

# To this day

Business



There have been a number of massacres throughout history, none of which have ever been held in a positive regard. As the world began to move into the connected age, large scale massacres have become less common amongst modern nations, though they still occur in many less developed countries. Today it is considered a war crime and an act that has been deemed unacceptable for nearly a century. The Indonesian Massacre of 1965 is a crime that, to this day, has not received, the rightful recognition that it deserves, from the rest of the world for the atrocity that it was. In 1965 a failed coup, supposedly staged by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), left many of the Indonesian's generals dead except for one: Suharto. Stopping the coup within 24 hours, Suharto claimed the coup was the working of the PKI, though there was no evidence to indicate it was a PKI plot.

For his effort against the coup and because he was one of the only prominent political figures left, Suharto came into power and gave military authority to movie theater gangsters. The crimes of these gangsters had only previously consisted of scalping movie theater tickets for little to no profit. With control over his newly acquired "military forces", Suharto ordered the killing over half a million members of the PKI (Cribb).

Undemocratic shifts in power are not uncommon among third world countries especially with the unstable state of political alliances during the Cold War era. While forceful shifts in government authority can be seen as a social injustice in itself, this particular shift in power should not be overlooked, as it played a key role in allowing a greater social injustice to occur.

The injustice being that Indonesia called itself a democracy yet allowed Suharto to come into power without the consent of the people or any government officials. However, the more prominent social injustice was the actual killing of more than half a million innocent Indonesian citizens. Killing, in any form, is rarely justified by any means, but the massacre extended to innocent people who had no part in the supposed coup. Members of the PKI were often tortured to get them to confess information. Given the circumstances the victim gave up the information to appease the torturer and it was usually not even accurate or useful information.

They were then killed in a brutal fashion that was derived from the sadistic mind of man who held the communists in the lowest regard. (Oppenheimer). Methods such as this were used in the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century, yet this event happened only fifty years ago. Village raids were also common in the massacre. Most likely having no idea of Suharto's rise to power or the failed coup, many of them may not even have considered themselves to be part of the PKI party, but were still killed without mercy. They did not die because they believed in something or because they fought for a cause.

They died because soldiers, who were put into command without any formal training, decided that they deserved to be executed because of a crime they did not commit. This crime has echoed into the modern world because the criminals who committed them have not yet been punished. In fact, they are held in the highest regard in their country. A prominent group in the massacre known as the Pancasila Youth are cheered on and treated as heroes as they march through the streets (Oppenheimer). The fact that this group

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still exists is a troubling thought in itself, but the way that they are treated in Indonesia is almost incomprehensible. This group is still recruiting young impressionable kids today who are told the glorified version of the massacre that their leaders once had a part in.

Even after the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998, the current president has no plans to make amends to the victims of the massacre effectively telling them to forget about it (Asia Sentinel). The government's complete disregard for their inaction against Suharto is something that should not be allowed in the modern world, and has not even been addressed foreign superpowers .. The most disturbing injustice is the United States' direct involvement in the massacre. A study by Brad Simpson, Assistant professor of history and international studies at Princeton University, suggests that " the US and Britain did ' everything in their power' to ensure that the Indonesian armies would carry out the mass killings." (Braddock).

Meaning that the U. S directly funded Suharto's party during the time that he ordered the killings. The support for the communist killings is most likely due to the Cold War and the U. S hostilities to all communists. To this day the U. S refuses to acknowledge and make amends for the direct aid of the crimes against the Indonesian people.

There is no one to come to the aid of the victims and the criminals still allowed to continue on with their lives unpunished for the atrocities they committed. Everything about the events of Indonesia in 1965 can be considered an injustice. From the shift in power to the brutal murder of countless innocent citizens and the effect it had on the country in the coming

years. Considering how much time has passed, it would be difficult to give retribution to the criminals, but it is never too late to give compensation to the victims of these horrible crimes. It is the duty of the United States as a country to aid those affected by the massacre. The Indonesian Massacre of 1965 is an event that was buried by history, and even if it is not the duty of a person to be punished for a crime they didn't commit, it is still important that it is exposed for the world to see.

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