

Observing Psychological Aspects of Victims of 1965 Tragedy

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The 1965 Tragedy is an important event of the Indonesian history. Not only it causes countless casualties but also traumatizes its victims.

A psychological study by Aloysius L.S. Soesilo, M.A., UGM doctoral student, shows that victims of the 1965 Tragedy had suffered during imprisonment. Instead of physical pain, they suffered most from psychological pain.

The study is done by examining several biographical writings by former political prisoners in three autobiographies. They are Caramel Budiardjo - *Surviving in the Indonesia Gulag* (Cassel, 1996), Adam Soepardjan - *Mendobrak Penjara Rezim Soeharto* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2004), and N.H. Atmoko - *Banjir Darah di Kamp Konsentrasi: Catatan Harian Aktivis PNI dalam Penjara G30S* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress).

"During imprisonment, they also witnessed the death and suffering of fellow prisoners," he explained in his doctoral public examination at Faculty of Psychology UGM, Monday (7/30).



Each affliction they witnessed and family memories became traumatic events. While the victims were imprisoned, their family members were often socially stigmatized. The victims also received this ill-treatment once they were released.

“Family relations eroded by the status of an ex-political prisoner, economic difficulties and finding a job become additional burdens to the existing trauma,” said the Psychology lecturer of Universitas Satya Wacana.

Loss and trauma of the victims did not only emerge from the 1965 Tragedy. The plight continued to occur even after that. Due to its pervasive impact, Aloysius mentioned trauma cannot only be seen as intrapsychic, but also socio-cultural dynamics.

Traumatization process has only been studied in the sociological, historical, ideological, and discursive contexts, because psychosocial reality before, during, and after the traumatic events always shape a traumatic experience.

“Further studies can examine deeper how the dynamics of the victims’ family and transmission of trauma are realized or not by the following generations,” he concluded.

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