Since the Bali bombings of 2002 and the rise of political Islam, Indonesia has frequently occupied media headlines. Nevertheless, the history of the fourth-largest country on earth remains relatively unknown. Adrian Vickers’s book, first published in 2005, traces the history of an island country, comprising some 240 million people, from the colonial period through revolution and independence to the present. Framed around the life story of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Indonesia’s most famous and controversial novelist and playwright, the book journeys through the social and cultural mores of Indonesian society, focusing on the experiences of ordinary people. In this new edition, the author brings the story up to date, revisiting his argument as to why Indonesia has yet to realize its potential as a democratic country. He also examines the rise of fundamentalist Islam, which has haunted Indonesia since the fall of Suharto.

**Adrian Vickers** is Professor of Southeast Asian Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Sydney. He is the author of the acclaimed *Bali: A Paradise Created* (1989). In 2003 he curated the exhibition *Crossing Boundaries*, a major survey of modern Indonesian art, and he has also been involved in making documentary films, including *Done Bali* (1993).
Contents

List of figures, maps and tables page vii
Acknowledgements xi
A note on spelling, pronunciation and names xiii
Chronology xv

Introduction 1
1 Our colonial soil 9
2 Cultures of the countryside 34
3 ‘To assail the colonial machine’ 60
4 The Revolution 87
5 Living in the atomic age 117
6 From the old order to the new 146
7 Terror and development in happy land 174
8 Age of globalisation, age of crisis 202

Biographies of key figures 237
Abbreviations and glossary 245
Notes 249
Bibliography 275
Index 297
List of figures, maps and tables

FIGURES

1.1 ‘East Indies Blind’, Nutcracker, 1 (16 November 1907), commenting on the Aceh situation

1.2 One guilder: Dutch colonial banknote with a depiction of Borobudur temple statues

1.3 Dutch cartoonist Menno: a Dutchman in the East, newly arrived and thirty years later

2.1 The regent of Pasuruhan

2.2 Mills and damping stations, sugar factory

3.1 A Balinese image of modernity, attributed to I Nyoman Ngendon, late 1930s

3.2 An Indo family relaxing at home

3.3 The Dutch government’s struggle to come to terms with the Islamic League

4.1 Cover of Djawa Baroe (New Java), a Japanese propaganda magazine, showing ‘An air hero who has adopted a cockatoo (in Java)’

4.2 100 rupiah, 1943 banknote, Japanese currency, showing an ancient East Javanese statue

4.3 Menteng 31, the colonial hotel that became the Menteng 31 boarding house, where future leaders from the Indonesian political left lived in the 1940s

4.4 Poster from the Revolution: ‘Women, If Necessity Demands, Be Ready to Help the Youth’

4.5 Dutch troops taking the Javanese city of Malang on the morning of 31 July 1947

4.6 Prime Minister Amir Syarifuddin (‘Communist Priest’) addressing the people

page 12
19
27
38
51
62
65
76
89
96
98
104
108
113
viii List of figures, maps and tables

5.1 Newspaper advertisement for a radio manufactured by the Dutch company Philips 131
5.2 Sukarno addressing students in an open-air classroom in Yogyakarta on the value of education 136
5.3 Volunteers in Jakarta signing up for the campaign to liberate Irian from Dutch control 142
6.1 Stamp showing Sukarno’s version of modernity, the Ambarrukmo Palace Hotel in Yogyakarta 151
6.2 1960s stamp showing the monument to the liberation of Irian from Dutch rule 153
6.3 General Suharto as new military commander of the Irian campaign, 1962 154
7.1 500 rupiah note (value approximately US$2 at time of issue in 1968) showing General Sudirman, hero of the Revolution and founder of the army 177
7.2 Stamp showing President Suharto as Chief Scout of Indonesia, 1993 187
8.1 Monas, the National Monument, Jakarta 203
8.2 Benny Rachmadi and Muhammad Misrad’s image of the height of elite consumerism just before the fall of Suharto 210
8.3 Protest poster by Dodi Irwandi (b. 1974) showing the proclamation of the ‘People’s Oath’ 213
8.4 Pramoedya Ananta Toer at the height of his early fame at the beginning of the 1960s 235

MAPS

1 The Netherlands East Indies, showing major islands and cities 8
2 Java, showing major cities by size 35
3 Administrative areas of the Netherlands East Indies in the late colonial period 59
4 Central Jakarta, 1940s to 1960s 101
5 Indonesia, showing the Dutch Federal States, the Republican areas at the end of the Revolution, and the 1950s Darul Islam Revolt 118
6 Jakarta, 1960s to 1998 176
7 Indonesia during the New Order period, showing provinces before 1998 219
List of figures, maps and tables  ix

TABLES

5.1 Monthly Living Costs for a Civil Servant in 1948  139
5.2 Monthly Living Costs for a Civil Servant in 1954  140
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A note on spelling, pronunciation and names

Indonesian has gone through several spelling systems, and there is great inconsistency in the public use of these systems. For the sake of simplicity I have generally used the spelling system introduced in 1972, although Pramoedya preferred the Dutch-era ‘oe’ instead of ‘u’ in the spelling of his name; likewise Dr Djelantik preferred the pre-1972 ‘dj’ instead of ‘j’.

Syllables in Indonesian words are generally pronounced with even weight; ‘a’ is pronounced like the English ‘u’ in ‘up’; ‘e’ is usually pronounced as in the English word ‘step’ or like ‘a’ in ‘day’; ‘i’ is pronounced as in ‘hid’; ‘u’ is pronounced like ‘o’ in ‘do’; ‘c’ is pronounced like the English ‘ch’; ‘sy’ is pronounced ‘sh’. Javanese is transcribed variably in the sources used; the ‘a’ is like the Danish ‘a’, and so is usually rendered as ‘o’, but inconsistently (e.g., ‘Ronggowarsito’).

Although many Indonesians have adopted the use of family names or surnames, there is a great deal of variation in personal names in Indonesia. Some people have only one name, such as Suharto and Sukarno. Many names also incorporate titles, such as the Sumatran aristocratic title ‘Sultan’ in Sutan Syahrir’s name. It is quite common to change names at different stages in life, as when Suwardi Suryaningrat changed his name to Ki Hajar Dewantoro at the age of forty. Many people are known by abbreviated names for simplicity, as in the case of Abdurrahman Wahid, known as ‘Gus Dur’, which combines a Javanese familiar title, ‘Gus’ (short for Gusti but sometimes Agus or Bagus), and an abbreviation of his main name.
Chronology

1870  Beginning of a ‘Liberal Policy’ of deregulated exploitation of the Netherlands East Indies
1873  Beginning of the Aceh War
1888  Founding of the packet steamship line KPM
1890  World depression
1894  Lombok War
1898  General van Heutsz becomes chief-of-staff of the Aceh campaign
Wilhelmina becomes queen of the Netherlands
1901  Ethical Policy proclaimed
1903  Aceh declared conquered
1904  Van Heutsz made governor general
1907  Raden Mas Tirto Adhi Suryo founds Civil Servants’ Association, Sarekat Priyayi
1908  Budi Utomo proclaimed first official nationalist movement
Last Balinese rulers to resist Dutch rule wiped out in a battle to the death
1911  Founding by Tirto Adhi Suryo of the Islamic Traders’ League
1912  Islamic League (Sarekat Islam) becomes first mass-based nationalist party
1914  World War One; the Netherlands is a neutral country in the war
1917  East Indies trade with Europe cut off by the war
Russian Revolution
1918  Death of Tirto Adhi Suryo
1920  Founding of the Communist Party of the Indies (PKI)
Economic downturn
1925  Birth of Pramoedya Ananta Toer
Sharp rise in world commodity prices brings prosperity to the Indies
Chronology

1929
Great Depression

1930
Sukarno’s famous nationalist speech, ‘Indonesia Accuses’, given as defence in his political trial

1940
Germany invades the Netherlands

1941
8 December (7 December in Hawai‘i), US naval base at Pearl Harbor bombed by Japanese

1942
Japan invades the Netherlands East Indies

1945
15 August, Japan surrenders
17 August, Sukarno and Hatta proclaim Indonesia’s independence, signalling the beginning of the Indonesian Revolution
10 November, Battle of Surabaya

1946
Social revolutions, including Three Regions (Tiga Daerah) Revolt
Republican capital established in Yogyakarta
Federal states set up by Dutch in Outer Islands

1947
25 March, Linggajati agreement, first ceasefire
20 July, First Police Action

1948
Abdication of Queen Wilhelmina
19 January, Renville Agreement, Van Mook line established between Republican and Dutch territories
August, fall of Amir Syarifuddin government
18 September, Madiun Affair
December, Second Police Action, fall of Yogyakarta to the Dutch, execution of Amir Syarifuddin by Republicans

1949
February, execution of Tan Malaka by Republican army
1 August, official ceasefire
December, Dutch forced to take part in Round Table Agreement
27 December, Indonesia achieves full sovereignty

1950
Federal states dissolve and Indonesia becomes a unitary republic
Korean War brings high prices for rubber and other Indonesian commodities

1955
First national elections

1956
PRRI–Permesta regional revolts

1957
State of war and siege declared, beginning of Guided Democracy
Dutch enterprises nationalised

1962–3
Irian Jaya (West New Guinea) campaign
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963–5</td>
<td>Confrontation with Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>30th September Movement ‘coup’ (Gestapu) leads to the death of 500,000 to 1 million people identified as Communists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Sukarno hands over power to Suharto through the 11 March Letter of Command (Supersemar), beginning of the New Order regime</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>‘Act of Free Choice’ legitimises Indonesia’s control over Irian Jaya</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>Death of Sukarno</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>First New Order election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>15 January upheavals (Malarí) end the New Order’s ‘honey-moon’ period Pertamina Affair</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Invasion of East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>National election ‘Normalisation’ of university campuses programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>National election</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mysterious Killings (Petrus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Tanjung Priok Affair involving killings of Muslims in Jakarta Clampdown on Islamic political leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>National election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>‘Openness’ campaign announced Establishment of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals’ Association (ICMI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>National election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Press bans end ‘Openness’</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Death of Tien Suharto Attack on Megawati’s faction of the PDI Bre-X scandal (or Busang gold mine scandal)</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Asian financial crisis and drought National election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>21 May, fall of Suharto, replaced by B. J. Habibie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Legislation to create Regional Autonomy National election Referendum leads to political violence and the independence of East Timor Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) becomes president</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Abdurrahman Wahid resigns Megawati Sukarnoputri becomes president</td>
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</tbody>
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Chronology

2004  National election followed by first direct presidential election
      Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) becomes president
      26 December, tsunami
      Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and Indonesian government
      restart peace talks, leading to a peaceful settlement
2005  28 March, massive earthquake hits Sumatra
      15 August, signing of the Helsinki Accord ends Aceh dispute
2006  30 April, death of Pramoedya Ananta Toer
      27 May, massive earthquake hits Yogyakarta region, mud vol-
      cano at Sidoarjo begins on gas-drilling site
2008  27 January, death of Suharto
2009  SBY re-elected
      30 December, death of Gus Dur
2010  Earthquakes hit Sumatra