

Literary Representation of the Red Scare in Indonesia

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Abstract

This session discusses the depiction of the Left in Indonesian literature since the anti-leftist purge in 1965. The literary development in Indonesia is unique because of the mass killings in 1965-66 and 32-year centralised dictatorship that followed, where literary censorship was at its peak. Even after the regime's end in 1998, most Indonesians still have an innate fear of a potential rise in communism, and literary representation of the Left is still seen as problematic. This session examines Indonesia's institution of literature, the (mis-)use of the idea of cosmopolitanism under the New Order regime (1966-1998), and the ways in which power intersects with literature. Eventually, it provides an insight into the legacy of the Cold War in Indonesia's post-authoritarian period.

Keywords: Indonesia, literature, power, Cold War, Red Scare