World Turned Upside Down: Benedict Anderson, Ruth McVey, and the "Cornell Paper"

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A little more than one year after Benedict Anderson completed his fieldwork in Indonesia and returned to Cornell University to begin writing his doctoral dissertation, an ill-fated coterie of army officers and troops operating under the name "September 30th Movement" forever changed the Indonesia he had come to love so dearly. In response to the bewildering turn of events, Anderson, Ruth McVey (who had earned her Cornell doctorate in 1961 while studying in the government department), and Fred Bunnell (a fellow doctoral candidate in government at Cornell), launched into making sense of who had done what in Jakarta on the morning of October 1.[1] The result was a 162-page document titled *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia*.[2] The level of detail was remarkable and the short quotations from a

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[1] In October 1965 Ruth McVey was a researcher at the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project. Frederick Bunnell assisted with the research but did not contribute to writing the final text.

[2] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson and Ruth T. McVey, asst. Frederick P. Bunnell, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Interim Reports Pub. 52, 1971; and London: Equinox Publishing, 2009).

fourteenth-century Javanese manuscript, the *Negarakrtagama*, at the start of each section, were enchanting.

The argument was fairly straightforward. The September 30th Movement was more or less what its leader, Lieutenant Colonel Untung, said it was in a radio broadcast on the morning of October 1—a preemptive move by middle-ranking officers against the Westernized, corrupt, CIA-aligned military high command to prevent them from carrying out a coup against President Sukarno.[3] The one major twist, in the authors' view, was that the origins of the movement lay in Central Java, rather than Jakarta, and reflected the growing cultural chasm between the Javanese world-view of middle-ranking army officers behind the movement and the Westernized and pro-Western senior military elite. The authors stressed that the movement led by Colonel Untung on October 1, 1965, and the subsequent anticommunist pogroms encouraged and spearheaded by the army "form quite separate political phenomena."[4] The former was crushed by the evening of October 1, with the search for a few stragglers lasting until the second week of October, when Untung was captured in Tegal, Central Java. The physical assault on members of the Communist party and its affiliates only began, with one important exception,[5] *after* Major General Suharto was installed as army chief-of-staff on October 16. The worst of the violence was committed over the first six months, but arrests and killings continued in various locations in Indonesia for another three years, resulting in the murder of at least half a million people and the imprisonment of many more.

If, as McVey once suggested to me, the events of October 1, 1965, were (and still are) a "whodunit," then the story of the *Preliminary Analysis* from the time it was completed up until its publication by the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project in 1971 might be thought of as a case of "whoseenit." Almost immediately, word of the paper and its line of analysis elicited great interest among diplomats, journalists, and academics, long before most observers had seen a copy. This article explores the social life of that paper and, more broadly, its relationship to Anderson's scholarship. The first three sections reconstruct how Anderson and McVey's *Preliminary Analysis* became the infamous "Cornell Paper" and resulted in Anderson being banned from Indonesia. The fourth turns to how the Indonesian state came to figure in Anderson's subsequent scholarship on Indonesia. A final section offers some tentative thoughts on how Anderson's thinking about the events of 1965 and the nature of the Indonesian state did and did not change when, finally, he could return to Indonesia, following Suharto's abdication in 1998.

[3] The most serious discussions of Anderson's and McVey's argument and alternative interpretations are W. F. Wertheim, "Suharto and the Untung Coup—The Missing Link," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 1, 2 (1970): 50–57; Donald Weatherbee, "Interpretations of Gestapu, the 1965 Indonesian Coup," *World Affairs* 132, 4 (1970): 305–17; Rex Mortimer, "Unresolved Problems of the Indonesian Coup," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 25, 1 (1971): 94–101; and Harold Crouch, "Another Look at the Indonesian 'Coup,'" *Indonesia* 15 (1973): 1–20. The most important reassessment since Suharto's resignation in 1998 is John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). See also Geoffrey B. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[4] *A Preliminary Analysis*, 63.

[5] In Aceh, in northern Sumatra, killings began on or about October 7, 1965.

Reconstructing the social history of an academic paper written more than half a century ago that was never intended for publication may seem like an unusual, and perhaps even quixotic, exercise. To dispel such charges, it may be helpful to make several reasons for this article explicit from the outset. First, and most obviously, the founding myth of Suharto's New Order regime was that the September 30th Movement (*Gerakan 30 September*, which the Indonesian army abbreviated as G30S) was orchestrated by the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI), with the link between the two cemented through hyphenation—G30S-PKI. Anderson and McVey's account, which was completed just as the Indonesian army was beginning to construct its own "official" version of events, directly challenged that legitimacy and continues to stir interest today.[6] Second, Anderson and McVey's paper, and the work of Western scholars more generally, have had a phenomenal impact on Indonesian political and intellectual life, for which there is no serious rival anywhere in the twentieth century. Third, while Anderson's name has become synonymous with the study of nationalism, far less attention has been paid to the role of the state in his scholarship. His perspective on the state evolved in important respects in response to the events of 1965. Finally, the account that follows is intertwined with two journals, and so may be of special interest to their readers: the *New Left Review*, which for two decades was edited by Anderson's younger brother, Perry; and Cornell's journal *Indonesia*, founded by Benedict Anderson in spring 1966.

Cataclysm

In the aftermath of the September 30th Movement, Anderson, McVey, and Bunnell temporarily set aside their primary academic commitments to make sense of what exactly had happened in Jakarta and several cities in Central Java. To do so, they drew on the extensive Indonesian newspaper holdings in the Cornell University library, foreign news service reports, Indonesian radio broadcasts, and personal communications by telephone and mail with select friends. Professor George Kahin, under whom all three studied in Cornell University's department of government, encouraged their efforts.

While they were busy at work in Ithaca, New York, violence was engulfing Indonesia. Mass arrests and killings began in Central and East Java in mid-October; in West Java, in late October; in North Sumatra, during the first week of November; and in Bali, in early December, with the army directly coordinating the assault in some places and providing tacit encouragement elsewhere.[7] The army-controlled press vilified the Communist Party for the murder of the generals on October 1 and there were calls for the PKI to be banned and for its membership to be "destroyed down to the roots." The army openly and proudly justified its actions as a necessary response to the events of October 1. But the media provided few details about arrests and the movement of military personnel and there was absolutely no reporting on the killings.

[6] On Indonesian Army and New Order accounts of the September 30th Movement, see John Roosa, "The September 30th Movement: The Aporias of the Official Narratives," in *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–68*, ed. Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), 25–49.

[7] On the sequencing of violence across provinces, see Douglas Kammen and Faizah Zakaria, "Detention in Mass Violence," *Critical Asian Studies* 44, 3 (2012): 441–66.

Major General Suharto and his military allies ignored President Sukarno's pleas to stop the violence, and actively worked to undermine the president's authority. In mid-December, already confident that the PKI had been destroyed as an institution, the army leadership trained its sights more directly on President Sukarno. The immediate target was the Supreme Operations Command (Komando Tertinggi, KOTI), which Sukarno had established in 1961 to spearhead anticolonial policies. Over the next few years, KOTI had emerged as a parallel cabinet. To counter Sukarno's control over KOTI, in mid-December the army forced the president to agree to the appointment of three new members: General Nasution (for military affairs); the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengku Buwono IX (for economic and general affairs); and diplomat Ruslan Abdulgani (for political and social affairs). These appointments were, in the words of US Ambassador Marshall Green, "an elliptical procedure for assuming control of government."[8]

At precisely the same time that the army was encroaching on the Supreme Operations Command, Anderson and McVey turned from research to writing up their account of the September 30th Movement.[9] Anderson wrote the first section on the course of events, while McVey composed a second section that presented alternative hypotheses. They completed their paper on January 10, 1966, at which point twenty copies were mimeographed. The cover page contained a blank space in which to type the name of the intended recipient and the words "Confidential. Not to be circulated or copied." The following page contained a three-paragraph message explaining why the report had been prepared, the reason for circulating it, and a request that the recipients maintain its confidentiality. Most of the recipients were friends and colleagues, including a number of Cornell University graduates,[10] but copies were also sent to Howard Jones, who had served as the American Ambassador in Jakarta in 1958–65; Colonel George Benson, who had served as US military attaché in Jakarta in 1962–65; and US Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy.

"Unfortunately," Kahin wrote in his memoir, "at least one of the copies of the analysis was reproduced and circulated widely, rapidly acquiring notoriety as the so-called 'Cornell Paper.'"[11] Indeed, within weeks of its circulation to friends and

[8] Telegram 562A, Green to State Department, Washington, DC, December 15, 1965, POL 23-9 [INDON], National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

[9] Anderson said it took McVey and himself three weeks to write the paper; see Ben Anderson, "Tentang Pembunuhan Massal '65," interview with Ben Abel, distributed on the Apakabar email list, September 24, 1996.

[10] Among the known and likely recipients: Daniel Lev (Cornell PhD in government, teaching at University of California, Berkeley), Herb Feith (Cornell PhD in government, teaching at Monash University), John Smail (Cornell PhD in history, teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Madison), Donald Hindley (Brandeis University), Harry Benda (Yale University), Glifford Geertz (Chicago University), W. F. Wertheim (University of Amsterdam), Rex Mortimer (PhD candidate, Monash University), John Legge (Monash University), Lance Castles (MA from Monash University in 1965 and soon to pursue his PhD at Yale, in history), and Jim Siegel (PhD candidate, University of California, Berkeley). *Preliminary Analysis* resulted in an unfortunate episode between McVey and Anderson, in Ithaca, and their friend Herb Feith, in Melbourne. See Jemma Purdey, "Being an Apologist? The Cornell Paper and a Debate between Friends," 2011, http://www.aust-neth.net/transmission_proceedings/papers/Purdey.pdf, accessed November 18, 2017.

[11] George McT. Kahin, *Southeast Asia: A Testament* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 178. In Indonesian studies circles, the view has long been that Guy Pauker, a Harvard PhD working at the Rand Corporation, was the culprit. This is incorrect according to a letter from Anderson to Lance Castles, undated (but before August 1966), kindly provided to me by David Reeve, in which Anderson wrote:

colleagues in January 1966, the paper was already the topic of conversation in Jakarta circles. In the words of Roger Paget, one of Kahin's doctoral students then living in Jakarta, "generals and field-grade officers were talking about the paper at Jakarta parties."[12] But notoriety and circulation are quite different things, so it is necessary to consider how a confidential draft distributed in a narrow academic circle became the infamous "Cornell Paper."

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On March 5, 1966, *The Washington Post* ran an article by the columnist Joseph Kraft titled "Bloodbath in Indonesia."[13] Kraft began by lamenting the fact that the slaughter of "some 300,000 persons" had not elicited concern in the West, and was even being treated in Washington as a "gift from the gods." To counter this view, he drew on "a study of recent events by a group of American scholars at Cornell University," which he summarized succinctly before describing the perpetrators in Java and Bali and speculating about the ongoing struggle for power in Jakarta. Regrettably, Kraft wrote that the "Cornell study begins with the mysterious coup of last October." While perfectly true, this phrasing might be read as implying that Anderson and McVey's work addressed the massacres. Just this interpretation was picked up by the US Department of State, which sent a cable to the American Embassy in Jakarta on March 8—the very day Lieutenant General Suharto issued a nation-wide ban on the PKI—explaining that Kraft's article "offers exposition of post October 1 events based on [a] recent study by [a] 'group of American scholars at Cornell.'" The cable noted that McVey had recently visited Washington, where she gave a synopsis of *Preliminary Analysis* to Kraft to be used for background, because "she felt press coverage had been 'one-sided.'"[14]

At Cornell, Kahin was concerned about the possible repercussions that Kraft's article might have for Cornell's Modern Indonesia Project and Southeast Asia Program, which received generous government grants. The result was that, on March 10, the *Washington Post* published a curt letter to the editor by Kahin noting that his students' work was restricted to the events surrounding "the coup of October 1 and 2, 1965," and firmly disassociating all scholars of Indonesia at Cornell from Kraft's article. Immediately below Kahin's letter was a one-sentence apology from Kraft: "Professor Kahin is quite right, and I am sorry if I gave any other impression."[15]

"… Guy Pauker, who was furious at not being on the original receiving list …"; and letter from McVey to Kahin, Anderson, and Bunnell, November 20, 1970, in the Anderson collection, in which McVey wrote: "The only person who got left out was Guy, and if he wants to object in print to his neglect I'll be glad to explain just why." For a colorful but preposterous account of the "leak," see Arnold Brackman, *The Communist Collapse in Indonesia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 179–80.

[12] Personal communication with Roger Paget, January 15, 2016.

[13] Joseph Kraft, "Bloodbath in Indonesia," *The Washington Post*, March 5, 1966.

[14] Telegram 1135, American Embassy Jakarta to Department of State, March 7, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA.

[15] It is true that the three-page synopsis and text of *Preliminary Analysis* did not discuss the mass killings. It is almost certain that McVey discussed the killings with Kraft and she may even have given him a copy of Lucien Rey's eleven-page article "Dossier of the Indonesian Drama" that, as discussed below, was soon published in *New Left Review* (I/36, March–April 1966). This article, which was completed shortly after February 21, contains a final section titled "The Anti-PKI Massacres Begin," with one paragraph about the massacres and another about the fate of PKI leaders.

But word was out. Officials in Washington were quick to inform senior military officers in Jakarta about Anderson and McVey's study and the Kraft article.[16] Hugh Tovar, who was CIA chief of station in Jakarta, immediately wrote a letter to Guy Pauker at the Rand Corporation in California (whom I will discuss in greater detail later), mentioning "the school of McVey et al." and what he calls their "Diponegoro Theory."[17] Journalists, too, were eager to get in on the action. The American journalist Arnold Brackman, who specialized in coverage of Southeast Asia, also wrote to Pauker about Kraft's article and the Cornell authors:

> … I probably need not tell you of the appalling—incredible is perhaps a better word—Kraft piece based on some "scholarly" research at Cornell. I just could not believe it, and I still don't. The Lev piece in the current *Asian Survey* was equally unbelievable.[18] I am heartsick.
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> Of course, consdering [*sic*] the fact that in recent years these people have been apologists for the Communist-backed fascist Sukarno regime, I quite understand the need on their part to rationalize their positions. But so crudely—that's the revealation [*sic*] and, I suspect, a clue to their shock. Cornell, Kraft, and Lev have, in effect, sought to whitewash Sukarno and the PKI in the affair. It is shocking.[19]

The day after Kahin's letter was published marked a critical new tipping point in the political struggle in Jakarta. On the afternoon of March 11 Lieutenant General Suharto sent envoys to the presidential palace in Bogor, where Sukarno was forced to transfer executive authority to Suharto (the infamous, and perhaps nonexistent "Order of March 11," abbreviated Supersemar). While killings continued in many provinces, in Jakarta the army's victory ushered in a new round of arrests of communists as well as those in the left wing of the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, PNI). It was this that prompted the next mention of *Preliminary Analysis* by the US Department of State. Ambassador Green's cable from the American embassy in Jakarta to Washington on March 21, 1966, reported:

> Cornell student Roger Paget requests Department [of State] inform Professor George Kahin at Cornell that Ong Hok Ham, long time local assistant, researcher, and informant for Cornell and for Cornell researchers in Indonesia, received 66 page condensation of McVey study from McVey and probably did

[16] Interviewed in Indonesia in 2012, Anderson told a journalist: "Of course, bureaucrats in the department of state, the CIA, and the pentagon were furious, and immediately informed the army brass in Jakarta." Quoted in "Ben Anderson, G30S dan Cornell Paper," *Pemuda Demokrat Indonesia*, September 28, 2012.

[17] Donald K. Emmerson, "Facts, Minds and Formats: Scholarship and Political Change in Indonesia," in *Producing Indonesia: The State of the Field in Indonesian Studies*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 2014), 274. This suggests that Tovar was familiar with *Preliminary Analysis*, but does not prove that he had actually read it; he might have based his assessment on the Kraft article, the three-page synopsis, or the just-published "Dossier of the Indonesian Drama," and inferred this to be the work of the same authors.

[18] Brackman was referring to: Daniel S. Lev, "Indonesia 1965: The Year of the Coup," *Asian Survey* 6, 2 (1966): 103–10.

[19] Letter from Brackman to Pauker, March 14, 1966, in Pauker Papers, Box 36, folder 7, The Hoover Institution Archives. Another early response was the journalist Arthur Dommen's long article that was serialized in the *Djakarta Times* in December 1966–January 1967; see Arthur J. Dommen, "The Attempted Coup in Indonesia," *China Quarterly* 25 (1966): 144–70.

> not destroy it before his arrest by Army. Ong Hok Hak was arrested on March 12 just after Army takeover and had already suffered nervous breakdown on March 11.
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> According to Paget, Ong Hok Ham was recently offered attractive job (nature unspecified) by [Foreign Minister] Subandrio and he publicly joined [the] PNI student affiliate (GMNI) three weeks ago. This and fact that Ong was arrested at same time BPI [Central Intelligence Agency] members were being rounded up raises possibility that Ong was in fact BPI agent.
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> From above facts, it is clear that McVey document may well have fallen into hands of Subandrio and BPI before Ong's arrest or into hands of Army thereafter. Paget, who learned of Ong's arrest after posting his letter to Kujin [*sic*, Kahin] of March 14, is nervous both for his own position and that of Cornell. He has been advised temporarily to discontinue local contacts until situation becomes more clear. Paget is informed of Kraft article and Kahin's partial disavowal of McVey study.[20]

Green was misinformed in several key respects. There is no evidence or reason to believe that McVey had sent a sixty-six page "condensation" of *Preliminary Analysis* to Onghokham. The first part of the paper, which presents the authors' reconstruction of events, is sixty-seven pages, so would not have been a synopsis at all. Rather, at the time of his arrest, Onghokham had a letter from McVey in his pocket.[21] Furthermore, Green wrongly speculated that Onghokham might be an agent working for the Indonesian state Central Intelligence Agency. His arrest was prompted by his increasingly erratic behavior, which including shouting defenses of the communists in public.

Onghokham's well-being and speculation that he might have had a partial copy of *Preliminary Analysis* was only part of the story, and far from the most interesting. A *peranakan* Chinese from East Java, Onghokham was an undergraduate history major at the University of Indonesia and a gadfly with myriad contacts in intellectual and diplomatic circles. Unknown to Ambassador Green, this brilliant and eccentric student had played a curious role in the army's own early propaganda efforts. Less than a month after the September 30th Movement had been crushed, Nugroho Notosusanto, who was a lecturer in the department of history at the University of Indonesia, as well as a civilian employee in the armed forces' history unit, was tasked with writing an official army version of events. Notosusanto summoned Onghokham and several other students and set them to work scrutinizing Communist Party documents seized by the army.[22] By one account, Onghokham was kept under "lock and key" for about a

[20] Telegram 2691, American Embassy Jakarta to Department of State, March 21, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA. Although Onghokham was never charged, a letter regarding his release stated: "Indication of being a CIA agent or a PKI agent." Letter from Onghokham to Anderson, March 14, 1967, in Anderson collection.

[21] Personal communication with David Reeve, February 15, 2016, and letter from Paget to Anderson, June 4, 1966, in Anderson collection.

[22] The product was *40 Hari Kegagalan "G-30-S" 1 Oktober–10 November* (Djakarta: Pusat Sedjarah Angkatan Bersendjata, 1965). A second official publication, which is a compilation of documentation regarding the September 30th Movement and the military's response, was published by the Army Information Center as *Fakta2 Sekitar Persoalan G30S* (Djakarta: P. N. Balai Pustaka, 1966).

month.[23] When he reappeared in early December, he refused to say where he had been or what he had been doing, according to Paget's recollection.

Soon after Green sent his telegram regarding Onghokham, the "Cornell Paper" made an entirely new appearance. The March–April issue of *New Left Review*, the leading English-language Marxist journal, then under the editorship of Perry Anderson, included an article titled "The Indonesian Dossier," by Lucien Rey. In fact, this was a highly abridged and more accessible version of *Preliminary Analysis*, prepared by Anderson and McVey, and edited by Peter Wollen, a member of the *New Left Review* collective.[24] The decision to publish an abbreviated version of their analysis in *New Left Review* may have helped those on the Left in Britain and elsewhere in the West make sense of the events of the previous October, but it had the unfortunate consequence of allowing conservative foreign policy experts to conclude that the author was a "fellow traveler" and the analysis partisan. Ben Anderson acknowledged as much in a letter written to an Australian researcher in mid-1966:

> As you probably remember the Kraft article caused a good deal of trouble for us, and this has recently been brought to life again by Guy Pauker, who was furious at not being on the original receiving list, and has according to reliable information been busy spreading rumours about Cornell's "kiri" [leftist] orientation and anti-army sympathies as well as parts of the P. A. [*Preliminary Analysis*]. His main agent has been Ruslan [Abdulgani]. Enough is now known about Cornell … so that army suspicion of us is evidently quite considerable. [Indonesian Ambassador] Palar has been on the phone at us and all.[25]

Diplomatic Maneuvers

By mid-1966 the pace of killings in Indonesia had slowed and new efforts were underway to process the enormous number of people under detention. In Jakarta, a carefully orchestrated special session of the People's Consultative Assembly was held in June, at which the transfer of executive authority to Suharto was confirmed and Sukarno was pressed to account for the September 30th Movement. In his speech before the assembly, Sukarno infuriated the army leadership by refusing to refer to the September 30th Movement by name or admit the involvement of the PKI.

Even at this point, in Indonesia the "Cornell Paper" was still a name, not an actual document that was read and whose contents could be studied and discussed. That this was the case can be seen from a short diplomatic exchange in mid-1966. On July 19, Ambassador Green sent a cable to Washington requesting "copy of study written by Ruth McVey and other Cornell graduates on Sept 30 Affair" and commenting that

[23] Interview with Roger Paget, February 20, 2015, La Jolla, California. Paget says that, after attending a *wayang* performance together on October 26, 1965, he did not see Onghokham again until December 10. Paget was correct; for the sake of security, Notosusanto and his staff were given special accommodation while working on his book: see Katharine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past* (Singapore: Asian Studies Association of Australia and NUS Press, 2007), 64.

[24] Robin Blackburn, "Benedict Anderson," 2011 letter to the Social Science Research Council, http://www.ssrc.org/pages/benedict-anderson/, accessed November 18, 2017. Wollen, Blackburn writes, used the pen name Lucien Rey because he was "a deserter from the British army."

[25] Letter from Anderson to Lance Castles, no date, but sometime mid-1966. Courtesy of David Reeve.

"Indonesian Cornell graduates plan [to] write article rebutting McVey's thesis and wish to see as complete account as possible on her arguments."[26] The response from US Secretary of State Dean Rusk, received the following day, was that a synopsis of the report had *already* been sent to the embassy on March 9. Rusk wrote: "Will airpouch another copy soonest. Copy [of] complete study *not* available."[27] As of mid-1966, then, the US embassy in Jakarta still did not have a copy, the state department claimed not to have a copy, and there is nothing to suggest that the Indonesian army or intelligence agencies did, either.

Remarkably, the fact that the "Cornell Paper" was not available even fueled suggestions that Anderson should come to Indonesia to explain it in person. Iwan Tirta, a young professor of international law, whose family housed Anderson and other Cornell researchers in the early 1960s, told researcher Lance Castles:

> Umar Kajam [Cornell PhD 1965] had said that he particularly wanted BA [Anderson] to come out to Indonesia as soon as possible; that several high army people especially wanted him to come, that there was even talk of the army paying BA's fare out … This would show the Cornell crowd that they were wrong, since if the Army had anything to hide why would they be urging their critics to come out …[28]

The "Cornell Paper" came fully into public view in Indonesia in September 1966. The prompt came from Pauker, who had visited Jakarta a few months earlier. Pauker met with army officers and briefed Nugroho Notosusanto and Rosihan Anwar (a prominent author, staunch anticommunist, and member of the banned Indonesian Socialist Party) on the "Cornell Paper." With this ammunition, Anwar published a rebuttal of the Cornell "thesis" in the newly established voice of the anticommunist student movement, *Harian KAMI*.[29] Anwar reported that in addition to the "confidential" report on the September 30th Movement, American experts on Indonesia had also published an article with the same "contents and tenor" in *New Left Review* under the pseudonym Lucien Rey.[30] Following the official army propaganda of the previous year, Anwar asserted that the Cornell analysis was constructed around

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[26] Telegram 295, American Embassy Jakarta to Department of State, July 19, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA. The Indonesians alluded to here who had graduated from or spent time at Cornell were most likely Selosoemardjan, Soedjatmoko (a member of the Indonesian Socialist Party, with whom Anderson was on frosty terms), and Umar Kayam (who received a PhD in rural sociology from Cornell University in 1965).

[27] Telegram 10427, Department of State to American Embassy, July 20, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA, signed by Dean Rusk. Emphasis added. One cannot help but wonder why the embassy had not received the synopsis sent by the US State Department in March 1966. Was it an office oversight, or was the diplomatic pouch intercepted by Indonesian intelligence?

[28] "Points from Talks with Lance Castles," dated September 18–19, 1966, in McVey archive. The identity of the author cannot be determined, but it might be McVey.

[29] KAMI is the acronym for Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian University Student Action Forum). The daily *Harian KAMI* was established in June 1966.

[30] Anwar did not identify the author(s) of the "Cornell Paper" or "Dossier of the Indonesian Drama," or speculate as to why *New Left Review* had been selected as an outlet. But it was common knowledge in intellectual circles that Anderson's younger brother was the editor of *NLR*. Reporting on a conversation with Lance Castles, who had left Indonesia in August 1966, an unidentified author (possibly McVey) wrote: "On the authorship [of the Cornell Paper], by and large Ben Anderson was the main criminal, with Ruth the next worst."

the "false premise" that the Indonesian Communist Party was not involved in the September 30th Movement.[31]

The debate over the "Cornell Paper" and the fact that the embassy had still not been able to obtain a copy frustrated US Ambassador Green and his staff to no end. In October 1966, Green sent a cable to Washington with the heading "Continuing Indonesian Interest in Cornell Report on Indonesia." He began: "The anniversary of Gestapu[32] has rekindled an increased Indonesian interest in the paper on the September 30–October 1, 1965, events reportedly prepared by scholars working in connection with the Cornell [Modern] Indonesian Project." First noting that the embassy still did not have a full copy, Green reported on Anwar's newspaper article: "While Rosihan's article and refutation are mild, they represent some uneasy feeling on the part of knowledgeable Indonesians that an important group of American scholars has been on the wrong track in sleuthing the responsibility for Gestapu."[33]

If well-placed Indonesian and American officials were so certain that Anderson and McVey's analysis was simply incorrect, then one would expect the initial flurry of interest to abate and the document to be relegated to the waste bin. Far from it. In early November 1966, Ambassador Green sent an airgram to Washington with the subject heading "The Cornell Report on Gestapu."[34] Green began the cable by reporting that the embassy had received "a number of informal approaches" from Indonesians asking for a copy of the report and an "official request" from the army and the provisional national legislature (which by this time was controlled by the army). Requests made in Jakarta were only half the story. Green continued: "The matter has now reached a point at which it seems wise to bring it to fuller and more formal attention of the Department [of State]." The upshot of the cable was that in the preceding months multiple officials at the highest levels of Indonesian political life had sent well-regarded emissaries to Cornell University—in centrally isolated Ithaca, New York—to try to obtain a copy of the elusive "Cornell Paper." Who were these visitors?

The Sultan of Yogyakarta, who in March 1966 had been appointed minister of finance and economics, sent his long-time aide, Selosoemardjan, to Cornell. Selosoemardjan had received his doctorate in sociology from Cornell University in 1959, so he knew Kahin and his students well. While in Ithaca in late September 1966, he was allowed to read the entire *Preliminary Analysis*, but was not given a copy.[35] "Selosoemardjan remarked [to Ambassador Green] that, perhaps as an alumnus of Cornell himself, he was given a special permission which he knew had not been granted to other inquirers after the mysterious paper." Selosoemardjan was told that

[31] Rosihan Anwar, "G 30S, Mahmillub and US," *Harian KAMI*, September 26, 1966.

[32] "Gestapu" is an acronym created by Brigadier General Sugandhi, head of the Indonesian army information service, by slightly reordering the name "Gerakan 30 September" to "**Ge**rakan **S**eptember **T**iga-**pu**luh."

[33] Airgram A-194, American Embassy Jakarta to Department of State, October 26, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA.

[34] Airgram A-222, "The Cornell Paper on Gestapu," American Embassy Jakarta to Department of State, November 9, 1966, POL 23-9 [INDON], NARA.

[35] The date of Selosoemardjan's visit to Ithaca is from McVey's typed notes, "Interview with Adam Malik & Company, New York, October 2, 1966," in McVey archive.

after its completion in early January four copies had been retained at Cornell while twenty-five were distributed to colleagues elsewhere.

The second envoy was sent by Adam Malik, who, in March 1966, had been appointed Indonesia's new minister of foreign affairs. He dispatched his chief of staff, Abubakar Lubis, to Ithaca in October 1966.[36] Green, who almost certainly debriefed Lubis after his visit, reported: "Bakar Lubis said that when he asked at Cornell to see a copy of the paper, he was told in effect that there was no real paper—only a brief outline or essay of only a few pages which had been drawn up in possible preparation for a fuller study. Lubis says he was told that no such study took place and that there was no completed paper. He clearly felt dissatisfied by their answer and left Cornell somewhat embittered and with his suspicions heightened."

The third visitor to Cornell University in late 1966 was Ruslan Abdulgani, a long-time Sukarno confidant who had been appointed minister of information in 1962. Selosoemardjan told Ambassador Green that Abdulgani "was presumably sent by Sukarno to acquire a copy of the full report," but "did not succeed."[37] Any hope Abdulgani might have had of obtaining a copy of *Preliminary Analysis* was sorely misplaced. Only a few months before Abdulgani's visit to Cornell, Anderson had written to a friend that Abdulgani "has been anti-Cornell ever since he took a pasting in Herb [Feith]'s book, and now sees in this a chance to embarrass [Foreign Minister] Malik …"[38]

Selosoemardjan fretted to Ambassador Green that "the general conclusion in Indonesian circles is that, given the authoritative position of Cornell in Indonesian matters and its close relationship with the Department [of State], the paper must have been prepared for the Department and must constitute the basis for current Department policy toward Indonesia."[39] It is perhaps all too easy to simply dismiss this as lunacy. The "Cornell Paper" was carefully restricted to assessing responsibility for the September 30th Movement, so was silent on the course of subsequent events including both the anticommunist pogroms as well as US policy toward Indonesia. Furthermore, having studied at Cornell, Seloemardjan would have been well aware of how strongly Kahin valued academic freedom and the fact that Kahin had suffered at the hands of McCarthyism and was a fierce critic of US policy in Vietnam. Nevertheless, we should not be too quick to dismiss Green's account or Seloemardjan's views; they reveal that there was more at stake than simply who did what on the morning of October 1, 1965. Even if the principle parties knew better, for most observers the outcome of the struggle between General Suharto and President Sukarno was still far from certain.

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[36] Green identifies him as Karim Bakar Lubis. This visit can be dated from Anderson's notes, "Talks w Abubakar Lubis, 12.10.66, Ithaca," in McVey archive. This does not mention *Preliminary Analysis* or what Anderson and fellow Cornellians told Abubakar.

[37] In addition to the visitors to Cornell, Anderson and McVey also met with several Indonesian officials elsewhere: McVey in New York City with Adam Malik; and Anderson in Washington, DC, with Didi Djajadiningrat, an officer at the Indonesian embassy, who wanted a copy so he could reassure people and put the paper in perspective.

[38] Letter from Anderson to Lance Castles, mid-1966, Anderson archive.

[39] Airgram A-222, "The Cornell Paper on Gestapu."

The visits to Ithaca might have left Lubis feeling "embittered" and Selosoemardjan "shaken," but they or their political masters must have recognized that the denials in Ithaca could be used against the Cornell authors. Thus, in mid-December 1966, the newly established Catholic daily *Kompas* ran an article with the surprising title "Cornell Paper about G-30-S Cancelled."

> A planned paper that recently caused an uproar in official circles in Indonesia and the United States has been cancelled. The paper has been reviewed by several writers, including Rosihan Anwar. The paper from Cornell University put forward the proposition that the PKI was not involved in the bloody coup of 30 September 1965.
>
> Instead, the paper intimated that ABRI [the Indonesian Armed Forces] "baited" the PKI so that it could be destroyed. The US Department of State, which was initially willing to participate in the research project, has withdrawn.
>
> Subsequently Cornell University cancelled the project, apparently because it could see that the facts clearly did not support the "theory."
>
> The unwritten paper created a stir when a short synopsis was published in the English press. The two principle authors of the paper, Ruth McVey and Benedict Anderson, have written several works about Indonesia and conducted research here for some time.
>
> According to a source who knows the author, Ruth McVey (who recently completed a book about the development of the Indonesian Communist Party since the 1920s) obtained a great deal of information from the PKI and its sympathizers, including from a university student who is a member of the left-wing faction of the Indonesian National Student Movement.[40]

Here we see the intertwining of obfuscation in Ithaca, intended to protect the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, and propaganda in Jakarta, aimed at discrediting challenges to the (il)legitimacy on which the New Order was founded. The result, for both sides, was a combination of temporary relief and lingering anxiety.

Old Friends, New Foes

In January 1967, months after his release from prison, Onghokham composed a long letter to Anderson in which he reported on discussions in intellectual circles and gossiped about friends. "Meanwhile," he wrote, "you are still the most talked about Cornell personality in Indonesia [Djakarta]." Among other things, he explained that a mutual friend was "*sedikit marah* [a little angry] about the famous or notorious 'Cornell White Book' with the Negarakrtagama quotations" beginning each section. "*Massa kita belum madju2, masih tetap dalam taraf Negarakrtagama, menurut Ben!*" ["As if, according to Ben, we've never progressed and are still at the stage of Negarakrtagama!" (i.e., the fourteenth century).] Onghokham also gently commented that "in psychological terms, it isn't possible for Indonesians to accept that the PKI played no role or wasn't to blame for the Gestapu affair. It has become an article of faith with us

[40] "Paper Cornell ttg G-30-S dibatalkan," *Kompas*, December 17, 1966. The student referred to is clearly Onghokham.

that PKI is involved in the Gestapu events, to what extend [*sic*], there might be some differences, but you cannot absolve them completely." He added:

> What has been unpleasant is that many [people] are mad about your opinions here on the Gestapu affair and now to clean you [*sic*, clear your name] they say that I was the one who gave you the facts and supplied you with the material.

Suharto's new regime was deeply concerned about adverse views of the events of 1965 that had brought the army to power. The semi-official visits to Cornell University in late 1966 reflected this unease, and in turn prompted an effort to redress the situation. To this end, on January 14, 1967, General Suharto, in his capacity as a member of the staff at the Army Staff and Command School (SESKOAD), issued an official letter for cooperation between SESKOAD and the Rand Corporation in California. The letter appointed Lieutenant Colonel Ismail Saleh, an army prosecutor, and Nugroho Notosusanto, the historian with ties to both the University of Indonesia and SESKOAD, to travel to the United States to help clarify "the judicial, historical, and political" aspects of the Communist Party's involvement in the September 30th Movement, and to prepare a manuscript for publication.[41] They were given three months to complete their assignment.

Notosusanto and Ismail's partner at the Rand Corporation was Guy Pauker, whom I mentioned earlier, a Romanian émigré and rabid anticommunist with ties to the political scientist Robert Scalapino at the University of California, Berkeley. A year before the collaboration got underway, Pauker had told General Simatupang "that most scholars in America consider the evidence that the army has produced as trumped up, forged."[42] That was no obstacle, only further reason to produce a more convincing official narrative. The result, with a preface dated April 12, 1967, was a book written in English titled *The Coup Attempt of the "September* 30th *Movement in Indonesia."* The structure of the book was clearly modeled on *Preliminary Analysis*. Just as Anderson and McVey had divided their labors, Notosusanto authored the first half of the book on the course of those events that took place in Jakarta and Central Java on October 1, 1965, while Saleh wrote the second half on the evidence, drawn almost exclusively from the special tribunals that tried individuals implicated in the September 30th Movement.[43] The authors' preface explained:

> In the light of the existence of a campaign being waged by certain circles in Western countries against the New Order in Indonesia, posing the rebel's view of the affair, the two authors were sent to the United States and the Netherlands, where they were able to observe the campaign from its very

[41] "Surat—Perintah Nomer: PRIN-4/11/1967," Departemen Angkatan Darat Sekolah Staf dan Komando, signed by Letnan Jenderal TNI Soeharto, January 14, 1967. A second order, "Surat—Perintah Nomer, PRIN-30/2/1967," dated February 4, 1967, was signed by minister of defense and commander of the army Lieut. Gen. Panggabean, providing further authorization. Both documents are reproduced in Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *Tragedi Nasional: Percobaan Kup G30S/PKI di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Intermasa, 1989), 205–7.

[42] Guy J Pauker, as told to Ewa Pauker, April 25, 1966, Rand Limited Document, Box 37, file 2, Guy Pauker Collection, Hoover Institution.

[43] Not surprisingly, in this book there is not a single reference to *Preliminary Analysis* or to the Indonesian press reporting on which Anderson and McVey relied.

> centers. It should be mentioned here, that the "political guerilla"[44] waged by certain Eastern Bloc countries were [*sic*] considered well-known enough; consequently the two authors were not sent to those countries as was planned earlier. By studying the hostile campaigns, the authors were able to rewrite their manuscript in order to cope with the issues posed by the articles of those circles.[45]

The "campaign," of course, was a clear reference to Cornell's *Preliminary Analysis* and those articles that had been spawned by the "Cornell Paper." The final chapter of Notosusanto and Saleh's book includes sections addressing "The issue of the PKI's Innocence," "The issue of the 'Generals' Council," and "The issue of the 'Internal Army Affair'"—with the first and third of those items directly countering the arguments presented by Anderson and McVey.[46] In fact, the authors were so intent on controverting Anderson and McVey's positions that they felt obliged to assert that there *was* a direct link between the events of October 1, 1965, and the "bloodbaths in certain areas of Indonesia." This is the only acknowledgement in official army publications that a "bloodbath" occurred. It appears here not because the authors were concerned with truth, but rather because of their determination to counter each and every aspect of Anderson and McVey's *Preliminary Analysis*.[47]

Notosusanto and Saleh were not the only authors hard at work. Back in Ithaca, while Anderson was busy completing his doctoral dissertation, McVey had launched into a much deeper exploration of the network of individuals involved in the September 30th Movement. The first product of these labors was a 140-page manuscript titled "An Excursion into the Small World of Lt. Col. Untung" (unpublished). Drawing together data culled from an exhaustive reading of the Indonesian press as well as her own field notes and interviews, McVey traced the careers of Untung and a host of other individuals—some with long military careers and others who operated as labor organizers, intelligence informants, or in opposition circles—from the revolution up until 1965. Her sleuthing revealed that a number of the key actors in the September 30th Movement had long-standing connections to Suharto, some having served under him in the army's Diponegoro Command in Central Java during the 1950s and others during the Dwikora campaign against Dutch-held West Papua in 1962–63. The links were not merely professional but, in some instances, personal as well. McVey's manuscript laid the groundwork for a second paper, presented in Chicago in early 1968, in which she made the case that then-Major

[44] "Political guerilla" is an overly literal translation of the Indonesian *gerilya politik* (guerilla politics), the abbreviation of which—*gerpol*—was widely used for a decade to refer to the views and efforts of dissident Indonesians, particularly those in the Eastern Bloc countries.

[45] Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the "September 30th Movement" in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pembimbing Masa, 1968), ii–iii.

[46] Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the "September 30 Movement" in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pembimbing Masa, 1968), 107–51. Anderson received a typed copy of the manuscript from Herb Feith in April 1968; Kahin did not receive a bound copy until November 21, 1968 (a copy that included neither information on publisher nor date of publication). See personal copy, signed and dated by Kahin, in Echols Collection, Olin Library, Cornell University.

[47] For an excellent analysis of army publications, see Roosa, "September 30th Movement," 25–49.

General Suharto may have been the intended beneficiary of the September 30th Movement.[48]

In the spring of 1967 George and Audrey Kahin, who had just married, traveled via Ceylon to Indonesia. Over the next two months, the Kahins had an extraordinarily busy schedule. They met with a wide range of high-level Indonesians, foreign diplomats (including Ambassador Green), and intellectuals (including Soedjatmoko, Rosihan Anwar, and Nugroho Notosusanto). Late in May, George Kahin made visits to army headquarters and the Army Staff and Command School in Bandung. He also visited Bandung's Padjadjaran University, where, while on stage in front of a large audience, it was announced, to his great surprise, that he would talk about the "Cornell Paper." He politely sidestepped the request, instead addressing the poor treatment of the ethnic Chinese at the time.[49]

Private discussions soon found their way into the press. On May 7, the army daily *Angkatan Bersendjata* ran an article, based on an interview with Nugroho Notosusanto, stating that the "Cornell Paper" was the primary source behind "the distortion of facts in connection with Gestapu/G30S and negative views of the New Order [regime]." Notosusanto expressed regret that there were still scholars in the United States who "worked dishonestly," citing articles by Dan Lev, Joseph Kraft, Lucien Rey, Philippe Devillers, and W. F. Wertheim. But he also noted approvingly that there were other authors who "did not provide analysis, but simply supported our [Indonesia's] position." Notosusanto, the article explained, had just departed with Colonel Saleh for the United States, where they hoped to explain the Communists' "treason" to the American government and people.[50]

Three days later, *Kompas* carried two articles about the "Cornell Paper." The first, which had the *Angkatan Bersendjata* (army daily) byline, though was, in fact, an entirely different write-up, reported that Kahin had told Nugroho Notosusanto the so-called "Cornell Paper" was not an official Cornell product at all and had been produced and circulated without Kahin's permission.[51] Moreover, the article further attributed to Kahin that "the tone of the paper was sarcastic and childish." Kahin may well have sought to distance himself and the Cornell Southeast Asia Program from fallout from Anderson and McVey's draft paper, but it is not conceivable that he would have called his students or their work "childish."[52] The second article, written by Rosihan Anwar, was titled "Sudisman (PKI) and that 'Cornell Paper.'"[53] Sudisman, the secretary general of the PKI, had been arrested on December 6, 1966, in Tomang, West Jakarta. He was the only member of the PKI Politburo who was not executed and he was due to go on trial in July 1967. Anwar, it appears, had seen a copy of *Preliminary Analysis*,

[48] Letter from Herb Feith to Kahin, McVey, and Anderson, dated April 6, 1968. I was unable to locate a copy of McVey's conference paper.

[49] Personal communication with Audrey Kahin, February 22, 2016.

[50] "'Cornell Paper' jang membela G 30 S," *Angkatan Bersendjata*, May 7, 1967.

[51] Onghokham introduced Anderson to Notosusanto in 1962 and the two became friends.

[52] This resulted in an exchange of letters between Kahin and Notosusanto. Kahin objected to Notosusanto's characterization, and in turn Notosusanto acknowledged the embellishment, but explained that it was intended to make it clear to readers that Kahin did not agree with Anderson and McVey's position. Correspondence in Kahin collection.

[53] H. Rosihan Anwar, "Sudisman (PKI) dan itu 'Cornell Paper,'" *Kompas*, May 10, 1967.

for he provided the correct date of release and number of pages. He commented that "the views and argumentation expressed in the 'Cornell Paper' turned out to have a long tail," by which he meant that Anderson and McVey's erroneous views had "spread" into the writings of various Indonesianists and journalists in the West.[54] Anwar lamented that, by replicating the views expressed in the "Cornell Paper," these experts on Indonesian had "ganged up" on the Indonesian army and "defended the PKI in the G30S affair."

What outraged Anwar was that some of the individuals he named were in Indonesia at the time. Anwar explained to his readers that Kahin had entered Indonesia in late April 1967, Herb Feith was at the time a visiting lecturer teaching political science at the University of Indonesia, and Donald Hindley, a professor at Brandeis University who in 1964 had published a book about the PKI, was in Indonesia for three months to conduct further research.[55] And Anderson arrived in Jakarta on the very day *Kompas* published these articles.[56] Having recently defended his dissertation, and *sans* job application or interview, he had been offered a position as an assistant professor in Cornell's government department. The trip should have been a well-deserved return to the land he loved and reunions with old friends. Instead, it became a chance for Anderson to learn firsthand the ravages of the military onslaught and the fate of acquaintances on the political left. Remarkably, Anwar's article did not create undue difficulties with the Indonesian authorities, and Anderson and Herb Feith were the only two foreigners to attend the trial of Communist Party secretary-general Sudisman.[57]

Debate over the "Cornell Paper" continued to simmer behind the scenes, and there was soon talk of a "kind of second Cornell paper."[58] After returning from Jakarta in early 1968, Herb Feith wrote to Kahin, McVey, Anderson, and Bunnell at Cornell. "Our good friend Guy [Pauker] has been it at again," he began. Pauker, Feith reported, had shown a copy of McVey's long paper on Lt. Col. Untung to a foreign graduate student, who in turn had asked Feith about it. Feith explained to his readers in Ithaca that while in Jakarta he was repeatedly asked "if it was true Cornell was now seeing Suharto as the *dalang* [puppet master] of the whole affair. I denied this strongly, saying that you, Ruth, had indeed held him to be the intended beneficiary in the original version of your Chicago thing, but that you had never advanced the notion of him being the *dalang* and that you had abandoned the intended beneficiary hypothesis

[54] Anwar's list of offending authors was longer than that in *Angkatan Bersendjata*: George Kahin, Donald Hindley, Daniel Lev, Herb Feith, W. F. Wertheim, Joseph Kraft, Lucien Rey, and Philippe Devillers. This resulted in a secondary brouhaha in the letters to the editor column over the next month, with Herb Feith protesting that he was not the author of an article Anwar had cited and Donald Hindley objecting on grounds that he had not written anything about either the September 30th Movement or the "Cornell Paper."

[55] Hindley and Kahin had roomed together in Jakarta in 1948–49, when Hindley was working as a journalist and Kahin was conducting research for his doctoral dissertation.

[56] Anwar's claim that Anderson arrived the same day the *Kompas* article appeared would seem strange if not for the fact that Kahin's personal diary has the written note "Ben" on that day.

[57] Anderson later received a smuggled copy of Sudisman's speech at the military tribunal, which he translated and published as "Analysis of Responsibility: Defence Speech of Sudisman, General Secretary of the Indonesian Communist Party at his Trial before the Special Military Tribunal, Jakarta, 21 July 1967" (Works Co-operative, Melbourne, 1975).

[58] Letter from Feith to Kahin et al., April 6, 1968, in Anderson collection.

in the final version …"[59] Pauker also made public statements refuting the "Cornell" thesis, which the press was only too eager to quote.[60]

"The other main problem," Feith continued, "is Brackman." The American journalist Arnold Brackman had made a career reporting from Asia and was keen to support Washington's Cold War cause. In early 1968 he set out for Jakarta, where he spent one month conducting interviews. The result of Brackman's short stay in Jakarta was a superficial Cold War version of events, published in 1969 as *The Communist Collapse in Indonesia*.[61] But the book did contain one revealing fact. In an interview, General Suharto told Brackman that on the night of September 30, 1965, he was at a hospital, where his son was being treated for burns from spilled soup. Suharto said that Colonel Abdul Latief had come to the hospital to check on him.[62] But for what? Suharto was not among the generals targeted by the September 30th Movement, so why would a participant in the plot feel a need to check on (or with) him only hours before operations began?

Publication of Brackman's book provided the pretext for the now infamous "Cornell Paper" to be featured in the Indonesian press. In 1969, the new tabloid *Minggu Chas* printed a four-part series of translations from Brackman's book with the title "The Cornell Paper." The author/translator began:

> A disturbing and bewildering aspect of the September 30th affair has been the apparent effort on the part of a group of Western academics. This small but extremely influential group has tried to "whitewash" (hide) the role of the communists and the role of Sukarno in the affair.[63]

The article rightly explained that the existence of the paper only became known after publication of Kraft's article in the *Washington Post*, and lamented the fact that many people had written to Cornell to request a copy but were told either that no

[59] Letter from Feith to Kahin et al.

[60] *Pikiran Rakjat*, February 20, 1968, quoted Pauker as saying: "These western scholars generally have an irrational sympathy for communism in the developing nations."

[61] Brackman claimed that he had been banned from the country by the Sukarno government; see *Communist Collapse*, 17. The CIA also sought to counter challenges to the official army version of events, and in December 1968 released *Indonesia 1965: The Coup that Backfired* (Washington, DC: CIA, 1968). For a revealing discussion, see Kahin, *Southeast Asia*, 179.

[62] Brackman, *Communist Collapse*, 100. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Suharto said that Latief had come to kill him, but had lost his nerve; see Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "Petrus Dadi Ratu," *Indonesia* 70 (2000): 1–7. Furthermore, in a speech on October 7, 1965, accounting for his actions against the September 30th Movement, Suharto made no mention of the fact that he had met with one of the movement's key actors only hours before the generals were killed. See "Pak Harto Menjelematkan: Negara dan Bangsa," *Sketsmasa* 1, 1969.

[63] "Kertas Cornell": Dari "The Communist Collapse in Indonesia," *Minggu Khas*, 1st Sunday of May 1970. This quotation has been slightly modified from Brackman, *Communist Collapse*, 175, to reflect the Indonesian translation. In interviews, Anderson recalls with delight another article published by the same newspaper in February 1972 with a headline "Cornell Scholars: Useful Idiots" ("Sardjana2 Cornell Ithaca: Orang2 tolol yang berguna," *Minggu Chas*, 3rd Sunday of February, 1972). *Chas* published a most-amusing follow-up the following month, titled, "Benedict R. O'G. Anderson nasibnja seperti Adamson" [Benedict R. O'G Anderson's fate is like that of Adamson], *Minggu Chas*, 3rd Sunday of March, 1972. The reference in the title appears to be to the sixteenth century Scottish theologian Patrick Adamson! After providing accurate biographies of Anderson and McVey, the article ended: "Completely unexpectedly, on March 2 a foreigner came to visit the *Chas* editorial room, and this turned out to be Ben Anderson. He met a staff person and asked to read the issues of *Chas* hanging on the newspaper rack. After reading *Chas* No. 148, which carried the exclusive article 'Cornell Scholars: Useful Idiots,' he slipped out undetected."

such paper existed or were sent a four-page summary titled "Hypotheses regarding the Origins of the Coup."[64] The introduction to the series noted:

> The manner in which the Cornell Paper was handled has raised many questions. Why wasn't the paper dealt with in the open manner that is routine at colleges and in academic quarters? Why was it treated as secret propaganda and turned into a political action document? Why did the paper's authors rush to clear the name of the PKI and Sukarno in terms of scholarship when their real motivation may have been ideological?[65]

The final chapter in the making of the "Cornell Paper" came in 1971–72. In the interest of setting the academic record straight, Kahin, Anderson, and McVey decided to publish *Preliminary Analysis*. On a visit to Jakarta in early 1971, Kahin informed the army's judge-advocate, General I. J. Kanter, and proposed that the Indonesian government prepare its own analysis so that the two could be published in a single volume. "He initially seemed enthusiastic at the idea," Kahin writes, "but there was not follow-up and presumably he was overruled by a higher authority."[66] So the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project went ahead with publication, with a two-page preface by Kahin (noting that Anderson and McVey intended to write a complete study of the events of October 1, 1965) and a four-page introduction by Anderson. "So that the record will be absolutely clear," Anderson wrote, "no attempt has been made to improve, update, or otherwise change the original text, even though, as a rough draft intended for circulation among close friends and colleagues, it contains some off-the-cuff remarks couched in an informal style which would be quite out of place in a regular academic presentation."[67]

The following year Anderson returned to Indonesia, but this time the authorities noted his presence and he was given two weeks to wrap up affairs before being deported.[68] The events of October 1, 1965, had not only precipitated a bloodbath that forever changed Indonesia; they also turned Anderson's world upside-down.[69]

Before considering whether Anderson's thinking about the September 30th Movement changed over time, it is worth reviewing the broader trajectory of his writings on Indonesia after he was banned.

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[64] "'Kertas Cornell': Dari 'The Communist Collapse in Indonesia (2),'" *Minggu Chas*, 2nd Sunday, May 1970, quoting Brackman, *Communist Collapse*, 179. The translation back into English provided here makes slight adjustments to the original to account for the Indonesian version.

[65] "'Kertas Cornell': Dari 'The Communist Collapse in Indonesia,'" *Minggu Chas*, 1st Sunday, May 1970.

[66] Kahin, *Southeast Asia*, 180.

[67] Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," in *Preliminary Analysis*, vi.

[68] According to McVey (personal communication, November 6, 2017), the key actor behind the decision to ban Anderson was an intelligence officer from Aceh named Teuku Hamzah, who, having been rebuffed during a visit to Cornell, used Anderson's case in a personal struggle with Admiral Widodo.

[69] Stephen Morris has suggested that the New Order response was not only to ban Anderson and McVey, but to make all "Cornell affiliates *personae non grata* in Indonesia." See Stephen J. Morris, "Ho Chi Minh, Pol Pot, and Cornell," *The National Interest* (Summer 1989): 49–62.

Indonesian Trajectories

Anderson once glossed his scholarship on Indonesia following the ban as essays on "history and literature."[70] Misleading as this may be, Anderson's scholarship has, in fact, often been reduced to a caricature.[71] At the risk of over-simplification, Anderson's writing on Indonesian can be divided into four streams.

The first is the direct product of his dissertation fieldwork on the revolutionary potential of youth during the early stages of the Indonesian revolution. This resulted in essays on Indonesian politics during the final year of the Japanese occupation, nationalist perceptions of Japan, the politics of rice, and cultural factors in the revolution, and culminated with the 1974 publication of his 1967 PhD dissertation as *Java in a Time of Revolution,* in the year he was expelled from Indonesia.[72] The second stream includes an eclectic range of essays on culture and political consciousness in Java and, in a few instances, Indonesia more broadly. Here we find, among others, a long, illustrated (and ill-timed) essay on "Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese" (1965), "The Language of Indonesian Politics" (1966), "Diachronic Field Notes on the Coronation Anniversary at the Kraton Surakarta" (1967), and his classic comparative essay "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" (1972), along with pieces on story-telling on painted scrolls (*wayang beber*) (1976), a Javanese millenarian movement (1977), and "Cartoons and Monuments" (1978).

The third stream of Anderson's scholarship on Indonesia, enabled by the Cornell journal he founded in the spring of 1966, concerns the Indonesian military and human rights. Here we find the translation of a number of key documents concerning the revolution and the military attack on the left in 1965–67, a long-running series of painstakingly detailed updates on who's who in the Indonesian military elite, scrupulous editorial work on Southeast Asia Program publications, and testimony before the US Congress and the United Nations on human rights in Indonesia and East Timor. Fourth, Anderson periodically translated and commented on Indonesian literature, particularly the short stories by Blora-born author Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who had the unfortunate distinction of being imprisoned by the Dutch during the revolution, then under Sukarno's Guided Democracy, and for fourteen years by Suharto's New Order.

Whatever improvement this typology may be over "history and literature," there are still items that simply do not fit. Of these, three are particularly revealing:

- "Perspective and Method in American Research on Indonesia," first drafted in 1971, rewritten and presented in 1973, but not published until 1982;

[70] Filomeno Aguilar, Caroline Hau, Vicente Rafael, and Teresa Tadem, "Benedict Anderson, Comparatively Speaking: On Area Studies, Theory, and 'Gentlemanly' Polemics," *Philippine Studies* 59, 1 (2011): 112.

[71] In a reflection on his intellectual formation, Anderson has encouraged this view; see Benedict Anderson, "Frameworks of Comparison," *London Review of Books*, January 21, 2016.

[72] See, all by Benedict Anderson: *Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944–1945* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1961); "The Problem of Rice," *Indonesia* 2 (October 1966): 77–82; "Japan the Light of Asia," in *Southeast Asia in World War II: Four Essays,* ed. Josef Silverstein (New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1966); "Cultural Factors in the Indonesian Revolution," *Asia* 20 (Winter 1971–72): 48–65; and "The Pemuda Revolution: Indonesian Politics, 1945–1946" (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1967), published as *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).

- "Last Days of Indonesia's Suharto," published in 1978; and
- "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective," published in 1983.[73]

At first glance, these articles could not be more different. "Perspective and Method" is a blistering attack on fellow Indonesianists for unselfconsciously adopting and perpetuating Cold War perspectives with regard to the Indonesian polity and its place in the world. "Last Days" is an overly optimistic analysis of fissures in the coalition that brought the New Order to power and premature prediction of Suharto's political demise. The third, "Old State, New Society," beyond the title's playful admonition of Clifford Geertz,[74] is a call to see continuity, rather than rupture, in the state(s) that ruled the Netherlands Indies, post-independence Indonesia, and the Suharto's New Order.

But there are also key commonalities that suggest we view these works as a trilogy of sorts, and an important one at that. In sharp contrast to the works in the four streams outlined above, these three articles are all directly concerned with the state. Particularly revealing is that they were written at regular intervals that correspond precisely to the Indonesian electoral cycle—with national legislative elections held in 1971, 1977, and 1982 (and the supra-legislature's rote reappointment of Suharto early the following years). Each addresses the relationship between the ideals that animated the revolution and the structures of authority and power that took hold in and over Indonesia. Furthermore, and of special importance to our story, these essays also reveal how the combination of time and new intellectual endeavors provided Anderson with fresh perspectives on the military takeover of 1965 and the terrible mass violence that ensued.

In "Perspective and Method," Anderson contrasted the combination of anticolonial liberalism and the historical method, which characterized the Kahinian tradition, with that of imperial liberalism and the comparative method, which were the hallmarks of modernization theory in the 1950–60s.[75] Different though they were, Anderson argued that both approaches were ultimately state-centric, seeing the exercise of state power as the fundamental issue. "In Kahin's eyes," Anderson wrote, "Sjahrir and the young intellectuals around him were as progressive as they were practical and moderate. They were more likely than any other group to be able to marshal the combination of realism and vigor which would be needed to carry out the extensive program of socio-economic changes on which Kahin thought the new state would have to embark." In contrast, and adopting a perspective from on high, Anderson noted in passing "the profound domestic consequences for a weak state of its 'relationship' to a hegemonic

[73] All by Benedict Anderson: "Perspective and Method in American Research on Indonesia," in *Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, ed. Benedict Anderson and Audrey Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Interim Reports Publication 62, 1982), 69–83; "The Last Days of Indonesia's Suharto?" *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 63 (July–August 1978): 2–17; and "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, 3 (1983): 477–96.

[74] Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

[75] The companion piece to this is Anderson's "Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies," in *The Study of Thailand: Analysis of Knowledges, Approaches, and Prospects in Anthropology, Art, History, Economics, and Political Science*, ed. Eliezer B. Ayal (Athens: Ohio State University Center for International Studies, 1978), 193–247.

one."[76] Reflecting both his dissertation on radical youth in the revolution and the tragic counter-revolution of 1965–68, Anderson clearly sided with those who "sought to remove themselves from, or radically alter" their position in the global political economy.[77] Here is Anderson's insistence on placing the object of study within what, as we will see, he would later call "a world history in the continuous making."

Indeed, one of the criticisms of *Preliminary Analysis* was that, in honing in on the cultural origins of the perpetrators and friction within the military, Anderson and McVey had largely neglected the international context. For Anderson, this omission presented a double challenge. Not only was there a need for greater attention to the interests and actions of Washington, London, Moscow, Peking, Tokyo, and Canberra, to name only the most obvious players; but it was also necessary to explore how the many actors at play in 1965 understood themselves and the global context in which they were embedded. In a letter to McVey in 1971, in which he told her about his decision not to publish "Perspective and Method," he went on to discuss their plans for a coauthored book about 1965.

> … my thinking has shifted a bit, and I now have an idea of an approach to the book which may or may not work/interest you. Rather than the conical structure we had posited earlier, starting with the general outlines of post-1945 history and zeroing in on the coup, I wondered if one couldn't move in the reverse direction … It seems to me that one of the unique things about the trials … is that you have a detailed record of what Indonesian political actors actually said about themselves, their friends and enemies, their hopes, their pasts, the issues that they worried about, etc.[78]

The "new" approach Anderson was suggesting was essentially an elaboration of what McVey had already begun to do in 1967 with her 140-page, unpublished paper "A Preliminary Excursion through the Small World of Lt. Col. Untung." Whereas McVey's primary aim still lay with establishing the facts and accountability, Anderson wanted to situate the mental universes of the actors within the orbit of not only local and national politics, but also the international context.

Where "Perspective and Method" called for viewing the Indonesian state within the "world system" of global capitalism, "Last Days" searched from below for cracks in the New Order edifice.[79] The argument, simply put, is that the political coalition that had brought Suharto to power and sustained the New Order through its first decade was showing signs of breaking up. For an article squarely concerned with the coalition on which Suharto's state rested, it is remarkable to find that the word "state" is almost entirely absent. Instead, the key analytical terms shift from Suharto's "government" downward to the disaggregated constituent elements of the Weberian state: bureaucracy, state administration, legal apparatus, security forces, state-owned enterprises, and even state universities, and upward from the person of the president

[76] Anderson, "Perspective and Method," 131, n. 28.

[77] Anderson, "Perspective and Method," 121.

[78] Letter from Anderson to McVey, August 28, 1971, in Anderson personal collection.

[79] The comparative companion to "Last Days," published a year earlier, is Anderson's "Withdrawal Symptoms: Social and Cultural Aspects of the October 6 Coup," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 9 (1977): 13–30, about the democratic opening and reactionary crackdown in Thailand in 1973–76.

to the "regime" (or formal as well as informal rules set for political behavior). The reason for the absence of any serious discussion of the state as such is that, as Anderson put it, after 1965 "the army [was] in full control of the state."[80] Yet Anderson's great hope was that, in the context of tensions within the army and between the army and Suharto's inner circle, "it may be tempting for some military officer to try to put together a new coalition, by coup, assassination, or other means."[81] Over the years Anderson took delight in agitation and propaganda, what he called "agitprop."

The writing of "Last Days" was heavily influenced by two new developments. After months of meddling and cross-border incursions, in early December 1975 the Indonesian military invaded Portuguese Timor, with horrifying consequences. As an expert on the Indonesian military, eleven days after the invasion Anderson was in Washington, DC, to testify before the US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations. The second development involved efforts by Indonesia to woo its critics. In 1974, General Sugondo had visited Cornell, and in fall 1975, as Indonesian forces were massing for the invasion, generals Ali Murtopo and Benny Moerdani, both holding high-level intelligence positions, came to Cornell to reeducate Kahin and his students regarding the September 30th Movement. A year later, the Indonesian army made further, coordinated approaches to Ithaca and London. A team of three generals, a colonel, and a major arrived in Ithaca, where they held closed seminars with Anderson, Kahin, Feith, and Bunnell, and delivered twenty of the voluminous transcripts from the military trials. Murtopo and Moerdani also led a visit to the London School of Economics for discussions with leading experts on Southeast Asia, to which McVey was invited.

Following the seminar in Ithaca, Anderson sent a cryptic message to McVey: "we had some longish talks after they [Indonesian military officers] had gone, and are increasingly convinced that the coup paper is way off base in a very peculiar way, and absolutely right in another."[82] McVey's response was a four-page spoof, arguing that the only plausible explanation for the warm meetings between representatives of the military regime in Jakarta and its foreign academic critics (all with links to Cornell) is that "the two sides are not, in fact, in contest but in collusion"! A separate sheet included a hand-drawn Venn diagram showing the links among the authors, fellow Cornellians, and the Cornell Paper, and the Indonesian state intelligence agency, CSIS, and the 1965 "coup." At the top of the page, Indonesian spy chief Ali Murtopo is depicted as a cunning spider, and at the bottom the caption reads: "The tangled web, or is Ali Murtopo the real author of the Cornell Paper?"[83]

By the time the 1982–83 Indonesian election cycle rolled around, it had been a full decade since Anderson last set foot in the country and the New Order had settled into a comfortably numb normalcy. In one sense, Anderson's response was now to hone in on the often-overlooked but critical word in Weber's definition of the state—the *continuous* nature of the apparatus(es) of power—and explore continuity in the states

[80] "Last Days of Indonesia's Suharto?" 14.

[81] "Last Days of Indonesia's Suharto?" 14.

[82] Letter from Anderson to McVey, late 1976, in Anderson collection.

[83] Letter from McVey to "Chief," December 9, 1976, in Anderson collection.

that ruled over modern Indonesia. In another sense, his response was to out-Marx the admittedly small body of Marxist scholarship on Indonesia.[84] Reacting to what he called "the unresolved" neo-Marxist debates over the postcolonial state in Asia and Africa and appeals to the relative autonomy of the state, Anderson drew inspiration from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Napoleon*, in which Marx sought "to explain … circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part."[85] Anderson's explanation lies less in the particular class basis of Bonaparte's rule than in the circumstances under which the state could emerge unfettered by a (domestic) ruling class. Marx wrote:

> Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent. The state machinery has so strengthened itself vis-à-vis civil society that the Chief of the Society of December 10 suffices for its head—an adventurer dropped in from abroad, raised on the shoulders of a drunken soldiery which he bought with whisky and sausages and to which he has to keep throwing more sausages.[86]

The parallels with Indonesia were all too obvious. Where Richard Robison and other Marxists sought to specify the class-basis of Suharto's rule, Anderson wanted to highlight the circumstances that allowed state power to become unhinged from specific (domestic) class interests and influence. His answer lay in the *continuous* lineage of the state and its growing *bureaucratic* power over societal forces.

In 1983, around the time *Imagined Communities* was published, Anderson began work on a new book project about Indonesia.[87] When I was in my senior year at Cornell he gave me two or three draft chapters to read that focused, as I recall, on the Netherlands in European dynastic politics. At the time, he said something about those being chapters from a project he had abandoned. The first chapter was a dizzying discussion of the House of Orange in European dynastic marital politics, the early Dutch Republic, the puppet kingdom given to Louise Bonaparte, and the fateful year 1830, during which Belgium split from the Netherlands and the Cultivation System was introduced in Java.[88] It was not until years later that I began to understand the multiple coordinates that informed the drafts I had read. For one thing, that project was Anderson's response to "history from below," which, from its origins in the work of George Rudé and Eric Hobsbawm, had made its entry into Southeast Asian Studies through an influential essay by John Smail.[89] For another, it was modeled on the *New*

[84] Vedi Hadiz, by contrast, takes Anderson literally, as meaning that there is a struggle between "state" and "nation," and so sees Anderson's analysis as hopelessly non-Marxist. See Vedi Hadiz, *Politik, Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1992), 97.

[85] Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumair of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, ed, Robert C. Tucker (New York/London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 595.

[86] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumair of Louis Bonaparte," 595.

[87] Precise dating of this project will have to await access to Anderson's complete archive, but I would hazard a guess that he began this shortly after the publication of his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983) and "Old State, New Society."

[88] Anderson gave me these chapters in 1988. This is the same project as the "forthcoming book on the history of Indonesian State and Society" mentioned in the bibliography at the end of Vedi Hadiz's thoughtful reflections on Anderson's scholarship, *Politik, Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial*, 176.

[89] John Smail, "On the Possibility of Autonomous History of Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, 2 (1961): 72–102.

Left Review "theses," a series of articles by Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn in 1964–65 that drew on Gramsci, then largely unknown in the English-speaking world, to reexamine British social formation. This project was, in other words, Anderson's attempt to view Indonesia through the "inverted telescope" of imperialism and comparative colonialism. A single fragment, preserved in the work of Vedi Hadiz, provides an intriguing glimpse into Anderson's aims:

> In a sense, the old colonial scholars were not wholly wrong in seeing the history of Indonesia as originating in Holland; rather they were mistaken in comfortably imagining themselves at the forefront end of a history which encompassed only themselves and the colony. Both the Netherlands and Indonesia are equally parts of a world history in the continuous making. In this sense, both "Europe-" and "Indonesia-" centric perspectives are, it seems to me, either misleading or beside the point.[90]

This was not a generic call for so-called world-systems theory; rather, Anderson was interested in the specific characteristics of colonizers and colonized as they figured in a global network of economic relations and political power. By the early nineteenth century, the Netherlands was a minor European country that, in the context of European dynastic politics, benefited from British imperial protection and trade policies. At the same time—in contrast to Portugal, which had anachronistically retained widespread colonies; Spain, which was losing valuable American possessions; Britain, on whose empire the sun never set; and France, which was quickly acquiring a global presence of its own—the Netherlands had a single massively valuable colony, the Netherlands East Indies. In this regard it was similar to Belgium, though it enjoyed a three-century head start and far more favorable indigenous political structures and agricultural output. The abandoned book project would have laid out the economic and sociological trajectories, over the longue durée, of state and nation, and specifically the forces that led to the savage attack in 1965–66 and the "icy institutional violence" of Suharto's New Order.[91]

The reasons Anderson abandoned his writings on Indonesia within a "world history in the continuous making" are not known, but there are several obvious candidates. The growing fame of *Imagined Communities* and the ever-increasing number of speaking engagements kept him extremely busy. Anderson also served on an enormous number of graduate committees—at one point commenting to me in his nearly barren basement office in Cornell's McGraw Hall that he would soon hit the one-hundred mark. And there was his long exile from Indonesia. In a 1990 letter from Manila, he lamented:

> I guess I should add in all honesty that after close to 19 years banishment from Indonesia I am pretty out of touch. I know there is a sort of time-lag in these things and people, especially in Indonesia, may still think of me as an Indonesian Honcho, but it's in good part now an illusion. That, and being in opposition. If there were only some others, aside from Dan Lev, who stuck

[90] Quoted in Hadiz, *Politik, Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial*, 161. Hadiz views this as representing "almost a complete break from [Anderson's] previous works, including those that made the greatest contribution to the study of Indonesian politics."

[91] Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2001), 13.

> their necks out even the tiniest bit—but our Indonesianists are, frankly, a fairly cowardly lot—honorable exceptions there are, of course. This is only to explain why people still often expect a lot from Cornell.[92]

Unanswered Questions

In early 1998 the combination of a financial crisis and El Niño brought the Indonesian economy to its knees, and elite self-preservation emboldened student demonstrators to take to the streets, and eventually to occupy the roof of parliament. With this, after thirty-two long years, Suharto abdicated the presidency on May 21. It was thus in the context of economic collapse and hopes for a political transition that Anderson quietly reentered Indonesia for the first time since 1972. The following year, on the occasion of *Tempo* magazine's twentieth anniversary, he delivered a keynote speech at the Hotel Borobudur, with the title "Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future." The first half of the speech followed his 1983 article "Old State, New Society" rather closely; the second half was an impassioned call for reviving the "common project" of the nation and admonition of national leaders for representing a continuation of Indonesia's "Dry-rot Order" (a term coined by Anderson for Suharto's "New Order" that was first introduced in this speech).[93]

Anderson's return to Indonesia gave him the opportunity to see old friends, meet a new generation of writers and activists, travel openly, and even start new research. But there were also unresolved questions that Anderson was intent to pursue. "After Harto's fall," he wrote,

> wasn't there a responsibility to use the new opportunities to talk with people who had been silenced for three decades and discover what they could say about the abiding mystery of October 1, 1965? By 1999, the "Cornell Paper" was thirty-three years old. How far could one still say it was at least closer to the truth than the pile of paper issued by the late Titular Brigadier-General Nugroho Notosusanto and his staff?[94]

An opportunity presented itself almost immediately. At the time of Suharto's resignation, while many rushed to accuse Suharto of corruption, there was also an outpouring of publications and translations about the history of the Left in Indonesia and critical reappraisals of Suharto's rise to power. Col. Abdul Latief, who was one of the central actors in the September 30th Movement, and the only one not to be executed, was of particular interest.[95] When Latief's defense statement from 1979 was published as a book, Anderson was asked to write a review. According to Latief, Anderson writes, Suharto "was fully briefed beforehand, by Latief himself, on the

[92] Letter from Anderson to Douglas Kammen, October 21, 1990.

[93] An English translation of the speech, which Anderson had delivered in flawless Indonesian, was published in both the *New Left Review* I/235 (May–June 1999) and *Indonesia* 67 (April 1999), 1–11. Three years later, on his first and only visit to Timor-Leste, Anderson gave a very similar talk at Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosae, calling on students to see sacrifice rather than personal opportunity as the order of the day.

[94] Anderson, "The World of Sergeant-Major Bungkus: Introduction," *Indonesia* 78 (October 2004): 1.

[95] See, for example: "Pengakuan Kol. Latief: Soeharto terlibat G30S," *Adil*, September 29, 1998; and P. Fitradjaja and B. Setiawan, *Keterlibatan Soeharto dalam G30S* (Surabaya: Pusdikaron, 1998).

Council of General's plotting of Sukarno's overthrow and on the September 30th Movement's plans for preventative action."[96] And yet Suharto did nothing to inform his superiors. It is this line of analysis that received center stage in several subsequent essays.[97]

Anderson's acceptance of Latief's account appears to represent a sharp departure in Anderson's thinking. Where *Preliminary Analysis* had argued that the September 30th Movement was a limited, internal army affair, Anderson now seemed to accept that Suharto had full prior knowledge of the conspirators' plan, which, at the very least, suggests Suharto did not expressly oppose the attempted coup. But had Anderson's thinking really changed—and, if so, when did this happen? Asked in 1996 whether he still stood by the account in *Preliminary Analysis*, Anderson said that he remained certain that President Sukarno had not been involved in the movement, but that the PKI, which was not the brains behind it, may have been drawn into the plot. In 2001, however, he told a journalist that "what was missing from the 'Cornell Paper' was the sense that the whole thing was manipulated from the top by Suharto, which I think is probably what really happened." And in a brief interview in Indonesia in 2012, Anderson prefaced his response by saying that his memory was failing and went on to explain that his position had shifted from being "certain" to "agnostic" about *Preliminary Analysis*.[98] The problem is that the question itself is misleading because it seeks to freeze Anderson's thinking in time, obscuring the fact that Anderson and McVey continued to pursue the matter and that their thinking had already undergone a number of changes in the years immediately after *Preliminary Analysis* was written.

The irony, of course, is that Latief's account is compatible with McVey's sleuthing into the links between the conspirators and Suharto in 1966–67. Her 1967 conference paper made the case that Suharto was the intended beneficiary of the September 30th Movement. Latief insisted that he informed Suharto about the movement's plans on the night of September 30, but never specified whether Suharto expressed agreement with the conspirators or offered his support. For Latief, who had languished in prison under horrifying circumstances, the point was that Suharto, despite his foreknowledge, had not taken action to protect his superiors and thus was also guilty. For Anderson, Latief's account was evidence that Suharto had manipulated the situation so that not only could he play the hero's role on October 1, but he could also destroy the PKI, emasculate Sukarno, and install himself as king.

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[96] Ben Anderson, "'Petrus Dadi Ratu,'" *Tempo*, April 10–16, 2000. This was republished as "Petrus Dadi Ratu," *New Left Review* 3 (2000): 5–15; and "Petrus Dadi Ratu," *Indonesia* 70 (October 2000): 1–7.

[97] See "The World of Sergeant-Major Bungkus: Two Interviews with Benedict Anderson and Arief Djati," *Indonesia* 78 (October 2004): 7–60, esp. 37–38. Bungkus recounts asking Latief about Suharto, and Latief stating that, as written in his defense plea, he had informed Suharto of the movement's plan. Anderson's title is clearly intended to echo McVey's aforementioned "Small World" manuscript. See also Benedict Anderson, "Exit Suharto: Obituary for a Mediocre Tyrant," *New Left Review* 50 (2008): 33, where Latief tells Anderson that he felt "betrayed" by Suharto's role in crushing the movement.

[98] These positions are from Ben Anderson, "Tentang Pembunuhan Massal '65"; Scott Sherman, "A Return to Java," *Lingua Franca* 11, 7 (October 2001); and "Ben Anderson, G30S dan Cornell Paper," *Pemuda Demokrat Indonesia*.