



A History of Modern Indonesia

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Although Indonesia has the fourth largest population in the world, its history is still relatively unknown. Adrian Vickers takes the reader on a journey across the social and political landscape of modern Indonesia, starting with the country's origins under the Dutch in the early twentieth-century, and the subsequent anti-colonial revolution which led to independence in 1949. Thereafter the spotlight is on the 1950s, a crucial period in the formation of Indonesia as a new nation, followed by the Sukarno years, and the anti-Communist massacres of the 1960s when General Suharto took over as president. The concluding chapters chart the fall of Suharto's New Order after thirty two years in power, and the subsequent political and religious turmoil which culminated in the Bali bombings in 2002. Adrian Vickers is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Wollongong. He has previously worked at the Universities of New South Wales and Sydney, and has been a visiting fellow at the University of Indonesia and Udayana University (Bali). Vickers has more than twenty-five years research experience in Indonesia and the Netherlands, and has travelled in Southeast Asia, the U.S. and Europe in the course of his research. He is author of the acclaimed *Bali: a Paradise Created* (Penguin, 1989) as well as many other scholarly and popular works on Indonesia. In 2003 Adrian Vickers curated the exhibition *Crossing Boundaries*, a major survey of modern Indonesian art, and has also been involved in documentary films, including *Done Bali* (Negara Film and Television Productions, 1993).

A History of Modern Indonesia Details


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From Reader Review A History of Modern Indonesia for online ebook

John Marius says

Re-read this book and enjoyed it so much. Vickers runs the history of modern Indonesia alongside the biography of political activist and author Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Vickers laces the history with comedic flourishes - or at least the academic equivalent. The book draws a picture of an Indonesia unable to find a uniting theme and riddled with a fetish for feudalism.

A great book. If you're interested in further reading into aspects of Indonesian psyche check out Under the Volcano by Cameron Forbes or John Birmingham's work on East Timor.

Dorian says

Good overview of modern Indonesia, though the very recent events (post-Suharto) are rather brief. A better analysis of the contemporary period would probably come from Reformasi.

Erlend says

An good overview of Indonesian history after independence, with a brief dip into the "Dutch era" to help put the events after WW2 and independence in perspective and to help in understanding how events played out.

Wirda Suzli says

Ok, it was good...kalo bukan karna tugas review, gak jamin gw kenal buku ini...And damn, setelah gw baca ternyata buku nya ckup bagus karna membahas Indonesia dr zaman baholok...Adrian Vickers pasti lah banyak sekali ngumpulin data hingga bisa buat buku semacam ini ^_^

Keith says

An excellent introduction to modern Indonesian history. (I first read Colin Brown's short history which was a very helpful overview. Next, Vickers, and then read Ricklef's tome most recently, definitely the right order for me).

Vickers' account is authoritative and very well written. It is vivid because he also draws on the accounts of many people he has conversed with over the years. Eg on the assassination attempt on Sukarno in Cikini 1957, although Prof Ricklef's gives more detail and context, it's from Vickers that we learn that many ordinary people felt more sure he possessed supernatural powers when he survived it.

Vickers' 2nd edition is also more informative than Ricklef's 4th edition on the post 2004 period.

On quirky thing: in his acknowledgements Vickers quotes a Javanese proverb without translating it. I asked my Javanese colleagues what it meant. They all said it was old Javanese and none could understand it!!

Vickers is very good on popular culture, eg Kroncong, dangdut, civil servants' living costs. Also useful that he refers to the writer Pramoedya, and gives helpful maps, throughout. At the back he also gives helpful biographies of key figures. If you only have time to read one book about the modern history of Indonesia, this is definitely the one I'd recommend.

jenny says

using many of pramoedya's fictional works as a guide, this non fiction account of a slice of modern indonesian history is excellent. starting with the establishment of the dutch east indies corp's colony, and leading up to 21st century indonesia - this book does a great job of telling the somewhat mysterious political & social history of the country. there are some excellent tidbits about CIA that will leave you shaking your head at their nasty, meddling ways - including their attempt to make a pornographic movie "starring" the president, sukarno, in order to defame him... which, of course backfired and only increased his popularity. especially now that the government has basically banned the teaching of indonesian history in public schools - this is a good book for many people to get to know.

Gasa Bahar putra says

Sebuah sajian mengenai kajian sejarah Indonesia alternatif yang ditulis oleh salah seorang yang dapat disebut Indonesianis asal Australia yakni Adrian Vickers. Adrian menyajikan "pelajaran sejarah" yang lain dari buku teks yang sering dijadikan buku pegangan wajib anak sekolah di Indonesia dengan mengkaji sejarah dalam sudut pandang orang biasa atau rakyat banyak yang sedikit banyak ia sandarkan pada pengalaman sastrawan Indonesia, Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Buku ini diawali dari kajian mengenai keadaan sebelum Indonesia merdeka atau sebelum terbentuknya negara Indonesia, yang mana masih merupakan bagian imperium belanda yang disebut dengan Hindia Belanda dan diakhiri dengan sejarah indonesia pasca reformasi yang mana masih memunculkan banyak tantangan bagi bangsa Indonesia ke depan. Buku ini dapat dijadikan alternatif dalam mengkaji sejarah Indonesia yang tidak harus melulu dalam cara pandang penguasa karena sejarah tidak hanya milik penguasa, namun juga milik rakyat.

Perdana says

What really extraordinary about this book is how Vickers often used literature (fictional ones) in order to describe Indonesian historical context at that time. He must be cautious then, but it is really OK because he used leading literature like Pram's for example (Tales from Jakarta, Buru Quartet, and so on). It gives new insight and lighter prologue to comprehend Indonesian history.

Missy J says

Hands down the best book on modern Indonesian history!

Just read it, okay.

So Hakim says

Solid, if rather short, history of the country from late 19th century up to general election in 2004. Plenty of old posters, stamps, and strip comics through the ages showing contemporary zeitgeist.

On less serious note: being Indonesian, it's a little amusing to see some local names translated into English for readability. Suddenly they just assume different aura. :)) ("Kebon Kacang" = "Peanut Garden" ?)

Anugerah Erlaut says

A great exposition of the Indonesian history. It is welcoming start for enthusiasts, with just enough amount of details to understand the current landscape of Indonesian daily life.

Antero Tienaho says

Kattava yleisteos Indonesian historiasta kolonialismin päivistä vuoden 2002 tienoille.

Sujuvaa ja funktionaalista tekstiä. Vickers käyttää tehokkaasti eri kirjailijoiden (erityisesti nationalistisen Pramoedyan) teoksia värittämään ja kuvaamaan maan ja ihmisten mielialoja.

Devina Heriyanto says

A complete and detailed narration of Indonesia

Zayn Gregory says

Coming to the topic with almost zero knowledge, I felt like I learned a lot from the book. I had no idea Sukarno's period was as radical as it was, or how strong the Communist party was in those days. It makes clear how Indonesia fit into the Cold War and why it was such an object of US interest.

The swing in national culture from the loose multi-party lefty Sukarno period to the Suharto regime was grimly fascinating. Vickers' description of the stifling New Order conditions was so very familiar. Strike out the proper nouns and the description would fit another country I may or may not be living in right now: the self-censorship of the press, the safari-suit civil servant uniforms, the nearly meaningless government slogans, the shift from universities in city centers to isolated self-contained campuses, mandatory uniformed college student groups that teach marching drills, the use of Chinese tycoons as graft partners and the way that increased resentment of the Chinese while cloaking the real kingpins... Which country are we talking about again?

Histories of this sort are never a pleasurable read, but Vickers' use of Pramoedyan's life and hometown as a

narrative thread helps to give some continuity. Less effective were the quick asides where a specific peasant would be named and quoted in support of a point. "The rupiah devalued 5-fold against the dollar, creating misery for the poor. Mat, 32, a food stall operator in Balikpapan, said, 'Susah, Pak'." I get that there is probably a good reason in theory to include that kind of thing, so that history is not solely the voice of the big and powerful. But these little asides felt like argument by anecdote and reminded me of the horrible affectation in US presidential campaigns of using a specific individual as examples of national problems, like Joe the Plumber. That's a minor thing though and didn't take away from the book at all.

Mindy McAdams says

I chose this single history of Indonesia based on Amazon reviews; they turned out to be spot-on. Probably the most readable history I've ever held in my hands. I read it cover to cover and found only a small bit (in Ch. 5) to be draggy. Devotes 85 pages to pre-WWII, starting in earnest in the late 1800s. The rest of its 224 pages (not counting end-matter) takes us through the fall of Suharto.

Full review:

<http://inidisini.wordpress.com/2011/0...>
