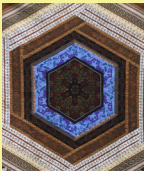


**CHRISTEN J.
GRORUD**
1979-2016

Memories of Chris

Compiled by the Southeast Asia Center in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington



Chris's mother, Caryl, designed the quilt on the cover for him in 2014. She made it using textiles he collected from each of the islands he visited in Indonesia.

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Christen J. Grorud

Remembered by Laurie J. Sears

I first met Chris Grorud in person when he came out to visit the University of Washington in spring '07 after he was accepted into the History department's MA program for Fall 2007. We had spoken on the phone once or twice and I was very eager to have him as a student. I knew his project was both long overdue for the field and that he had the skills to carry it out. His letters from Wisconsin where he had received an MA in Southeast Asian Studies were glowing. Professor Thongchai Winichakul was a bit saddened that Chris had not found the Wisconsin program a good place for him to continue. But there was no Indonesian historian at Wisconsin, and Chris knew he wanted to be an historian. He came to the University of Washington to study with me, and I became his academic advisor. Over the years, Chris and I became very close, more like friends or even family, I would say, as we worked through the best ways to set Chris on the path he had chosen for himself as an expert in Indonesian history and culture.

By 2014, Chris had gained extensive experience living in Indonesia, on Java as well as the outer islands, and he spoke Indonesian at the advanced level and a few other Indonesian languages to various degrees. Chris possessed field research experiences in both urban and rural settings. He was selected for the Transparency in Development Project, a

two-year pre-doctoral research fellowship that was sponsored by the Health Sciences programs at Harvard University and the University of Washington. Chris was chosen because of his extensive knowledge of Indonesia, his Indonesian language skills, and his previous fieldwork on the Indonesian Revolution in Ambarawa, Central Java.

Chris' focus on re-thinking the Indonesian Revolution for his doctoral research was both timely and important. He started out looking at early formations of the Indonesian nation's political system and the political figures important in the new nation's formation. In his last two years in the graduate program, his research had broadened out to look at the gendered construction of the young revolutionaries or pemuda—male youth—especially in Central Java (the major island of Indonesia that holds over 50% of the country's population). The work had grown into an exciting PhD proposal that would have combined oral histories, theoretical studies of history, trauma, and memory, and the delicate balance between elite diplomats and rural revolutionary youth. After the exciting work of George Kahin, Benedict Anderson, John Smail, and others in the 1950s and 1960s, most scholars of Indonesia have ignored the Revolutionary period of the late 1940s. There have been chapters in books by James Siegel and

Rudolph Mrazek, studies of the Revolution from outside of Java by Audrey Kahin and others, and one new study of the Revolution from a social history, gendered, and anthropological perspective, Mary Steedly's *Rifle Reports*, which looks at stories of the Revolution from North Sumatra. Chris knew that the time was ripe for a re-thinking of the Revolution in Java as new ideas about nationalism and revolution have appeared over the past two decades. Most followers of Indonesian politics are aware of the frustrations and disappointments of the post authoritarian Reformasi period, 1998-2001, when the great hopes that Indonesians and Indonesianists had for the nation fell apart with the early end of the Abdurrahman Wahid presidency in 2001. But scholarly work in history in Indonesia opened up in 1998 for the first time in 32 years and continues to expand and deepen. Chris' topic was right on target with the recent interest in relations between the postcolonial nation and the colonial state and continuing debates over the tensions between regionalism and nationalism in 21st century Indonesia. He was very aware of the limitations of looking at the Revolution from the political center, and this explains his move away from the view from Jakarta to interviewing surviving members of the early years of the nation and its Revolution in Central Java, people who might now finally be allowed to tell their stories.

Chris Grorud was a brilliant and dedicated student. Because of his Indonesian language command, he had been using Indonesian sources for his research over the past five years. In addition to his research on the

Revolution, he had been reading relevant Indonesian literature in the original and in translation and exploring methodologies for using oral histories to gather testimonies about the Revolution. Chris and our Indonesian Senior Lecturer Desiana Pauli Sandjaja spent a year reading a very challenging novel by one of Indonesia's best authors, Ayu Utami. The novel was difficult even for Indonesian readers, but Chris and Bu Pauli were determined to understand every word.



Chris' decision to carry out research in Central Java also required him to learn Javanese, a language as different from Indonesian as French is from Portuguese. The lack of Javanese language hampered his preliminary research and made him aware of the need to do interviewing in Javanese. I strongly supported his plans to go to Central Java in 2012 and enroll at Satya Wacana University in Salatiga to study Javanese and to visit the Central Javanese city of Solo, reputed to be the

site of excellence for the command of the higher, more polite and hierarchical, levels of Javanese language. Chris had an original mind and was becoming an excellent scholar producing field-changing work. He took his MA exams in History in Spring 2011 and advanced to the PhD program. His PhD committee included Professors Vicente Rafael for theories of nationalism, Christoph Giebel for comparative work on revolution in Viet Nam, and Professor Francisco “Kiko” Benitez, a scholar of Indonesian and Filipino Comparative Literature and Film.

Chris was also an excellent teacher. He was generous with his fellow graduate students and both rigorous and compassionate in undergraduate classrooms. When he was my TA for the first time in Spring 2011, I had the opportunity to observe his teaching and was very impressed. His skills at gently guiding the students to discover for themselves new ways of looking at problems was a learning experience for me. He gently explained his questions in several different forms until the students saw a variety of ways to approach the topics under discussion. I looked forward to the time when he could begin to teach his own classes.

Chris’ research topic leads into debates that are filling U.S. and global newspapers every day as nations emerge from brutal postcolonial military rule. I looked forward to each of his research papers and to his dissertation. He was the only student who managed to spend hours with the late Benedict Anderson during Anderson’s recent visit to UW as a Danz Lecturer because Anderson was so interested in Chris’s research. He became a fine scholar and seemed destined to play an important role

in shaping Indonesian history in the 21st century. Chris was very comfortable in Indonesia and with Indonesians of all walks of life. The opportunity to spend a year or so in rural Indonesia working with the Transparency for Development Project was very appealing to him. He was an excellent fit for the needs of the Transparency for Development Project.

After spending a year and a half working for the Transparency in Development Project, Chris decided that he would prefer to live in Jakarta where he had close friends and where he had recently secured a highly desirable job working for the Jakarta International School (JIS) as a history teacher. This was the perfect fit for Chris. He could share his love and knowledge of Indonesia with high school students and continue to carry out research in Jakarta and Central Java on school vacations. Sadly, this future was unable to unfold. Illness took Chris Grorud from us tragically and unexpectedly in January of 2016. He is sorely missed by all of us who came to love, laugh, and learn from this amazing young man.

Laurie J. Sears

Walker Family Endowed Professor of History
Director, Southeast Asia Center

Pamit dulu

Remembered by Micaela Campbell

From 2014 to 2015, Chris worked on a pilot project for rural maternal health that was jointly sponsored by Harvard University and the University of Washington’s Health Sciences Program. He was living in Banten province at the same time Lee, Hilah, and I were in Jakarta. He came to see us quite a few times during those months. It wasn’t until he arranged to have us go visit him that I realized the huge effort he put into getting to Jakarta. Geographically, it wasn’t that far but it was the rainy season and once off the main highway the road was mostly potholes and

boulders and mud. Every time he wanted to make a call or send an email, he’d have to go down this road about three miles just to get patchy Internet and cell phone reception.

In this picture (next page) we are standing on the path beside the house that Chris was renting from an elderly couple in the village. He could have lived more comfortably elsewhere but he chose to stay here because he wanted his rent money to go to the family in the most need. The mountain Chris told the story of climbing for his 36th birthday is peeking

“I think most of Chris’s fellow graduate students have memories of being at Shultz’s with him at one time or another. Beer, bratwurst and fries, and campus adjacent. We would often end up here after a seminar class or a Southeast Asia Center event. This is Chris sitting in the front booth at Shultz’s on a spring afternoon in 2011.”



Photo and memory from
Micaela Campbell.

through the mist in the background. Our plan that day was just to have a short visit and then he would come back with us to Jakarta. But nothing happens quickly or according to plan when it comes to life in rural Indonesia. Chris, being the gracious and conscientious guest that he was, made sure to introduce us to everyone and to “pamit dulu” (ask for permission) before he left.

We spent the next hours walking through the village, meeting his various neighbors and the village leaders, being invited onto

porches and into living rooms to sit on mats and drink cups of sweet tea and eat platefuls of gorengan. It seemed like

everything about that pilot project was a challenge but it was a pleasure to watch Chris that day as he moved through all the formalities and settled effortlessly into the lighthearted banter of everyday conversation that unfolds between people at ease in one another's company.

Micaela Campbell
PhD Candidate
Department of History



Chris, Hillah and Micaela in Banten.

“Chris was a wonderful student, incredibly dedicated to his study of Indonesia. He was a pleasure to work with on projects at the Southeast Asia Center. I especially remember one time that Chris ran a class for me while I was out of town. He showed a film and led a discussion on the events of ‘65 in Indonesia. He was very humble and imagined that it was not successful, but I learned otherwise from the undergraduates and graduates who appreciated how he led the discussion. I would have trusted no other student to lead such a sensitive conversation. He wrote me, “We talked

about how the lines between victim and perpetrator are not always clear, but no one seemed sympathetic toward those who were coerced into participating in the killings.” He then described how he tried to teach the students that Americans have skeletons in the closet as well, giving the example of racial segregation. I know that he made a great impression on the students that day, and I was very appreciative of his work.”

Celia Lowe
Associate Professor of Anthropology

Bread and Sasquatch

Remembered by Allan Lumba



There's a somewhat long story behind this piece of bread. Before our trip to the Sasquatch festival, we were disappointed to find out that once we entered for the day, we couldn't return to our camp. Which meant that if we wanted to eat or drink anything we had packed, we had to carry it into the concert area. This meant that we would have to pay outrageous prices for any sort of alcohol (think \$12 for a can of bud light). Chris Grorud and I had asked Micaela Campbell for advice on how to sneak in a bottle of whiskey. She told us that we could hide it in a loaf of bread. Geniuses that we were we cut a hole on one end of the loaf, painfully hollowed it out, and attempted to stuff the bottle in. It was

quite a mess but it eventually worked. (By the way for future reference, we did it incorrectly, saw off the top part of a loaf and hollow it out to place the bottle inside. Don't be dummies like us and try and do it from the end of a loaf). Everyday, for three days, we hid the bottle of whiskey in the same loaf of bread. For most of these three days at the Gorge, it was the typical kind of weather you'd see, overcast with intermittent showers. Nothing too crazy, but fairly miserable if you weren't already used to the climate in the Pacific Northwest. As you can see Chris is wearing multiple layers, like a great outdoorsman. On this day, however, the sun surprised all of us in the afternoon. At this time, the band playing on the main stage was MGMT. Chris and I liked to make fun of MGMT fans--pretty much anyone wearing mall-style "bohemian" clothing (for instance a southwestern motif of feathers, turquoise, day-glo). We would faux cheer after every song with shouts of "THE MANAGEMENTS!" a nod to a joke on hipster runoff. By this time the whiskey was finished and the bread was extremely stale and we figured it was inedible. Since it was the last day, and we no longer



Joseph Bernardo, Allan Lumba, Balbir Singh, and Jon Olivera with Chris at Allan and Balbir's wedding.

had any need for our "covert" loaf, I dared Chris to eat it. So what you see captured here is Chris being Chris, never one to let common sense get in the way of a funny bit. Don't worry, he didn't eat more than a bite.

Allan Lumba, PhD
Department of History



Chris playing with the UW gamelan ensemble.

Quiet confidence

Remembered by Cristoph Giebel

I have many precious memories of Chris, but want to focus on our relationship as co-instructors. Chris was a TA in my Viet Nam Wars course (in 2010) and also in my general Southeast Asian history class. I can say with complete conviction that Chris was among the top three TAs I have had the privilege to work with over the years; he had a bright future as a teacher and mentor! My Viet Nam Wars course is a tightly choreographed, fast paced and intense class that demands of my TAs close coordination with their weekly sections. Although an Indonesianist by focus, Chris performed superbly. He truly "got it" when it came to the historical themes I was developing over time and the specificities of their Vietnamese context, and his students responded with enthusiasm.

Even more masterful was Chris' teaching in my Spring 2012 course on Southeast Asian history. By then I had such complete confidence in Chris' historical competence and pedagogical talent that I offered to teach one of his sections for the quarter in exchange for his lectures on Indonesian history over time. Chris' four full-length lectures were the highlight of the quarter, presented personably, yet with quiet confidence, informative and challenging yet with a light touch, and developing connections and comparisons with other Southeast Asian and global developments in ways that were most impressive and inspiring.

Christoph Giebel
Associate Professor of History and International Studies

Grateful for a good buddy

Remembered by Evi Sutrisno

Chris with Evi and Micaela



An image from “Ribbons to Roots: The Threads that (Un)Bind Us. A Play about Southeast Asian Migration, Identity and Home,” which was based, in part, on Chris’s interview with Evi’s son.



Chris Grorud was one of my best friends both in and beyond the classroom. Different languages and cultural backgrounds had brought us closer together. For an international student and non-native English speaker like me, Chris was always willing to help in editing my papers. He didn’t just correct my grammar. He also gave me suggestions on how to improve the structure and content of my papers, which were intellectually stimulating. On the other hand, he was eager to speak in Bahasa Indonesia with me. As a student in Indonesian studies, he was always well informed about the socio-political situation in Indonesia. He always wanted the latest update.

Outside the classroom, Chris always made time to get

together or just come over to visit me and my boys. On one bright Sunday, he appeared at our house and offered to watch a Seahawks game together with my sons. They had a great time together and it became a memorable day for them. Since the father of my sons was back in Indonesia, Chris meant a lot to my boys.

One very special thing that Chris did was to interview my oldest son about his life in the States. This was for a class at the UW being taught by Tikka Sears and Theresa Ronquillo. The idea was to interview people from Southeast Asia about their experiences in coming to live in America. The interview that Chris did was one of the best that was received. It was chosen to be used in the play that was written by Micaela

Campbell and the class. Then the play was performed by the students taking the class and other students interested in the work of the class. My son felt so proud that his experiences were useful to others. Only Chris would have thought of interviewing an 11 year old boy.

We are so grateful to have had Chris as our good buddy. We miss him a lot.

Evi Sutrisno
PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology



Chris with Heri Purwanto, Sunardi, and Christina Sunardi

In a nutshell

Remembered by Christina Sunardi

Chris, in a nutshell, was a very special person--a gift. He was a very important part of my early years at the UW and in energizing me in my new life as a faculty member here who

bridged music and Southeast Asian studies. He was an enthusiastic participant in gamelan at the UW. Among other things, he helped with translation for a shadow puppet

performance, and performed gamelan music with visiting artists from Indonesia. Chris was always so helpful with visiting artists from playing in concerts to moving

instruments—so generous with his time and his truck--and a wonderful presence in the classroom, onstage, and backstage.

Chris's passing has been a very hard loss for both my husband Sunardi and me. Chris was such a good friend to Sunardi,

a person Sunardi could really talk to and trust. They also enjoyed hanging out and getting lunch together—usually Thai or Vietnamese food. I considered him a good friend, too. I miss him very much, but am grateful to have had him as a part of my life and am grateful

that he was part of Sunardi's. We both often reminisce of Chris and treasure our memories of him.

Christina Sunardi
Associate Professor
of Ethnomusicology

"Although I started as an art major in college, I decided to take some classes about Eastern religion and Southeast Asian history out of curiosity. I ended up spending hours in the library reading up on Buddhism, import substitution in Japan...anything I could get my hands on. My friends from overseas also told me stories of their lives back home. But what truly won me over were the stories my TA Chris told my quiz section about Indonesia, a country I never really thought

about before. One day he would talk about his experience in the midst of the student riots and the next day would be about Sukarno's political legacy. It was then that I knew I wanted to be an Asian Studies major and travel to Southeast Asia."

Remembered by an undergraduate in Chris's TA section

Docendo discimus

Remembered by Desiana Pauli Sandjaja

Docendo discimus, by teaching, we learn.

In my life as a teacher, students come and go and they leave behind memories. Chris did not only leave me with lasting memories, but with many valuable lessons from which I learn to be better at my job and as a human being.

Chris was the type of person who would take the time to really get to know you and to show that he really cared in the most genuine way. Once we had a discussion about, of all things, beer drinking culture. I told him that I could not drink beer alone since I used to drink socially with my family, especially with my Dad. Drinking alone would just make me miss my family sorely. A couple of months later, we were at a function. He came to me and brought me a bottle of beer and

said, “Bu Pauli, I know you need a drinking buddy!”

There are too many memories to share but if I have to pick one, I’d pick this one. Chris took an independent study with me to work on reading a novel for his research. It was a very complicated and intense novel by Ayu Utami. It was typical cold and rainy Seattle late afternoon. Our class was at the basement of Denny Hall. That day, we were reading the part about the character mutilating his grandmother. Just as the story became very intense, and frankly, scary, the door slammed. We jumped off our chairs and looked at each other but finally said “Maybe it’s just the wind.” And we continued reading. A moment later, there was some sort of flower smell in the air. We were at a basement of an old building with all windows were shut. We looked at each other. I asked him, “Chris, do

you smell that?” And he answered, “Do you have a Cross?” I shook my head and said, “Let’s get out of here!” We immediately packed our stuff and ended the class early. Every time we met after that quarter ended, we still talked about it, with much laughter.

Life as graduate students is tough and I have seen such struggle through Chris as well. His passion and

commitment to his study kept him going. He paused to collect his strength and kept it going and kept it going and kept it going. I am very grateful for this life lesson that he showed to me and to many people around him.

Chris, your kindness, sense humor and uplifting spirit have touched so many of us and will remain in our hearts forever. You certainly

taught me valuable lessons of perseverance, patience and joy. Doscendo discimus. Selamat jalan, Chris.

Desiana Pauli Sandjaja
Senior Lecturer
Department of Asian Languages and Literatures

Chris “Brorud”

Remembered by Joseph Bernardo

Chris Grorud was the first person I met at UW back in 2007. It was orientation for incoming History graduate students and we got to talking while taking a walking tour of the campus. It was your typical basic small talk, “Where are you from?,” “What are you studying?,” “Who’s your favorite basketball team?,” etc. After the half-day orientation, we somehow ended up at another student’s apartment to partake on some homemade pasta and socializing. After a short while, I sat next to Chris who introduced me to his then-wife, Jinny. We bonded, talked about sports, his life in Madison, his affinity towards In-

donesian history and culture. After a bowl of mediocre pasta, I went home knowing that I made a potential friend.

Unfortunately, we didn't hang out much that first year at UW. We saw each other once in a while, but we didn't have the same classes or same social circles, so I didn't talk to him very often. Allan spoke to him more, but even he didn't get to know him much that year. We went about our ways, thinking after an initial start, we would only become acquaintances.

On the first day I got back to Seattle before the start of our second year, Allan invited me to Laurie Sears' house for a small gathering for Southeast Asianists. Kind of randomly, Chris happened to corner me in Laurie's kitchen and divulged the details of a personal matter. Mind you, I hardly spoke to him up to that point. I was a bit astonished that he opened up the way he did, but you couldn't help but feel for the guy. He bonded a lot with Allan and came over to our apartment fairly often. We hosted a house party that happened to land on his birthday and Allan bought him a cake. Nobody at the party really knew him (even I barely knew him), but he still loved the kind gesture.



The following fall, our friendship somehow finally clicked. Not sure how it happened. Allan may have been travelling and I got to Seattle fairly earlier than normal, but there was a short stretch prior to the start of the quarter that we hung out a lot. I remember one time I came over to his house and started to feel sick from something we ate earlier. All of the sudden I started to break out into a ferocious sweat and felt nauseous while playing the latest version of MarioKart. I immediately ran to his bathroom (which was quite disgusting by the way) and vomited out what I consumed. He felt really bad for me, but laughed at my misfortune at the same time. Laughing at each other's mishaps was a pattern that repeated constantly.

That year, we were inseparable. We hung out with each other almost everyday. One time we were studying, Allan came home and said, "Well, if it isn't the Shell and the Kernel," a funny reference to an article we had to read for Laurie's class. I learned a lot about Chris that year: his journalist background as the editor for his high school paper, the tattoo on his foot, his insane binder of Tecmo Bowl statistics, his cross-country days, his estranged

relationship with his ex-wife, his love for singing "Ghostbusters" on the Magic Mic, his struggle with anxiety, and his 2am hunger cravings for 7-11 hot dogs. I cherished our long conversations during those times we had a few hours to kill.

While his own graduate student career was in jeopardy, Chris nevertheless always had time to support others'. He was a helpful ear to complaints about academic life. He was there to celebrate Allan and my respective triumphs after exams. Such selfless loyalty is what epitomized Chris. He was always there for you. He was there on the morning of my wedding, making Gerlie's aunt iron his clothes since he didn't know how to operate one. He was there at my dissertation defense, hashtagging #joejamdefense as he was posting moments from it on social media. He was the first person to call me Dr. Joe. He was there at my graduation where he charmed my family including my rugrat nieces and nephews. I can never forget them yelling out "Uncle Chris! Uncle Chris!" while he was wrestling with them or giving them ice cream. My mom told me that weekend, "I really like Chris." Jokingly, I attributed his charisma to his white skin and conjured up playful hashtags like #whitelove and #promiseofthegrorud to describe my family's love for him.

Despite our distance the last few years, we were always pretty close and made even more memories. I remember getting so excited when he would come

visit me in LA as I knew we would begin new adventures. Unfortunately, the last time he was here, I wasn't the best host. I was miserable at my former job and took out my frustration at him a little bit during his visit. I eventually apologized for my grouchiness, and in typical Chris fashion where he thinks of others before himself, he replied, "Don't worry about it. I know I haven't."

Today, family and friends of Chris celebrate his life, with Allan and Balbir representing all of us at the funeral. I'm sad that I couldn't be at there in person, but I plan to make a trip to Fremont, Nebraska in the coming months – something I always promised him I'd do. I've always found that the silver lining in one's death is that it brings people together. Sharing great memories of him with all of you whom I met in Seattle makes me cherish a special time and a special person. I'm positive we'll all see Chris again soon, but before he left, he left with his most selfless gift to all of us: time with each other. I love all of you and hope you are well. Here's hoping for more memories together for years to come.

Joseph Bernardo

PhD Candidate, Department of History

Heartfelt welcome

Remembered by James Pangilinan

Chris will be missed deeply by those whom he graced with his humor, generosity and care back home, in Seattle, and in Indonesia. I recall fondly how, from the first time meeting, he imparted a sense of welcome.

After sitting in a seminar on Foucault taught by Vince Rafael, Chris reached out after class and discussed what made for a good life in Seattle as opposed to other options and places I was considering. He was well acquainted with the geography of Southeast Asian studies centers, having been a Badger before a Husky. But, besides such institutional ties, one felt his honest fascination and intensity of interest in Southeast Asia. Chris's intellectual and personal passion for the field was palpable in the mundane manner through which he could chat about sports or Indonesian politics both with equal succor. That is to say, he was intellectually curious and cosmopolitan in the most equitable of ways.

From the first time meeting, a quality of broad curiosity and heartfelt welcome came through with earnest insistence. I have spent a good deal of my time thinking of what makes hospitality possible and what sustains a culture of welcome. Seattle isn't the best in place in this regard. But Chris would seem to instill and insist on making this place, school and community more open and more welcoming. Let's hope Chris's hospitality may continue welcoming others with the same generosity, care and hospitality.

Chris with Balbir Singh.



When I last saw Chris, I sought to reciprocate, if possible, the same welcome he offered to me. He was in town, on leave from Indonesia, after struggling with health and dental issues there. I gladly hosted him in my study space, amidst all of the Southeast Asian studies books, many of which he gifted to me. We walked around his former neighborhood (the Central District); got Ezzell's and picnicked by Lake Washington, with a sherbet vista of Mount Rainier in the distance. Eventually, we met up with Joseph Guanlo in Capitol Hill; moving through Seattle as if he hadn't

left, as if he wasn't leaving for family back home and Indonesia, in the near future. While Chris indeed left, his welcoming presence will be felt and honored through prolonging his hospitality here.

James Pangilinan

Graduate student at University of British Columbia

A philosopher of area studies

Remembered by Vince Rafael

I knew Chris as a student in a couple of my seminars. As most of you know, he wanted to write about the Indonesian revolution and we talked a few times about his project. At one point, he even managed to spend an

evening with Ben Anderson when he visited Seattle who gave him some good advice.

I myself wasn't quite sure why he was interested in the Indonesian revolution,

but during one of our conversations he told me something very interesting: that he had been a philosophy major as an undergraduate. Why would someone interested in philosophy--



Chris carrying Hillah in Jakarta.

and presumably Western philosophy--want to go into area studies, especially the history of Indonesia? I was fascinated by this curious conjunction. His interests seem to come from entirely different places. Yet I could see how each fed into the other.

Both philosophy and area studies, after all, involve bringing us closer to the world by drawing us away from it. Both make us strangers to ourselves so that we become open and available to others who are yet to come. In approaching Indonesia, Chris seemed to me to be continuing his work in

philosophy: discovering that part of himself that lay in the other. And his interest in the history of the revolution made all the more sense--even though perhaps he did not realize it at that time--inasmuch as revolution is about radical change. It is about getting at the root of things, as the word "radical" suggests, exploring and exploding the fundamental elements of life. Or to put it another way, revolution is about making the world philosophical again.

Chris had about himself a quiet bearing, a sly sense of humor, and a ready hospitality towards those near and far. He

had, in other words, all the makings of a historian of the revolution and a philosopher of area studies.

We all miss Chris, and the gentle intelligence with which he touched all things. Thinking of him brought to mind these lines from the writer David Ignatow: "I wish I understood the beauty in leaves falling. To whom are we beautiful as we go?"

Vince Rafael
Professor of History



An untitled essay

By Chris Grorud

Introduced by Allan Lumba

At first glance, Chris Grorud's untitled essay has a seemingly modest thesis: the histories of Ambarawa remain anomalous to official national and state-sanctioned scripts of Revolution. Throughout the piece Chris carefully highlights the dissonance of Ambarawa within the body of influential works on Indonesian Revolution, drawing specifically from James Siegel, George Kahin, and Benedict Anderson. Upon closer inspection, however, one notices quickly that Chris is not interested in presenting a localized version of what these past authoritative scholars of Indonesian national independence have argued. Rather, the essay patiently chips away at the multitude of mythologies, academic jargon, and nationalist narratives that have structured the history of Revolution in Indonesia. Even mundane stories recounted by residents of the small town of Suruh are stripped of nostalgia.

Through an elegant blend of

ethnography and oral historical methodologies, Chris reveals how the quotidian day-to-day stories offered to him and his interpreter turn out to be merely rote scripts that neither contradict nationalist narratives of independence nor make claims to partaking in the movement for Indonesian sovereignty. Thus, a particular normative "collective memory" is repeated and reinforced, not through the production of more narratives, but rather through tentative evasion, frequent breaks, and friendly suggestions to consult local authorities. Chris then soberly comes to what he admits is a frustrating conclusion: "the people" of the Revolution, refused to speak of Revolution. This conclusion compels Chris to break free (as best as he could) from his own investments in the collective and academic memorialization of Revolution in the rest of the essay.

In the essay's later sections, his expertise on Indonesian political and cultural history is put on display. Accounting for both local and global

historical factors, the essay sets out to demystify numerous Indonesian figures of the Revolution. The essay therefore compels us to see mythologized figures such as Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, and the pemuda, as Chris saw them. Not through a strict moral or political lens, but rather through the lens of Revolution itself. To examine the concept of Revolution itself. To ask if Revolution was even possible. For Chris, questions concerning Revolution simultaneously sprang from, and led to, Indonesia.

Thus, despite being incomplete, this essay gestures to Chris' deep love for Indonesia. It is clear he did not love the nation, and he was certainly inimical to the state. And although he had immense respect for its communities, his love was not even for "the people." Chris was far too brilliant to be seduced by any of those fantasies. Instead, this essay illuminates how Chris loved the messy assemblage of experiences, cultures, languages, politics, desires, religions, traditions, and socialities that the concept of "Indonesia" attempts to capture. But as this essay set out to illustrate, both the nation and the state consistently

failed to fully capture the messiness and the absolute singularity of Revolution, demonizing what could not be domesticated as "extremist" or "terrorist."

Chris was a perfectionist and protective of revealing work he believed to be incomplete. This was not out of some sense of safeguarding intellectual property. Rather, his reluctance to share what he considered incomplete emerged from an ethical impulse. Perhaps this ethical impulse was why he was drawn to the history of the Indonesian Revolution, and the ways myriad powerful people and institutions worked toward its failure. Perhaps he carried a particular responsibility to reckon with the wrongs of the past and held a utopic desire to create the conditions for justice in the present. I therefore consider this essay a gift in the most ethical sense of the word. And I am grateful to have read along with Chris' ethical way of thinking, to intellectually follow his singular mode of historical exploration.

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"We must seize Ambarawa with simultaneous attacks because Ambarawa is the key for them to dominate the whole of Central Java and Yogyakarta. This would endanger the position of the Republic. We frankly admit that we are less strong in terms of our weaponry. But circumstances of this kind will not hamper us or reduce our desire to defend our country. We have defined a strategy; that is, simultaneous surprise attacks with a pincer movement. Command of the attack will be administered by the commander of the TKR division. Forces from the struggle organizations (badan perjuangan) will serve as a rear guard. The assault begins tomorrow morning at 04:30. Good luck with the fight, Allah is with us, Amen. Merdeka!"

-Soedirman, December 10, 1945¹

In *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, James Siegel discusses the processes of recognition, or rather their failure, in Indonesia through the examples of an essay contest held by the Indonesian state on the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of independence.² Through an examination of the narratives submitted of personal experiences of the Revolution, Siegel notes that most Indonesians continued about their daily lives in their usual occupations rather than participating directly in the revolutionary struggle. Nevertheless, it is unacceptable in Indonesia merely to assert

that one just struggled to survive during this dangerous period because to account for the hardships one faced truthfully does not put one among the revolutionary fighters. It is unacceptable because an assertion of this kind—that is, an account that does not place oneself within the state's heroic narrative of the war for independence—creates the possibility of being misrecognized as an enemy of the state. Consequently, their personal narratives of the mundane qualities of daily life, especially those tales structured around passing encounters of Dutch troops, are related in such a way as to prevent this misrecognition. Siegel writes, "That they nonetheless considered themselves to have fully participated in the revolution is because they thought of themselves as being in danger."³

Apart from Siegel's incisive analysis of language, memory, and history in Indonesian society, there is the question of persistent nonappearance. Siegel effectively shows the utility of remaining unseen in order to survive during the Revolution. By appearing as an anonymous member of ordinary society, one minimized the possibility of being killed as a consequence of being recognized or misrecognized as either a supporter of the revolutionary struggle by the Dutch or a supporter of the Dutch by the revolutionary fighters. However, as noted above, being unseen in the historical memory in the post-Revolution period is constitutive of a danger in itself in that it invites the possibility of misrecognition. Rather than altering one's own personal narrative to become more present within the national narrative of the Revolution, Ambarawa presents a unique case to the study of the Revolution and the

collective memory of the period in that both the state and the residents of the greater Ambarawa area desire to bind and confine local experiences only to a depoliticized vision of village normality. In doing so, the residents remain invisible to historical accounts of revolutionary heroism. Unlike the majority of Indonesians whose possible invisibility or exclusion from revolutionary participation augers the potential for misrecognition as an enemy of the nation, the residents of the greater Ambarawa area must remain anonymous bystanders of the Revolution for the sake of their inclusion within the national identity. Any assertion of either direct or, in the cases examined by Siegel, secretive revolutionary participation negates not only the official nationalist narrative, but also the state-mediated national identity.

In discussing the concept of collective memory of a national history, Maurice Halbwachs describes it in contrast to the memory of the individual:

"In recalling [the events around which the memory is formed], I must rely entirely upon the memory of others, a memory that comes, not as corroborator or completer of my own, but as the very source of what I wish to repeat. I often know such events no better nor in any other manner than I know historical events that occurred before I was born."⁴

The Indonesian collective memory places the Revolution as the originary moment of the modern nation. Told as a period comprised as a series of heroic events, Siegel and other scholars of Indonesia have shown the

powerful ability of the state to control the popular memory of the Revolution within the nationalist narrative. Halbwachs' conception of the role of national history within the collective memory highlights the desire of the individual to connect to the collective memory in both a present and future moment despite differences that exist between the individual's and the collective's memories. In Siegel's analysis the desire to re-live the Revolution by placing oneself as a secretive participant in the memory controlled by the state is shown to be a desire for recognition of the individual's membership in the nation. The desire for recognition is not merely the wish to belong to the national identity, but is also motivated by the fear of the potentially fatal consequences of being misrecognized as not belonging to that identity within the official narrative of the state. This paper examines how the fear of being misrecognized also creates the possibility of, and the justifications for, having one's participation in the national struggle of the Revolution remain untold and unseen by the national collective memory. It is my contention that those who lived in and around Ambarawa, a small town in the highlands of Central Java, represent such a case.

LOCAL SILENCE

In the summer of 2008, I interviewed an 86-year-old woman in Suruh, Central Java, about her memories of the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949). Suruh is a small village roughly fifteen miles southeast of the city of Ambarawa and is within the area that was known during the early months of the Revolution as the Ambarawa Theater. We met in the sitting room of her home, the walls

of which were unadorned other than an aged, canvas work portrait of Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia. The interview was conducted through an interpreter, the woman’s step-grandson and a close friend of mine. He translated my questions from Indonesian into Javanese for the woman and then translated her answers back into Indonesian for me. Before the interview began, she and her two daughters in the room with us seemed amused that I would want to interview her, “but why?” they asked. I said that out of my admiration for Sukarno, I had become interested in the Revolution, to which the woman responded favorably. As to my current interest in the social history of the Revolution, she appeared skeptical, but agreed to the interview nonetheless.

Not long after the interview began, a steady stream of relatives stopped by the home, joining in the conversation. I started by asking the woman about her childhood. Although the woman was willing to answer, she soon stood up and left the room for a short break. The others in the room told me this was because her arthritic condition made it difficult for her to sit too long in one place. As the interview progressed and my questions became more specific to her experiences during the Revolution, her breaks became more frequent. When she returned, she frequently repeated her original question as to why I wanted to know such things. Repeating the answers I had given her before about my interest in the Revolution did not satisfy her. In fact, my answers elicited neither a verbal response from her nor a physical response as she maintained the same facial expression of physical pain and bemusement in receiving my answer as she had when asking the question.

When the woman was absent from the room, I was happy to ask the growing number of relatives in the room questions and they seemed eager to respond with stories and information. However, they offered no more information about the woman’s experiences of the Revolution other than the few brief answers she had given me. That is, there had been some fighting in the area and that the woman and her husband, like most of the villagers, had worked as farmers. The relatives stated that there was nothing to be learned from her experiences and, moreover, that there was nothing worth knowing about their village and its residents during the Revolution. If I wanted to know more of the area, they said I should visit the *Monumen Palangan Ambarawa* (Ambarawa Theater Monument). If I wanted to collect oral histories, they suggested I make contact with military officials in Semarang or Jakarta to arrange an interview. When the interview with the woman was over, I left believing that the interview was a failure because I was unable to gain information from the woman and her family that could be used to advance my research of the Revolution. Despite her experiences, the woman was unwilling to speak.⁵ Her relatives were also silent on the issue of a local collective memory and, instead, directed me towards the official memory of the Battle of the Ambarawa Theater, that is, the one propagated by the state.

Unlike the personal narratives examined by Siegel, the elderly woman did not participate in the “easy sliding of identities”⁶ when I interviewed her about her experiences during the Revolution. Even though it was acknowledged briefly that her husband had

participated in the Battle of Ambarawa, the woman did not offer any details of his involvement, let alone any claims to heroism. Moreover, the information she related about the period aside from the battle were absent of themes of participation, danger, or survival. Rather, she spoke of farming rice and cassava as though her daily life was no different during the Revolution than it was working as a farmer after the Revolution. What emerged from her narrative and was confirmed by her descendants was that she, her husband, and the rest of the village were supporters of the nation, but not full participants in the achievement of its independence.

Although the woman experienced an important battle of the Revolution, she and her descendants asserted that any local memory of the event was only a limited village perspective. This local perspective was in keeping with the official narrative of the event and, more importantly, contained no information that contradicted the “authoritative” narrative collected and memorialized by the Indonesian state and military. According to Halbwachs, the individual memory is unable to contribute to the collective memory of national history for the collective memory is the “memory of others.” Even with the national collective memory supported by social institutions and being the domain of the state, Halbwachs describes the foundational knowledge of an event’s memory residing in “newspapers and the testimony of those involved.”⁷ The lack of local experiences of participation among the individuals I met with in the Ambarawa area invites an exploration of why the testimonies of area residents are excluded from the national collective memory and more importantly, the reasons why local

participation is disavowed.

EARLY STATE INSECURITY

Following the surrender of Japan to Allied forces, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed Indonesia’s independence on August 17, 1945. The laconic text of the Proclamation makes no philosophical, political, or territorial claims about the Indonesian nation, but rather it reads, in full, as follows:

*We, the Indonesian nation, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters concerning the transfer of authority, etc. will be executed in a careful manner and in the shortest possible time.*⁸

The brevity of Sukarno and Hatta’s message reveals a fundamental insecurity among the nationalist elite of Jakarta about their ability to speak for the nation. On the one hand, Japan had already begun to dismantle its occupation infrastructure, thus leaving the Sukarno-Hatta duumvirate few means through which to spread their nationalist agenda or assert their authority. Particularly problematic was the complete absence of police or military security forces.⁹ On the other hand, the nationalist elite of Jakarta were aware of profound differences on the question of independence among the people, for among those that supported the move to an independent future, a bitter divide was developing between the Jakartan elite, who tended to be older, as well as more cautious about the steps that should be taken, and the *pemuda*.¹⁰ Initially, the term *pemuda* embraced both female and male Indonesians, although eventually

it became more exclusively associated with men, whereas a new word, *pemudie*, emerged as a female form.¹¹ In the context of the Revolution, however, *pemuda* also came to signify a militant and masculine youth culture that supported a complete social transformation of Indonesia through violent struggle.

The divide between the older, conservative nationalists and the *pemuda* was represented as well in the political discourse of the period as a distinction between two options for expelling Dutch forces: *diplomasi*, or diplomacy, and *perjuangan*, or struggle, particularly a violent one. The perspective of the internal dynamics of the Revolution as a divide between *diplomasi* and *perjuangan* has dominated scholarship on the period produced in the West. This divide was first explored in George Kahin's 1952 classic *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*. While later scholarship on the period made important additions and corrections to Kahin's thesis, the later scholarship has reaffirmed the existence of the *diplomasi/perjuangan* split also.¹² Put briefly, the former represented the advocacy of the achievement of independence via international recognition and diplomacy, while the latter represented the belief that Indonesian independence could be considered legitimate only through the overthrow of existing power structures—colonial, imperial, as well as traditional social hierarchies. While support for *diplomasi* was limited to a small group of political elites, *perjuangan* had a much larger and more diverse base of support for the *pemuda* not only extended well beyond the youth of Java to the youth of other islands and ethnicities, but also included youth of various social, economic, religious,

and educational backgrounds.¹³ Understood domestically, the choice between *diplomasi* or *perjuangan* constituted a double bind facing the political elites—their search for legitimacy internationally was disadvantageous to their search for legitimacy domestically. In response to this double bind, the proclamation of Sukarno and Hatta represents an attempt to mitigate the consequences of their elite situation in the originary moment of the Indonesian state. Although it would be some time before Sukarno, Hatta, and the remainder of the republican government consolidated their authority over the Indonesian people, their actions from the earliest days of the Revolution period are representative of a need to control the national narrative nonetheless. By initiating their attempts at controlling the narrative, the republican elite established the foundation for an Indonesian identity through which the elite could recognize (or misrecognize) the Indonesian people by their inclusion (or exclusion) from the nation.

The original insecurity of the nationalist elite concerning the legitimacy of both their domestic and international positions was tempered considerably by the establishment of the Indonesian military on October 5, 1945, which would soon emerge as a force to countervail the nation's reliance on the actions of the *pemuda*.¹⁴ Predictably, as the military steadily grew in size and became more capable of leading the revolutionary fight against the Dutch military, the political significance of the *pemuda* waned. This process, however, was not a zero-sum game of political capital because even with its rapid growth, the Indonesian military could not match the strength of the Dutch. Consequently, the military relied on the

paramilitary assistance of the *pemuda* for the duration of the Revolutionary period, yet the state—as run by the nationalist elite—continually thwarted any attempts at political consolidation of the variegated *pemuda*, most notably by imprisoning Tan Malaka, the most vocal champion and potentially unifying figure of the *perjuangan* movement, from March 1946 until September 1948. The ultimate blow to the political position of the *pemuda* came in February 1949 with the assassination of Tan Malaka by the military.¹⁵ While these events—the consolidation of the state's authority, the rise of the military, and the destruction of the *pemuda*'s leadership and, by extension, its potential for organization—occasioned the Revolution's ultimate success through *diplomasi* rather than *perjuangan*, the older, conservative nationalist elite remained suspicious of the now amorphous *pemuda* and any impulse for the effects of a social revolution promised by *perjuangan*.

LEAD UP TO THE BATTLE OF AMBARAWA: JAPANESE SURRENDER AND THE ARRIVAL OF SEAC FORCES

Following the end of World War II, the Netherlands began planning the resumption of its colonial authority over Indonesia. Five years of German occupation, however, had left the Dutch state too weak to begin immediate re-colonization efforts. A major complicating factor to this was the large number of Dutch citizens who had comprised the colonial government and Dutch colonial society that had been taken as prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation of the Indies. At the time of Japan's surrender, there were more than 68,000 Dutch and other European

internees on Java with one-fifth of them, mostly Dutch women and children, held in the six internment camps in the small town of Ambarawa in the highlands of Central Java.¹⁶ To help facilitate their efforts, the Dutch had to rely on Lord Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC). In the words of one SEAC unit commander that were published at the time, the largely British SEAC forces were expected "to maintain law and order until the time that the lawful government of the Netherlands East Indies is once again functioning."¹⁷ The SEAC forces largely understood their mission as having two parts—disarming the Japanese and freeing the European prisoners of war. According to British historian Richard McMillan, their mission seemed straightforward as Japan had already pledged its cooperation and intelligence reports received from the Dutch assured SEAC that despite the proclamation of independence by Sukarno and Hatta, an overwhelming majority of Indonesians desired the return of the colonial government.¹⁸ As the first SEAC units landed in Jakarta on September 29, 1945, they quickly realized that they had been misled by their intelligence reports.

Interestingly enough, it was Sukarno, Hatta, and the rest of the Indonesian republic's central leadership that cautiously welcomed the British-led forces. In adhering to their objective of achieving independence through diplomatic negotiations for international recognition, these elites believed that the newly elected Labour party government in the United Kingdom would be sympathetic to Indonesian sovereignty. Moreover, these elite believed that the temporary presence of SEAC forces could potentially benefit them

as the nascent republican government still lacked a military or police force and therefore had yet to establish its authority over much of the population, especially the *pemuda*. In fact, in the wake of Japan's surrender, various *pemuda* groups assumed control over much of Java, including large sections of Jakarta. Although the majority of these groups supported the republican elite, especially Sukarno who had been firmly established as the symbol of Indonesian nationalism during the Japanese occupation, they were militantly opposed to the presence of any foreigners.¹⁹ Consequently, the *pemuda* revolution began prior to the arrival of SEAC forces with attacks against Japanese forces. In many cases, the Japanese forces were able to reach an understanding with the *pemuda* groups if they surrendered some of their arms to the *pemuda* and agreed to confine themselves to their barracks until they were transported out of Indonesia. The situation was direr, however, for Indonesians of Chinese descent and the members of the *pangreh pradja*, Indonesian members of the colonial bureaucracy. Both the Chinese Indonesians and the *pangreh pradja* had been given a legal recognition other than “Native” during the colonial rule of the Dutch. Consequently, they were frequently attacked by the *pemuda* for having a foreign status.²⁰ Amid the volatility and chaos of the early Revolution, the arrival of the SEAC forces was an affront to many of the *pemuda* groups who had every intention of defending their independence to the death.

Because the SEAC forces had been misled by Dutch intelligence reports as to the extent of military action their mission required, it took several weeks before they were able to gain a foothold on Java despite their military

superiority and the assistance of Japanese forces. By mid-November 1945, SEAC was in control of most of West Java aside from Jakarta and had defeated the *pemuda* in the major port cities on the north coast including Pekalongan and Semarang in Central Java and Surabaya in East Java. Although these SEAC successes left two Central Java cities, Yogyakarta and Surakarta, as the only major cities on Java free of SEAC forces, the republican government tacitly supported the expansion of SEAC's territorial control not only by refusing to oppose the SEAC forces with their own, newly formed army, but also by imploring the *pemuda* groups to refrain from attacking the SEAC forces for the *pemuda*'s violent resistance was seen by the republican government as counterproductive to their efforts at soliciting British support.

BATTLE OF AMBARAWA



[Figure 1: *Bureaucratic Elite: The Colonial Transformation of the Indonesian Priyayi* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979).]

On November 14, 1945, British and Japanese units entered the small town of Ambarawa in the highlands of Central Java from the major

highway to the west, while other British units, fresh from their victory over the *pemuda* in Semarang, approached from the north. The deployments marked the beginning of SEAC's efforts directed at bringing the small town under its full control. Aside from its large population of European internees as mentioned above, Ambarawa had a strategic importance for the SEAC mission as it is located at the junction point of the major highways and railways connecting West Java and the three largest cities in Central Java: Semarang to the north, Surakarta to the east, and Yogyakarta to the south (see Figure 1). The arrival of the forces only intensified a struggle that had been taking place for several weeks in the area. By September, *pemuda* had been attacking Japanese forces and European citizens in Ambarawa and Magelang, another small town with one internment camp that was located twenty miles from Ambarawa on the highway running toward West Java. Initially, the attacks were made against Japanese forces in order to seize their weaponry which, in some, but not all cases, the Japanese were willing to surrender. With these arms, the *pemuda* increased their attacks on the recalcitrant Japanese units and, in Ambarawa, reports emerged of individual *pemuda* infiltrating the internment camps and killing the European prisoners. But access to Japanese weaponry was short-lived and, much like they had reacted against the *pemuda* groups in other parts of Indonesia following the arrival of the SEAC forces, by late September the Japanese forces stopped surrendering their arms voluntarily and had begun to retaliate in order to re-seize their munitions.

By early October, Japanese forces reportedly

had begun arming some of the European citizens in the internment camps. The strange military alliance of internees and their former captors was born out of the difficulty of defending the military and internment camps in the face of a guerilla movement that was now attracting *pemuda* from the numerous smaller villages located in the greater Ambarawa area. Equally important to the increase in the number of *pemuda* and their attacks was the dwindling number of Japanese soldiers, in part due to casualties, but mostly due to fleeing from the area of conflict to areas with a SEAC presence during the first week of October.²¹ With SEAC forces being held up in the cities they entered by *pemuda* resistance, it was quickly apparent that it would take much longer for them than originally anticipated before they would reach the internment camps around Ambarawa in the interior of Java.

DIPLOMASI VS PERJUANGAN: PEMUDA “EXTREMIST” IN THE PRESS

The elite reaction to the *pemuda* violence around Ambarawa was similar to instances of *pemuda* violence elsewhere on Java. As early as October 19, 1945, the Ambarawa *pemuda* had gained the elite's attention when the daily Soera Rakjat (“The Voice of the People”) printed a critical report on “kaoem extremist” (extremist groups) operating in the area. The newspaper cited the London-based Reuters news service as the source of the story. The foreign origin of the report explains the English language spelling of “extremist,” which had appeared in a handful of Malay language newspapers beginning from the outset of the war prior to Japan's invasion of the Dutch East Indies. Although used less often, “terrorist”

also was used synonymously with “extremist” by the Malay language newspapers at the time. In some cases, the early uses of “extremist” and “terrorist” occurred in reports originating from Reuters. In every instance that I have found, the terms were used in reports about conflicts outside of the Indies most often concerning the actions of the Axis powers. Both terms predictably fell into disuse following the arrival of the Japanese as Japan forbade the existence of any newspapers other than those operated by its propaganda department, the *Sendenbu*.²² However, the terms began to appear again in the *Sendenbu*-operated press near the end of the Japanese occupation after the Allied victory in Europe in May 1945.

During the late occupation period, the rare appearances of these terms were limited to civil conflicts in Europe in which Japan did not have a direct interest. These conflicts involved communist revolts against state authority in territories recently liberated from German control.²³ It is my contention that although these reports fell short of declaring their support for the fight of the western European states against the communists in these conflicts, the common description of the communist groups using these pejorative terms reveals a rare agreement of the *Sendenbu* with their enemies insofar as the greatest threat to the Japanese occupation were the leftist underground *pemuda* groups. The invective language that defined leftist citizens within these European civil conflicts in terms of illegality was a clear indication of the limits of the Japanese military authority’s tolerance concerning the potential for political action by the underground *pemuda*. The evidence suggests that the appearance of

these warnings at the end of the occupation period did not occur in response to a rising tide of anti-Japanese action on the part of the *pemuda*. In fact, the actions of the leftist underground *pemuda* of the late occupation period, many of whom emerged later as the vanguard of the *perjuangan* movement during the Revolution, were not directly mobilized against the Japanese authorities. Moreover, the possibility of future actions against the Japanese was slim during the occupation as the underground *pemuda* groups were under constant surveillance by the Japanese secret police, the *Kenpeitai*.

Although the leftist *pemuda* groups of the late occupation period are frequently said to exist “underground” by scholars, the groups in question, which were concentrated mainly in Jakarta and to a lesser extent Bandung, did not exhibit the characteristics usually associated with “underground” political organizations.²⁴ Rather than issuing wholesale vilifications of Japanese imperialism, the surveillance by the *Kenpeitai* meant that the underground *pemuda* narrowed their criticism of the Japanese to specific points of policy. In contrast to the limitations of their opposition to the Japanese, the underground *pemuda* were openly critical of “collaborators,” especially Sukarno, Hatta, and the rest of the nationalist elite. Led unofficially by Sutan Sjahrir, the underground *pemuda* became more vocal and strident in their denunciations of the collaborationist elite following the initial meeting of the Japanese-established Investigative Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (*Badan Penyelidik Usaha-Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* or BPUPKI) on May 28, 1945.²⁵ While recent events in the war

had all but assured Japan’s defeat, the elite who participated in the BPUPKI did so with seriousness out of the belief that Japan would grant Indonesia its independence before it would surrender to the Allied forces.²⁶ The underground *pemuda*, however, were not only suspicious of any Japanese pronouncements on the issue of independence, but also questioned the legitimacy of a government run by the collaborationist elite. Amid the intensification of an already contentious relationship between the elite and the underground *pemuda*, the critical reportage on “extremists” and “terrorists” by the *Sendenbu*-run press should be read as a preemptive public attack on the politics of the underground *pemuda* for Japan’s recent defeats elsewhere in Asia had obviated the need during transitional periods away from Japanese authority for an alliance with a popular and stable local leadership.

During the transitional period, the Japanese military authorities in Indonesia found themselves in a situation they had not anticipated. The Sukarno-Hatta government maintained its friendly relationship with the Japanese forces and the duumvirate was widely popular, but the government as a whole was far from stable. This instability was largely as the result of the dismantling of security forces by the Japanese in accordance with the terms of Japan’s surrender to the Allied forces. Immediately after the surrender, the underground *pemuda* began contesting the authority of the new government. The definitive text of these *pemuda* in the initial months of independence is Sutan Sjahrir’s most famous essay “*Perjoeangan Kita*” (“Our Struggle”), which was published on November 10, 1945. In it, Sjahrir strongly condemns

Sukarno, Hatta, and the bulk of the elite nationalists in Jakarta for their collaboration with the Japanese. More than mere castigations, Sjahrir indicates a better future without the collaborationist elite by declaring the need of the young republic to “[purge] itself of the stains of Japanese fascism.”²⁷ While Sjahrir and his followers represented the greatest unified threat to the elites in power, their attacks against the government took place largely through the now unregulated world of print media.²⁸ In other words, their actions in the first months after independence fell short of the “extremist” brand of rebellion that had been originally feared.

Aside from the underground *pemuda* of the occupation, the post-independence actions of different *pemuda* groups defied certain assumptions that had been made of them as well. These *pemuda* widely embraced the popular nationalism embodied by Sukarno as expected, however, the widespread and violent nature of their attacks against Chinese business owners and money lenders, the *pangreh pradja*, the Japanese forces, and the Dutch and other European internees also illustrated their desire for the social revolution that Sukarno and Hatta would not promise. For the many *pemuda* who supported the national leadership, but nonetheless pursued a social revolution locally via methods that would come to define the *perjuangan* movement, there was no contradiction. Rather, as Anderson first noted, Javanese cultural norms meant that groups of *pemuda*, living autonomously and relatively isolated from other social groups, “were always there, built into traditional society, and ready to provide that society with a transcendent conception of itself when the times demanded it.”²⁹ To

these *pemuda*, poverty, famine, and the lack of political security following the proclamation of independence were all clear indications that the present moment was “a time out of joint” that demanded their involvement.³⁰ The difference between the beginning of the Revolution period and other moments in the past that necessitated the intervention of the *pemuda* was that instead of reflecting the teachings of a *kyai* (Islamic teacher) or other type of spiritual guru around whom *pemuda* communities traditionally formed, the *pemuda* groups that were compelled to action in the early Revolution reflected the blended teachings of militarism and nationalism that they had received from the Japanese through their membership in the numerous official organizations of the occupation.

The arrival of SEAC forces on September 29 was followed by an increase in *pemuda* violence. The collaborationist elites’ accommodation of the SEAC forces and the refusal to condone violence by Sjahrir and the other popular figures emerging from the so-called underground of the occupation period further distanced the *pemuda* from the influence of national figures, both governmental and non-governmental.³¹ *From mid-October onwards, there is a boom in political organizations and trade unions, many led by former underground members of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) which officially reconstituted itself on October 21st.³² As a result, many of the *pemuda* groups that had been acting autonomously from one another join forces at the local and regional level, thus making them more difficult to control from the perspective of *diplomasi*.³³

Beginning with the Ambarawa kaoem

extremist report on Oct 19, both “extremist” and “terrorist” reports re-appear and become frequent, not just in Ambarawa, but in other areas of SEAC concern, especially Bandung, Semarang and Surabaya. A number of factors contributed to the dramatic reappearance of the terms in reportage of the events. Generally, the presence of mobilized SEAC forces (as opposed to just defeated Japanese forces) meant that previously small conflicts have grown to full-scale battles and local organizations of *pemuda* engaging in battle begin to have an effect at the national level, making attempts at *diplomasi* between the government and the British more difficult.³⁴ Early government efforts to curb the *pemuda* activities, mainly through personal appeals by the elites³⁵, are ineffective but as they gain more power through the growth of military and police forces, the government can be more forceful with its censures because it is beginning to have the means to enforce its authority over the *pemuda*..

With SEAC presence in every major Javanese city by mid-November (other than Solo and Yogyakarta), the military has orders to repel Brits from areas currently free of them. The government increases its military presence in Ambarawa and, while in the lead up to the Battle of Ambarawa, their main concern is to ward off the British and not to subdue the *pemuda*, the government criticizes the activities of the Ambarawa *pemuda* in the press.

Yet, the government’s negative views of *pemuda* activities in the press run contrary to the language used by Soedirman in his speech on December 10, the day before the Battle of Ambarawa gets underway (December

11 – 15). Soedirman states that the only way to save the Republic is through the combined forces of the military and the *badan perjuangan* (the *pemuda* forces). Couched in the language of the Revolution, his speech clearly recognizes the role of the *pemuda* in the battle against SEAC forces. Sjahrir also addresses the hypocrisy of British and Dutch accusations of *pemuda* extremism in a speech he gives on December 9th. These official acknowledgements, are the beginning of a sea change in the way the government frames the role of *pemuda* in the Revolution. By February of 1946, the “extremist” *pemuda* of Semarang and Surabaya are officially recognized as *pahlawan* (heroes) and *pelopor* (vanguards) of the struggle. The same occurs for the *pemuda* of Bandung by late March. But such official recognition is never extended to the Ambarawa *pemuda*.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- The continual exclusion of Ambarawa *pemuda* does not result from a failure to remember the battle, the battle is constantly remembered and the military is valorized while the extremist *pemuda* are continually disavowed.
- Why were the Ambarawa *pemuda* not initially recognized for their contribution to the Revolution in the same way as other *pemuda* groups?
- How do the oral interviews with former revolutionary fighters in Ambarawa make the divide between *diplomasi* *perjuangan* more complex than previous examinations of the Revolution by Kahin, Anderson, and Siegel?
- What is the relationship between history

- and memory in the remembering of the Battle of Ambarawa by former revolutionary fighters?
- How does the fear of misrecognition act as motivation for their disavowal?

*Micaela Campbell reconstructed the highlighted text from Chris’ detailed notes outlining the originary moment of exclusion of Ambarawa *pemuda* from the official state narrative of the Revolution, his preliminary conclusion, as well as further lines of inquiry.

NOTES

1. Quote displayed within the museum at Monumen Palagan Ambarawa (Ambarawa Theater Monument) in Ambarawa, Central Java. My translation.
2. See chapters 8 and 9 of James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
3. 185.
4. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 51.
5. Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler have noted the difficulty of obtaining oral histories from witnesses whose memories conflict with the official narrative of the state. See Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, “Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in ‘New Order’ Java” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2000) 42:1. 4-48.
6. Siegel 185.

7. Halbwachs 51.

8. My translation.

9. During the occupation period, Japan promulgated a blend of Indonesian nationalism and militarism in order to cast the occupation as a cooperative effort in pursuit of the concept of the *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*. In Java and Sumatra, this meant the recruitment of several thousand young men into the paramilitary organizations Heiho and PETA (*Pembela Tanah Air or Defenders of the Homeland*). Several thousand more young men were recruited into official youth organizations that also utilized military training and discipline such as the Islamic organization Hizbollah, although these organizations were rarely armed. According to the terms of Japan's surrender, all of these groups were disbanded and the equipped units of Heiho and PETA were disarmed. The disbandment and disarmament of Indonesians trained in military, police, and general security tactics severely limited the ability of the republican government to assert its authority in the early Revolution period, especially as many of the former members joined irregular *pemuda* (youth) groups and movements that acted autonomously of the government. The best account of the effects of the Japanese proliferation of Indonesian nationalism with militarism, as well as the effects of the disbandment and disarmament of the youth organizations remains Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2006).

10. *Pemuda* is a term that means "youth".

11. See Anton Lucas and Robert Cribb, "Women's Roles in the Indonesian Revolution," in Taufik Abdullah, ed., *The Heartbeat of Indonesian Revolution*, p. 75, note 12. During the Revolution, the growing gender specificity of the word *pemuda* was also suggested by organization names that paired the term with the female signifier *putri*, such as *Pemuda Putri Indonesia*, *Pemuda Putri Republik Indonesia*, or *Barisan Pemuda Putri*. See Irna H. N. Hadi Soewito, ed., *Seribu Wajah: Wanita Pejuang Dalam Kancah Revolusi* ' 45 (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1995), 367-371. For an account of the masculinization of the word *pemuda* and its contemporary political importance, see Pam Nilan, "Contemporary Masculinities and Young Men in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 37.109 (November 2009): 327-344; and Loren Rytter, "*Pemuda Pancasila*: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto's Order," *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998): 45-73.

12. See George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952).; Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (1972; Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2006).; Audrey Kahin, ed. *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Melbourne: Longman, 1974).; and John RW Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution: A Study in the Social History of the Indonesian Revolution* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1964).

13. See Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*

and Audrey Kahin, ed. *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).

14. See Anderson chapter 7.

15. For a fuller account of Tan Malaka's demise and the subsequent impacts for the *pemuda*'s *perjuangan* movement, see Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution* chapters 11 and 12.

16. Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945-1946: Britain, the Netherlands, and the Indonesian Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 12-3.

17. George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell Univeristy, 2003) 142.

18. George Kahin, Benedict Anderson and other scholars of the Indonesian Revolution generally characterize the British involvement in the early months of the period as firmly committed to the re-establishment of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. The more recent research of British historian Richard McMillan offers a necessary correction to this body of scholarship as well as the histories of the period promoted in Britain and the Netherlands to show that the British involvement through SEAC was far more chaotic and never had a clear objective. See McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*.

19. See Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*.

20. For a case study of the attacks on Chinese populations and the *pangreh pradja* by Javanese *pemuda* groups, see John R. W.

Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution*. Heather Sutherland has also written on the pemuda's opposition to the *pangreh pradja* during the Revolution period, see Heather Sutherland, *The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite: The Colonial Transformation of the Indonesian Priyayi* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979).

21. Anderson, 145-7.

22. For a fuller discussion of the *Sendenbu*'s control of media outlets during the occupation period, see Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944-1945* (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1961); and Aiko Kurasawa, "Propaganda Media on Java under the Japanese 1942-1945," *Indonesia* 44 (October 1987): 59-116.

23. For examples, see *Asia Raya*, 5 July 1945; *Soeara Asia*, 5 July 1945; *Tjahaja*, 6 July 1945; and *Penjoeloeh*, 9 August 1945.

24. Of the leftist underground *pemuda*, Anderson writes, "They were not maquis, or undergrounds in the sense of groups engaged in sabotage, spying, or subversion. In most cases their activities amounted to little more than exchanging political gossip, discussing Indonesia's future, speculating on Allied intentions, and criticizing Japanese policy within the privacy of closed groups of friends." Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 39.

25. J.D. Legge, *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Following Recruited by Sutan Sjahrir in Occupation Jakarta* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1988).

26. For the minutes of these meetings, see Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, *Risalah Sidang Badan Penyelidik Usaha-Usaha Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (BPUPKI), *Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PPKI)*, 28 Mei 1945 – 22 Agustus 1945, 4th ed. (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1998).
27. Sutan Sjahrir, *Our Struggle*, Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, trans. (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1968) 28.
28. Legge, *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia*.
29. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 10.
30. 10-15.
31. McMillan 59.
32. These re-emerging and newly formed organizations will eventually belong to the Perjuangan movement
33. See John Smail for example.
34. See Bung Tomo. What presence did Communists and Socialists have in Ambarawa? Was this the impetus for *Persatuan Perjuangan in Januari*?
35. Sukarno’s visit to Ambarawa on November 1st seems to have had little effect in this regard.

COMMENTS FROM PROFESSOR LAURIE SEARS

This is an excellent and original reconstruction of the events leading up to the Battle of Ambarawa Chris. I have learned so much I did not know about the Revolution from you. Your use of Siegel’s idea of “misrecognition” takes you further than existing scholarship on this period of the Revolution, and I think you could extend the argument. As I see it, it is not only the fear of misrecognition of being a Revolutionary fighter or even just a farmer, as we now know from the work of Ann Stoler and Mary Steedly. Rather, this is the beginning of a long period when the Revolution is split, as you so elegantly explain, among three different groups, thus complicating the Kahin/Anderson/ Smail explanation of only two sides to the divide. To me, the big question of this period of the Revolution that your paper clarifies is to show that the people had three choices for their loyalties, whether they articulated them or not. They could sympathize with the tainted Sukarno-Hatta collaborationists, with the underground Sjahrir followers critical of Sukarno-Hatta, or, and this is the biggest issue, with the *pemuda* who wanted to and did continue to carry out the social revolution. The Sukarno-Hatta group was ready to abandon the social revolution at this early moment for recognition by the European powers. Sjahrir was not yet willing to do this, although once he becomes Prime Minister and the major representative of the Republic in Europe bargaining with the Dutch, he too is willing to abandon the social revolution. It is only the *pemuda* and eventually the communists like Musso and Amir Sjarafuddin who even agree, despite their different timelines, on the need for a social revolution. And after Amir

becomes prime Minister, he too abandons the immediacy of the need for the social revolution. As you go further with your studies of the Battle of Ambarawa, I hope you might be able to delineate these lines of division even more sharply. In this process, not only will you be complicating the long-lived Kahin/ Anderson/Smail paradigm but you will also be complicating Siegel’s idea of “misrecognition” by showing how the need for “recognition” was also important to unravel this period of the Revolution.

Christen J. Grorud Endowed Memorial Fund for Student Support

The University of Washington and the Southeast Asia Center in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies wish to thank Chris's family, Mark and Caryl Grorud and Marit Sullivan, in addition to numerous other family and friends, for establishing the Christen J. Grorud Graduate Student Support Fund in Chris's memory.

Many friends and family have come together to ensure Chris's legacy continues. His commitment to his work, to higher education, and to helping others will live on through the Christen Grorud scholars who will benefit from his named endowed fund. This is the initiation of a perpetual fund designed to promote and sustain a deeper understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia, an expression of Chris's passion.

The Christen J. Grorud Endowed Fund for Graduate Student Support will provide financial support for graduate students in Southeast Asia Studies. This endowed fund will ensure stable funding because the generated returns from the fund will support graduate students with research interests in Southeast Asia, honoring Chris's own academic pursuits. This means that the principal gift is never touched, but continues to grow over time and generate a steady, reliable source of income in perpetuity. The Southeast Asia Center is grateful for the generous supporters whose thoughtful contributions will create a strong legacy of honoring Chris. Their gifts will provide the funding for other graduate students to also pursue meaningful and transformative research and projects in Southeast Asia.

If you wish to participate and make a gift to Chris's fund, please contact:

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