sup>182</sup> “Aku ingat satu demo besar di parlemen waktu itu. Tapi yang aku ingat, rakyat pada waktu itu bawa pulang lemari es; di atas mobil itu banyak lemari es. Mungkin mereka beli dari Austria atau dari mana, karena perbatasan sudah buka waktu itu. Ini adegan lucu, ada orang bawa-bawa lemari es di kota, sementara yang lain demo besar di pusat kota.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>183</sup> “Kita cuma orang biasa.” June 12, 2021, Szent Gellért tér.

into bankruptcy or required privatization to conform with the free market economy. Unemployment mushroomed from 1989 into the early 1990s. Wardani managed to stay afloat despite the hardship of the transition by getting new jobs, but many struggled and suffered. Bagaskara described the situation as follows, “The transformation brought new vigour for the middle class to start their own businesses. But that was a very new condition which people had to deal with. So, there were some who succeed, but most failed.”<sup>184</sup>

From a different view, Artawan considers 1989 not only as a time of change but also a moment to get a better chance. He considered the transformation as the time for him to find a job that suited him better. “Oh, now I could really work based on my skills,”<sup>185</sup> he recalled his thought at that time. He needed to change work places for three times before he ended up working in an American company starting from 1994 until he retired. Agam and Paloh managed to continue working in the states-owned companies despite their big restructuration following 1989. I could sense a little joy in their voice—could be because they perceive it showed that they were worthy enough for the company to keep. Asep, who was working in the Oriental unit of the Czech Academy of Sciences lost his position after the transformation. He then worked at a store nearby his place until 2001. He shared none of his struggle related to this topic; saying that, after all, it was okay.<sup>186</sup> Instead he talked more about his wife’s work in early childhood education.

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<sup>184</sup> “Perubahan membawa semangat untuk memulai usaha bagi kaum kelas menengah dan bikin mereka semangat untuk memulai usaha sendiri. Tapi itu situasi yang baru bagi setiap orang ya. Jadi, ada yang berhasil tapi lebih banyak yang gagal.” June 12, 2021, Szent Gellért tér.

<sup>185</sup> “Oh, sekarang saya bisa bekerja menurut kemampuan saya, ya, menurut kemampuan saya.” March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>186</sup> Based on an interview on March 25, 2022, Jetelová.



## Far-right Politics

“I feel that racism started to boom after 89. For example, there were quite many skin heads here following the transformation. They would go around, asking, ‘What are you doing here? Get out from here.’”<sup>187</sup> said Artawan, responding to my question; whether or not he ever faced racism under the state socialism period. He, too, shared about one micro-aggression that he faced following the change of the regime. Once, a security came over saying that he could not park his car somewhere—and only after he spoke in perfect Czech, the security said sorry to him. “It was just a small thing, but it stayed in my mind.”<sup>188</sup>

Bagaskara recalled observing his friends started to grow their sense of nationalism near and after 1989. At once, he also sensed different mannerism starting to emerge after 1989—“Finally, the, how should I say it, hatred towards the other appear.”<sup>189</sup> However, he also stated that that tension is always in flux. “It has been more than 30 years from 1989; but really it depends on who is in power. I think, nowadays, it tends to be in a more exclusive sense; unwillingness in accepting others.”<sup>190</sup> He continued saying that a liberal government would situate people to be more receptive—which is not the case in Hungary for these past years. He also mentioned the migration crisis back in 2015—and that the Hungarian government created anti-migrant propaganda.<sup>191</sup> His

<sup>187</sup> “Dari yang saya rasa malah, ada peledakan rasialis yang besar itu setelah tahun 89. Jadi, misalnya, dulu kan di sini banyak skinhead. Itu skinhead itu mulai ngancem-ngancem ‘Kamu ngapain di sini? Keluar dari sini.’” March 21, 2022.

<sup>188</sup> “Itu persoalan kecil, cuma masih menggaris di kepala saya.” March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>189</sup> “Akhirnya, ya keluarlah, apa namanya, kebencian pada orang asing.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>190</sup> “Ternyata, ini sudah lebih dari 30 tahun dari 1989, tapi itu tergantung juga dari siapa yang berkuasa. Menurut saya, kalau zaman sekarang, memang nasionalisme yang lebih eksklusif; yang tidak mau menerima yang lain.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>191</sup> “Akhirnya, ya keluarlah, apa namanya, kebencian pada orang asing.” August 24, 2021, Millenium Park.

<sup>191</sup> For further readings, among others, see: Lilia Ilikova and Andrey Tushev, “Right-Wing Populism in Central Europe: Hungarian Case (Fidesz, Jobbik),” *Utopia Praxis Latinoamericana*, vol. 25, no. 12, 2020, pp: 325-332; Ákos Bocskor, “Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary during the ‘Crisis’ Year: The Orbán Government’s ‘National Consultation’ Campaign of 2015,” *Sociology*, 52(3), 2018, pp: 551-568; Elżbieta M. Goździak and Péter Márton,

sister, in a different meeting, also touched upon the growing tendency of criminalizing liberals. “In Indonesia, the government be like, ‘PKI! PKI! PKI!’ to fight those who criticize them. Here, they will be like, ‘Soros! Soros! Soros!’”<sup>192</sup>



Figure 59

One page from the anti-migrant propaganda. The left-side title says, “The forcible relocation endangers our culture and traditions.” The rhetoric (Human Rights Watch)



Figure 60

A sticker from aurora—a community centre located in District 8, an area with many low-income and minority residents—following the result of Hungarian parliamentary election on April 2022. The center frequently organizes workshops and discussions on social justice and civic engagement topic. (Personal documentation)

“Where the Wild Things Are: Islam and the Anti-Refugee Rhetoric in Hungary and in Poland,” *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, June, 2018, pp: 1-27.

<sup>192</sup> “Kalau di Indonesia, pemerintah bakal ‘PKI! PKI! PKI!’ kalau di sini, ‘Soros! Soros! Soros!’” August 14, 2021, Fővám tér. On related topic, see: “Legal Analysis of Hungary’s Anti-NGO Bill,” *Open Society Justice Initiative*, <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/legal-analysis-hungary-s-anti-ngo-bill>.

The topic of nationalism was also discussed by Asep. He said that there was, at that time, the tendency of people argued about internationalism—as in promoted by the Comintern—versus nationalism. He recalled having a discussion with a Czech friend of him while both were in the party’s political course. From this Czech’s friend, he learned that nationalism and internationalism does not necessarily negate each other. “According to Marxism, nationalism is still needed; as long as one does not misuse it.”<sup>193</sup>

Meanwhile, on the topic of racism after 1989, Artawan added that racists are always part of a society—saying that one should expect that they are 10% of each society; be it under socialist regime or non-socialist regime. Yet, he agreed that the raise of anti-migrant propaganda these past years in the Czech Republic, or in East Central Europe in general, contributed in enhancing racism and encourage people to show it up.<sup>194</sup> He continued saying that this growing tendency is a threat for democracy—an idea that people fought for before the transformation and hoped to see after 1989.<sup>195</sup>

## Democracy

Even those who were PKI cadres, Asep and Agam, said that, one of major reasons for the transformation to happen: no democracy under state socialism. “Because people wanted freedom and democracy,” said Agam.<sup>196</sup> Asep said that one big problem with state socialism was its coercive power. “Its principals then were unnatural. People’s devotion were not genuine because

<sup>193</sup> “Padahal menurut ajaran Marxisme, nasionalisme itu perlu. Tapi jangan disalahgunakan.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová. For further reading on this topic, among others, see: Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: on Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>194</sup> On this topic, among others, see: Vendula Prokupkova, “Two Mobilization Waves of the Czech Anti-Islam Movement,” *Intersections*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2018, pp: 51-71.

<sup>195</sup> Based on interview on March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

<sup>196</sup> “Karena orang menginginkan kebebasan dan demokrasi.” March 27, 2022, Agam’s residency, Brno.

they were rather afraid; it was coercive. The Communist was in power through non-democratic means. If only they could have done it differently.”<sup>197</sup>

When I asked, “What does democracy mean to you?” Asep said, it should be the freedom for people to decide. He took the Czechoslovakia Communist Party as an example—instead of focusing on maintaining power, the party, said him, should be aware about showing up for the people. “Maybe they did have this aspiration about the people; but how people could believe it if they were corrupted, for example.”<sup>198</sup> Artawan also mentioned about the corruption; saying that for a brief period, in 1967, he believed that the socialist system could had done it better.<sup>199</sup>

It is compelling to put further questions on this notion of democracy. For example, did Agam’s affiliation with WDFY—which funded his study back in the 60s— and the general pattern of this then-students’ participation in democratic youth organizations/conferences shape their notion of democracy? Or did the idea of democracy back during Sukarno’s guided democracy period (1959-1966) also shape their idea about it? Particularly, by considering that those period was their formative political years—before encountering different dynamics in, Czechoslovakia, for instance. Also, how much their exposure to the Eastern Europe dissidents’ ideas—although it was only through readings—shaped their notion of democracy?

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<sup>197</sup> “Prinsip-prinsipnya jadi gak natural. Bukan dari hati. Itu karena ketakutan; dipaksakan ke bawah. Komunis terus menerus memegang kekuasaan lewat cara-cara yang gak demokratis. Seandainya mereka natural saja.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová.

<sup>198</sup> “Ya mungkin memang untuk rakyat, tapi di situ terjadi korupsi segala macam, gimana mau dipercaya.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová.

<sup>199</sup> Based on interview on March 21, 2022, Vysočanská.

Asep and Agam still refer to themselves as ‘communist,’ and are still voting for the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. To them, I asked, “After experiencing State Socialism, and with all the criticism you have, particularly related to democracy, why do you still vote for a communist party?” Each of them tried to make sense of their decisions; how the party is different from KSČ, what they appreciate about it, for instance. Agam even tried to find some of the party’s publications at his house to show me their programs. Yet, it was their immediate responses that I could visualize quite clearly. Sitting in front of me in a Chinese restaurant that afternoon, Asep said, “I just cannot drop it. My heart just cannot. I cannot lie that I still believe in the idea.”<sup>200</sup> He moved his hands to his heart, then had a warm laugh. Along the same lines, Agam responded, “Still I vote for the communist party. I know it would not win; I know we are in the losing end. But still.”<sup>201</sup> He, too, laughed. Then there was a moment of silence between us before he asked if I would like to have some more tea. Sitting there with them—and their stories and feelings—I tried to recall that one quote from Mark Fisher, “melancholia consists not in giving up on desire but in refusing to yield. It consists, that is to say, in a refusal to adjust to what current conditions call ‘reality’—even if the cost of that refusal is that you feel like an outcast in your own time...”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> “Gak bisa saya tinggalin. Hati saya gak bisa. Gak bisa bohong kalau saya masih percaya sama ide komunisme.” March 25, 2022, Jetelová.

<sup>201</sup> “Masih komunis partai. Meskipun kalah; saya tahu gak bakal menang. Tapi tetap.” March 27, 2022, Agam’s residency, Brno.

<sup>202</sup> Mark Fisher, *Ghost of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology, and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Book, 2014), p: 41.

## Conclusion

This study locates the memory of this particular Indonesian diaspora community in a specific context of the connections between Hungary-Indonesia and Czechoslovakia-Indonesia, as well as the dynamics of socialist Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This study focuses on their agency in coping with it and starting a new life in (then) foreign countries—which, to a great extent, was supported by state socialism. Moreover, it discovers what they think about politics since most studies on this community narrate their stories in a depoliticized manner.

Centering on their slices of life, I hope to look closely at the characters in this research; their mannerisms and ways of thinking, for instance. However, I also understand that there might be a potential loss because of it. As an example, this research could not manage to draw a connection between their stories with the broader 1965 Indonesian diaspora community. It is difficult to square these characters' memories with the bigger picture of this scattered community—for its specificity within Hungary and Czechoslovakia contexts. It could be meaningful, presuming, if I gather accounts of those who went out of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. By collecting the accounts of those who once went to China and now reside in the Netherlands, for instance, I might be able to enrich the Sino-Soviet split sub-chapter.

Moreover, it could add more layers if I included those who moved between socialist countries' stories. I know there is one couple who once studied in Bulgaria and then moved to Czechoslovakia. However, due to the time limitation, I could not manage to gather accounts about their movement and their comparative experience of living in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. Even with Asep, I emphasized his living experience in Prague more. I did not elaborate on its

similarities and differences to his time in Moscow. In a broader comparative sense, drawing a parallel between this community and other leftist émigré communities—such as Greek, Chilean, and Spaniard—could be great for further studies. To what extent their stories are familiar; to what extent they are not. Supposing a comparison between this community and the Greek one, one could interrogate how the Indonesian’s racial and other marks, for example, might limit their integration into the Hungarian society. The accounts of the Budapest family in this study imply that they consider themselves as neither outsiders nor insiders in Hungary; a peculiar position.

Reflecting on the characters’ accounts, I would say they told the same story. It was rather one state socialism story than Hungarian and Czechoslovak stories. Although, examining the details, one could still find slightly different narratives; stories about language courses, or the integration process in general, for example. Those in Czechoslovakia went through the system of *Universita 17. Listopadu*. It was not the case in Hungary that seemed more organic in the integration process. It could be a telling example of a tiny difference between the two regimes. Similar to the story of socialism, their accounts of post-socialist Hungary and the Czech Republic were also rather monolithic. However, it is important to underline the fact that there is an imbalance number of interviewees in this research—with the Hungarian story coming from one family only. One could assume that more interviewees from the Hungarian context would probably bring more differences. This group also has a quite similar background; which might influence their shared views.

Nevertheless, I hope their accounts on state socialism could contribute to a more nuanced outlook on its past. Their background is—particularly as those who were once under the states’ guardian—certainly influential to their brighter views on state socialism. While some of their accounts are at the risk of sounding naïve, they might still be meaningful in order to understand the state socialism



past. It is contrary to the general black and white perspective of it as often promoted today in the former Eastern Bloc countries.

Another subject is their tendency to compare Indonesia and Hungary; Indonesia and Czechoslovakia. For examples, Artawan's point about the similarity between the Czechoslovakia regime and Suharto's regime; Bagaskara's and Wardani's attempt to make the connection between their experience with 1965 Indonesia and their friends' experience with 1956 Hungary. There was also a point where Wardani indicated an attempt to compare the post-socialist regime in Hungary—"Soros! Soros! Soros!"—with the post-Suharto regime in Indonesia—"PKI! PKI! PKI!." It could be a good starting point for a comparative study on the related topics, such as, illiberalism in both countries.

The main challenge in conducting this research was the oral history methodology itself. While it enables the author to relate and learn from their stories—it has its limitations. The significant one is its complex and malleable nature. There were some barriers in elaborating some subjects because of it. As an example, Asep's account on the Prague spring. He said that he once considered that the Soviet invasion was necessary. In the later period, he recognized that was not the right to do. Here one could examine how one's distance from an event might influence their way of seeing it, as they could also gather more perspectives on it.

Moreover, during the interviews, they could also give mixed information. One example is Ainun's account about free public transportation back in the socialist Hungary, which Bagaskara later corrected. Another case is their information about traveling to other countries before the transformation. While the majority informed it was difficult for them to travel; Artawan said a

delinquent account. Hence, trying to locate and understand their stories in a larger context by deploying them with archival research and secondary sources helped in verifying and complicating their accounts.

Working with oral history methodology, I also realize writing is active listening. While it is true that there are documents in the archives and a list of secondary sources to consult, these people's stories are still the center of this research. I have an urge to be delicate about it. Hence, besides providing accounts and analysis from archives and secondary sources, I ask many questions in the writing. Most of those questions are my way of avoiding making premature analysis on the topics—for I understand the limitations—. At once, it is also a way of practicing curiosity—because I want to understand the reasons behind their stories, yet, for the time being I could not grasp it yet.

With the limitations, there are certain loopholes in this study. In retrospect, it might be easier to pick a shorter period and focus on one particular topic. However, in the end, this is only a preliminary research on an intersection of different issues—among others, transnationalism, diaspora studies, and global socialism—within its particular historical context. It is a prior project in recovering connections and stories that almost entirely forgotten—particularly between Indonesia-Hungary; Indonesia-Czechoslovakia. It is, too, a micro contribution to more extensive subjects, such as global socialism and transnational cultural transfer. Hopefully, this study—with its intersection of different topics and materials—delivers various clues for further studies to elaborate.

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