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978-1-107-01947-8 - A History of Modern Indonesia: Second Edition

Adrian Vickers

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SECOND EDITION

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).

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A HISTORY OF MODERN INDONESIA

Second Edition

ADRIAN VICKERS

The University of Sydney



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[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

This book is the product of more than thirty years of conversations with hundreds of Indonesians. At times I have not listened as attentively as I might, and for that I ask forgiveness, *sampunayang titiang yening wenten kirang langkung*.

Endnotes cannot do justice to my debt to all the people who have influenced me. Those who played the strongest role in shaping my understanding of Indonesia were my mentors and colleagues at the University of Sydney, in particular Peter Worsley and the late Boy Joseph, along with Jenny Alexander, Paul Alexander, Richard Chauvel, Linda Connor, Tony Day, Keith Foulcher, Rudy de Jonge, Helen Jarvis, Michael van Langenberg, Thea van Lennep, Jennifer Lindsay, Doug Miles, George Quinn, David Reeve, Kathy Robinson, Raechelle Rubinstein and Jon Soemarjono. Thanks particularly to Max Lane for his insights into Pramoeđa's thinking.

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[More information](#)*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 'Sutan' 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.

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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

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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 Hawaii), 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

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

xviii	<i>Chronology</i>
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 Pramodya Ananta Toer 27 May, massive earthquake hits Yogyakarta region, mud volcano 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