Juggling Money in Yogyakarta. Financial self-help organizations and the quest for security

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All inhabitants of Bujung who can remember 1965-66 have their own story about how they experienced those chaotic months. A short collection:

A pedicab driver: "One day in 1965 the communists gathered on Jalan Usaha. They had prepared Molotov cocktails but in the end there was no confrontation with the police and the army because they fled. There were not so many people killed in those days, at least not in Yogyakarta. People were just taken away. It was the Sultan who prevented more violence."

Another pedicab driver: "In 1965 I kept out of everything. A lot of people from the PKI were taken away. They took them to Wonosari. There they blindfolded them and dumped them in a hole that ended in the sea. At that time people did not look carefully whether a person had sinned or not. All of them were taken. Pak A. joined in pointing out the people who were in PKI and he helped bringing them to Wonosari. When people like him did not like somebody they just said that he was a communist and they were taken away as well. Pak B. was taken away. I have a friend in RW 7 who was sent to Buru Island. He returned, but not such a long time ago. That was the worst place to stay. They had to work hard and a lot of them did not come back. In 1965 I just stayed in my house and waited till everything was over. I did not join in because I am afraid of God. I am afraid to do something wrong."

A krupuk producer: "My father spent two years in a prison here in Yogyakarta. It was just because we had family in the military that he is still alive. Many of his friends died. In the end we were able to buy him out with money, also because of our friends. That was a very difficult time. His krupuk factory was on the verge of collapse. My mother was there with five children and her father-in-law. Together they managed."

A retired policeman: "In 1965 Bujung was the basis of PKI in Yogyakarta. Almost all the men were taken away, and the ward was left empty."

A petrol trader: "I am originally from Riau but I came here to go to senior high school. In 1965 I was still in school and when October came I fled back to Riau. The killings, in which also a lot of my
friends died, took place in November and December. That time I had been living in another ward nearby. All the wards in this part of the city together formed the basis for PKI in Yogyakarta."

Another pedicab driver: "Also before 1965 there was money, but no food, the same as during the Japanese period. For the most part they ate roots and fruits. Those were strange times. Anybody could be your enemy (musahaan dalam selimut). Any friend could betray you. People just pointed to the houses of the people who were with PKI. I have been PNI [the Indonesian Nationalist Party, HL] all my life."

A retired technician: "After independence we had crazy times here. There were a lot of followers of PKI in this area. 90% were members of PKI. A lot of people from the military followed PKI. (...) We were all members of PNI and we were warned not to mix with the PKI people. If I had been a member of the PKI, I would probably not be alive any more. In 1965 after the coup attempt a number of generals were killed. Soon after, the army, the police, and the military police entered Bujung to take away the members of Gerwani and the PKI. Pak F. belonged to one of these military groups. Almost all PKI members were taken away. Many of them were killed and the others were imprisoned. Most of them died in prison. You could say that Bujung was left almost empty. Pak G. himself had a narrow escape. He had just started to follow PKI but he was still very young and they let him go. In fact hardly anybody has returned to Bujung. An exception is Pak B. When he came back he became a Catholic. The communists mostly did not have a religion. Most people who were affiliated but not taken away simply became Muslim."

Another pedicab driver: "I can remember 1965. In those days there were a lot of communists here. One day the Kopassus entered Bujung and a lot of people were taken away. I remember very well that I came back from driving my pedicab and I could not get any food in Jalan Usaha. I went into the ward to my house and decided to look for food somewhere else. I walked around and greeted everybody. In the meantime there was a lot of shooting going on, but I did not worry because I did not have anything to do with the PKI. The operations took place for one month. In the meantime I was sitting at home all the time and driving my pedicab. There were two men from the house next to me taken away. It might be that 90% of the people were taken. There were a lot of widows after that. Some women were taken as well, but only if they were listed as members of the PKI. I also remember one of those days that I was stuck on Jl. Diponegoro. I was not allowed to go anywhere because of the operations taking place in Jetis. Another moment I had two passengers in my pedicab. I did not
recognise them as policemen because they had civilian clothing. They asked me whether I had a weapon. I said yes. So, what is your weapon. My pedicab is my weapon, I said. That is not what we mean, do you have a knife or something like that? I only take a knife for when I want to cut wood in the forest. They laughed at my answer and they said that it was good that I was still working."