

# TOWARD AN AUTONOMOUS HISTORY OF INDONESIA

—With Special Reference to the Dutch Historical  
Writings on Indonesia—

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The chronicles of pre-colonial Indonesia were influenced by Hindu legends and by the concept of divine kingship and the cyclical view of history both of which stemmed from Hindu philosophy. It was not until the late eighteenth century that the Europeans initiated scientific studies of Indonesian history. By the end of the nineteenth century these studies had evolved into what might be called Dutch colonial history with its primary interest in the expansion of Dutch power in Indonesia. Indonesian nationalists have subsequently tried to revive their own history. Although the idea of "Indonesia-centric" history was advocated after independence, the writing of history for political purposes is being replaced by more substantial studies in each field of history.

## I. THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF HISTORY

After a long stay in Indonesia an American scholar told me that the Indonesian people generally evince little interest in their past. After my visit to the country I felt I could understand what he meant. His remark on the Indonesians' lack of interest in history might well invite criticism: one may ask whether the Hindu-Buddhist remains in Central Java are not relics of the past, or whether the Balinese festivals do not reflect Hindu influences even to this day. Nevertheless, a history-minded people does not always go with an abundance of the relics.

The chronicles known as *Babad* or *Sedjarah* were compiled in many parts of Indonesia before the coming of the Europeans. What matters here, then, is certainly not a lack of indigenous writings on the past, but rather the nature of the texts. First, these chronicles were strongly influenced by Hindu culture which placed a greater emphasis on narrative than on facts. Many of the stories in these chronicles derive from such Indian epics as *Mahabhārata* and *Rāmāyana*. Second, the cyclical view of history which is a special feature of Hindu philosophy greatly influenced the traditional literati of Java. This view classified history into four periods called *yuga*: *krtayuga*, *tretayuga*, *dwāpārayuga*, and *kaliyuga*. According to Hindu myth, a Messianic figure called *ratu-adil* or *erucakra* appears during the final period of *kaliyuga*, at which point history returns to the first period.<sup>1</sup> Third, this Messianic belief was often

<sup>1</sup> See B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, The Hague and Bandung, W. van Heove, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 77-81.

accompanied by the concept of divine kingship. This concept was prevalent not only in Indonesia but also throughout Southeast Asia, notably in Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma. The ancient Javanese regarded their king as an incarnation of god, and *kraton* or the royal palace as the center of universe. A poet called *pudjangga* served in the palace as legitimizing symbol of the king. Just as the king sat in the center of universe, so the *pudjangga* was the center of the intellectual activity of the court. It was the *pudjangga* who compiled most of the chronicles. It is not surprising, therefore, that one fails to find realism in the chronicles.

Thus, one should conclude from the above that Javanese interests in history were different from those of Europeans rather than being immature in a historical sense. It is understandable that the Javanese view of history as such had neither relevance to the masses of the society, nor appeal to the taste of the modern Indonesian intellectuals with Western education who have emerged since the latter half of the nineteenth century.

During the past centuries the Javanese image of the past obviously underwent changes of which the most important occurred under the influence of the expansion of Dutch colonial rule. The Dutch East India Company, which had first gained a foothold in Indonesia at the beginning of the seventeenth century, gradually changed from a commercial concern to a territorial power. By the middle of the nineteenth century the Governors-General of the Dutch East Indies had successfully brought most of Java under their control. Following these political changes, European cultural influences came to be diffused in Java and the rest of Indonesia. Therefore, before discussing the Indonesians' view of history after independence we should examine the nature of historical studies under Dutch colonial rule.

## II. THE HERITAGE OF COLONIAL HISTORY

The scholarly interests of Europeans in Indonesia date back to the days of their appearance in Eastern Asia. Tomé Pires, a Portuguese and the author of *Suma Oriental*, lived in Malacca in the first half of the sixteenth century, and referred to Indonesia in his book. The *Itinerario*, the first Dutch travelogue and written by Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, contained a detailed account of Indonesia. The seventeenth century saw not only an increase in number but also an improvement in quality of the works on Indonesia. The authors' interests shifted from superficial description to the analysis of contemporary political conditions and of historical background of the area. During the early eighteenth century François Valentijn wrote *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* or Old and New East Indies<sup>2</sup> which still remains one of the most detailed accounts of Indonesia and other Asian countries. Valentijn's work signals a change in the nature of studies dealing with Indonesia. His long experience in the country is reflected in his approach to the writing of Indonesian history: whereas earlier authors had written for an audience of European

<sup>2</sup> 5 vols., Dordrecht-Amsterdam, 1724-26.

scholars largely unacquainted with Asia, authors from Valentijn on began to carry out research in Indonesia and to write for a more specialized audience. In this way, the following decades saw a steady increase in the number of the scholars specializing in Indonesian studies. It was in 1778, for example, that the Englishman Sir William Jones founded "the first society to study the culture of the people in Java."<sup>3</sup>

During the British occupation of Java from 1811 to 1816 the British Vice-Governor of Java, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, carried out land reforms and encouraged studies of Indonesia. He himself wrote *The History of Java* in 2 volumes (London, 1817); William Marsden published *History of Sumatra* (London, 1811). The two books came to be regarded as standard works although despite their titles they contained more about contemporary Indonesia and its flora and fauna than about history in a narrow sense of the word.

With the intensification of Dutch rule over Indonesia from the middle of the nineteenth century, the number of scholars visiting Indonesia increased. The Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Institute for Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology), established at the Hague in 1851, was to become one of the leading institutions for the study of the Dutch East Indies for more than a century. In addition, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 accelerated communications between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

The changes resulting from increased Western penetration had as one consequence the degradation of the traditional value system of the Javanese literati. As royal power in Java declined, the role of the *pudjangga*, the court poet, atrophied. This may be seen from the fact that no successor was found for the *pudjangga* Ranggawarsita upon his death in 1850, and the post remained unfilled thereafter. Furthermore, it is also significant that before his death Ranggawarsita became acquainted with European scholars visiting Java, and through them he became interested in the methods of Western historiography. As C. C. Berg stated, Ranggawarsita, though with little success, tried to be the first scientifically oriented Javanese historian.<sup>4</sup> This episode may exemplify the essential changes that were taking place in historical research and writing.

From 1862 through 1888 J. E. J. de Jonge and others edited the monumental thirteen volume work entitled *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost Indië: Verzameling van onuitgegevene stukken uit het oud-koloniaal archief (1594-1811)* [The Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies: Collection of the Unpublished Materials from the Old-colonial Archives (1594-1811)].<sup>5</sup> This is a collection of historical documents concerning Dutch activities in Indonesia from the time of their arrival, with the comments on the documents at the end of each volume taking the form of historical descriptions in chronological

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Casparis, "Historical Writings on Indonesia (Early Period)," in D. G. E. Hall ed., *Historians of South-East Asia*, Historical Writings on the Peoples of Asia, London, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> F. W. Stapel ed., *Geschiednis van Nederlandsch-Indië* (History of the Netherlands Indies), 5 vols., Amsterdam, Joost van den Vondel, 1938-40, Vol. II, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1862-88.

order. Therefore, this publication may be called the prototype of later compilations of Dutch colonial documents and at the same time the style of the comments of this book set an example for the writing of the history of Dutch East Indies. J. A. van der Chijs, the first Director of the Dutch Colonial Archives in Batavia, the present Djakarta, used this work as a model when making his compilations of the Resolutions made at the Castle of Batavia,<sup>6</sup> and the "Collection of the Edicts of the Netherlands Indies."<sup>7</sup> The most remarkable of his efforts, however, was the compilation of the *Dagh-Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant Passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts India, 1624-82* (Diaries Kept at the Castle of Batavia of the Events Over There As Well As the Whole Netherlands Indies: 1624-82), an endeavor in which several other scholars participated.<sup>8</sup>

The Dutch interests in documentation outlived even the loss of the colony after World War II. W. Ph. Coolhaas, for example, started publishing the General Missives of the Dutch East India Company in 1960, and as of March 1968, two volumes covering the years 1610-66 have been published.<sup>9</sup> In addition, S. L. van der Wal finished his work of assembling archives of the previous Dutch Ministry of Colonies from 1900 to 1941 in four volumes.<sup>10</sup>

Along with these activities, general descriptions and specific studies relating to the Dutch colonization of Indonesia continued to appear in such number that one could not discuss them all. Even if attention is concentrated on only the most voluminous works in the field of general history, there are H. T. Colenbrander's *Koloniale geschiedenis* (Colonial History),<sup>11</sup> E. S. de Klerck's *History of the Netherlands East Indies*,<sup>12</sup> and *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië* (*History of the Netherlands Indies*) edited by F. W. Stapel.<sup>13</sup> A. D. A. de Kat Angelino's *Staatkundig belied en bestuurszorg in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Political Ad-

<sup>6</sup> *Realia: op de General Resolutiën van het Kasteel Batavia: 1632-1805*, 4 vols., Leiden, 1882-88.

<sup>7</sup> *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek: 1602-1811*, 4 vols., Leiden, 1882-85.

<sup>8</sup> 31 vols., Batavia, 1887, etc.

<sup>9</sup> *General Missiven van Gouverneurs-General en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (General Missives of the Governors-General and the Council to the Seventeen Gentlemen of the United East India Company), Deer I: 1610-38; Deer II: 1639-55, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960-64.

<sup>10</sup> *Het onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië: 1900-1942* (The Education Policy in the Netherlands-Indies), Groningen, J. B. Wolters, 1963. [Uitgaven van de Commissie voor Bronnenpublicatie betreffende de geschiedenis van Nederlands-Indië 1900-1942 van het Historisch Genootschap (gevestigd te Utrecht No. 1.) (Published by the Committee for the Publication of Source Materials Concerning the History of the Netherlands Indies (1900-1942) of the Historical Society Founded in Utrecht. No. 1)]

—*De Volksraad en de staatkundige ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indië: 1891-1926 & 1927-1942* (The People's Council and the Political Development of the Netherlands-Indies), 2 vols., Groningen, J. B. Wolters, 1964-65. [Uitgaven... Nos. 2 & 3.] The fourth volume has not been available so far.

<sup>11</sup> 3 vols., The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1925-26.

<sup>12</sup> 2 vols., Rotterdam, W. L. & S. Brusse, 1938.

<sup>13</sup> 5 vols., Amsterdam, Joost van den Vondel, 1938-40.

ministration and Management in the Netherlands Indies),<sup>14</sup> though one can hardly call it history, discusses the development of Dutch colonial administration. Non-Dutch scholars like Amry Vandenbosch and J. S. Furnivall have also published works on the Dutch East Indies,<sup>15</sup> in both cases during World War II. B.H.M. Vlekke's *Nusantara*<sup>16</sup> seems to have put an end to the genre of Dutch colonial history.

It is hard to generalize about the works of these numerous historians, but one may at least conclude that one theme common to most of the authors was taking the continuous Dutch rule over Indonesia for granted. This led on the one hand to disproportionate emphasis on Dutch activity in Indonesia at the expense of the Indonesians, and to the justification of Dutch colonial rule on the other. In this respect, the more detached works of Vandenbosch, Furnivall and Vlekke can be regarded as exceptions. The most striking exception, however, is *Indonesië* written by S. J. Rutgers and A. Huber in 1937. The authors of this work, adopting the Marxian interpretation of history, condemned Dutch colonial rule as imperialistic exploitation; despite some remaining traces of emphasis on the Dutch side of history, this book certainly was a forerunner of post-colonial historical writing on Indonesia.

Apart from these general histories, B. Schricke and J. C. van Leur contributed to the study of Indonesia through their use of sociological methodology, which provided deeper insight into various problems in Indonesian history. It was not until after World War II, however, that the English translation of their works began attracting the attention of general readers.

The interests of European scholars in Indonesia were not limited to the colonial period. Dutch scholars organized many projects for excavating and restoring ancient remains throughout Indonesia, particularly in Central Java. They also carried out philological studies of the traditional chronicles written in Javanese and other languages. It is in these fields that the Dutch scholars from the universities of Leiden and Utrecht were pre-eminent in Europe. Hendrik Kern and J. L. A. Brandes laid the foundation for archeological studies around the turn of the nineteenth century, while N. J. Krom, in the following generation, performed the same function for art history through his work.<sup>17</sup> C. C. Berg, Th. Pigeaud, and others are still maintaining the Leiden tradition of research in ancient Javanese through their brilliant studies; A. A. Cense and J. Noorduyt are studying the literature of islands other than Java.

From this brief review of European, mostly Dutch, studies on Indonesia

<sup>14</sup> 3 vols., The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1931.

<sup>15</sup> Amry Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies: Its Government, Problems and Politics*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, California University Press, 1942 and J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Vlekke, *Nusantara: A History of East Indian Archipelago*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1943. Its fourth and revised edition was later published by W. van Hoeve, the Hague & Bandung in 1959.

<sup>17</sup> *Hindoe-Javaansche kunst* (Hindu-Javanese Art), The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1923 and *Hindo-Javaansche geschiedenis* (Hindu-Javanese History), The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1931.

prior to independence, certain conclusions may be drawn: first, Dutch expansion in the end caused the gradual but inevitable disintegration of the traditional Javanese view of history. Second, the Javanese literati were forced to evolve an entirely new view of history at the expense of the previous one. As Mohammad Ali stated, these two views of history were different in their interpretation of "the purpose and function of historiography."<sup>18</sup> Ali also noted that the "anthropo-centric" view of history was replaced with the "cosmocentric" one.<sup>19</sup> One might well wonder if the Javanese would not be able to accept the new outlook as naturally as they had done in the instance of the Hindu and Islamic faith centuries before. This was to be utterly impossible, however, because third, the Javanese were to confront, in the European interpretations, an image of their own past which differed uncomfortably from that with which they had been acquainted.

Despite their discomfort, the Javanese found it difficult to close their eyes to the new image presented to them, because fourth, most of the historical sources and materials which the European scholars used were ones of which the Javanese had formerly been unaware. In other words, the outcome of European studies of Indonesia presented the Javanese with new historical facts rather than new interpretations of known facts. The kingdoms of Srivijaya and Majapahit, for example, were rediscovered by the Dutch scholars. Since one of these kingdoms had flourished outside Java and the other had held beyond Java, it was obvious that their history was not only the concern of the Javanese but of Indonesians in general. Ironically it was through the academic activities of non-Indonesians that the Indonesians became more conscious of the glory of their past, in which they were to find the spiritual basis of their unity some decades later.

Fifth, what is the most important is that all these changes largely reflect the expansion of Dutch political power in Indonesia. Regardless of their intention, the Dutch historians not only were safely protected by the colonial rule, but sometimes even cooperated in strengthening its control. Therefore, it is obvious that the Indonesians would tend to be more conscious of present misery rather than their glorious past, notwithstanding the rediscovery of a few ancient kingdoms. Even though in theory the cosmocentric view of history may have been replaced by an anthropocentric one, in fact the human beings who were to be the hub of history were not Indonesians. Soejatmoko, one of the most outstanding Indonesian intellectuals, once described the situation in which his countrymen found themselves as "the...loss of direct responsibility for our own destiny and future."<sup>20</sup> Such apathy on the part of the Indonesians not only lasted but worsened, for after all, it was not they

<sup>18</sup> "Historiographical Problems," in Soedjatmoko *et al.* eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1965, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>20</sup> Soedjatmoko, *An Approach to Indonesian History: Towards an Open Future*, Translation Series, Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1960, p. 6.

but someone else who was creating their history.

Indonesians remained indifferent to historical science, because their problems would not have been solved by the adoption of Western methods of historical research. Even when some Indonesians became interested in the ancient period of their own country, their interest tended not to be concentrated on historical facts as such.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Indonesian universities which had been established since the 1920's did not produce a single specialist in historical science up to the outbreak of World War II.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, one can safely assume that whenever, in those days, an Indonesian discussed the history of his country he was making his statement as an amateur historian. One of the earliest examples of such a historian was Dr. Radjiman Wediodipoero, a medical doctor at the court of Djakarta. He emphasized the need for historical education for his countrymen in a speech on the 27th of June, 1918 at the first session of the *Volksraad* or the People's Council which had been established as an advisory body for the Governor-General. He criticized the current colonial educational policy for overemphasizing purely intellectual and moral education, and emphasized the need for teaching the history of one's own nation for the cultivation of one's sense of nationalism.<sup>23</sup> Among statements relating to this subject made by these amateur historians, the most effective were doubtless those of Sukarno. From the formation in 1927 of the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), he energetically continued to condemn colonialism and imperialism through his articles and speeches, contrasting the darkness of the colonial regime with the glory that he thought was Indonesia before the coming of the Dutch. His idea was most explicitly expressed in his statement made at his public trial in 1930. [Later published in book form, *Indonesia Menggugat* (Indonesia Accuses).] The V-shaped image of history consisting of glorious past, miserable present, and promising future gradually was beginning to penetrate Indonesian minds, when Indonesia got involved in World War II in December 1941.

### III. HISTORICAL WRITING DURING THE PERIOD OF STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

The Japanese military occupation of Indonesia from the spring of 1942 to August 1945 helped diffuse "the V-shaped view" of history. This does not mean, however, that the Japanese military government intended to stimulate the nationalism of the Indonesian people. While the Japanese policy certainly

21 For instance, Hoesein Djajaningrat, the first Indonesian to obtain a doctoral degree from the University of Leiden, published *Critische beschouwing van de Sadjarah Banten* (Critical View of the Banten Chronicles), Haarlem, Tjeenk Willink, 1913. His interest, however, was not so much in the historical aspects of the Chronicles as in their philological and literary value.

22 Bambang Oetomo, "Some Remarks on Modern Indonesian Historiography, in D.G.E. Hall ed., *op. cit.*, p. 74.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

aimed at denouncing Dutch colonial rule,<sup>24</sup> it did not plan to approve Indonesian independence until the last months of the occupation. It is said that an Indonesian textbook entitled *Mata Hari*, compiled by the Dutch government, contained a map showing the Netherlands and Indonesia as about same size,<sup>25</sup> whereas in reality the latter was thirty-five times bigger. Using this as a model the Japanese military administration intended to insert the Japanese empire into the map in place of the Netherlands, side by side with Indonesia, again ignoring the scale. The Japanese administration suspended the teaching of Dutch in the schools, and at the same time tried to replace it with instruction on Japanese. When the Japanese administration realized that the language program could not work within such a short period, it allowed the concurrent use of the Indonesian language. Thus *Bahasa Indonesia* or the Indonesian language became the official language in the government offices and schools. In view of the close relationship among national language, national consciousness, and interests in national history, it is not surprising that the Japanese military administration, with all its efforts to stem the nationalist movement, was necessarily undermining its own colonial rule.

Two days after Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, the Republic of Indonesia declared independence, and the struggle against the Dutch set in. Indonesian armed resistance continued until the transfer of sovereignty agreed upon at the Round Table Conference at the Hague was accomplished in 1949. During the years prior to 1949 the psychological campaign against the Dutch was in full swing. It was from the time of this struggle that there was a ceaseless and overwhelming flow of books on Indonesian history. Most of these books assumed a clear-cut dichotomy between Dutch colonial rule defined as imperialistic on the one hand, and the rise of Indonesian nationalism on the other. In contrast with this general trend, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia* (History of the Indonesian People's Movements) by Pringgodigdo should be regarded as exceptional in that he identified both internal and external factors as stimuli for the surge of Indonesian nationalism. Specifically, Pringgodigdo pointed out Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, the 1911 Revolution in China, and the movements of the Young Turks during the first decade of this century as external impacts, while he emphasized the importance of the development of Western-style education, the relaxation of restrictions on Indonesians' right of assembly and association, and the establishment of the *Volksraad* for the betterment of the status of the Indonesians as internal stimuli.

In his article "Some Remarks on Modern Indonesian Historiography," Bambang Oetomo neatly isolated the following two characteristics as the common features of Indonesian historical writing: the glorification of the past and the extolling of the leaders who fought against the Dutch.<sup>26</sup> Typical of

<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Kikuo Koshino, *Dokuritsu to kakumei—wakaki Indoneshia* (Independence and Revolution—Young Indonesia), Tokyo, Indonesia Economic Institute, 1958, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> Bambang Oetomo, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.



the first is Muhammad Yamin's work on the kingdom of Madjapahit in which he regards the Minister Gadjah Mada's term of office as the golden age of the kingdom. Illustrating the second characteristic is the abundant publication of biographies dealing with such figures as Diponegoro, who was a nationalist hero in the Java War, Imam Bondjol of the Padri War, Teuku Umar of the Atjeh War, and Raden Adjeng Kartini, a pioneer in the women's movement.<sup>27</sup> Biographies of other nationalist leaders, such as Soetomo, one of the founders of the Budi Utomo, and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo who was a leader of the Indies Party, also appeared. While some of these works are of high academic quality, most of them hardly deserve the name of historical writing. In fact, at times their position in nationalist literature was incompatible with their value as history. It is ironic to note that when history was written to appeal to the people's nationalist sentiments it was not necessary to demonstrate historical fact; while when history was written as scholarly research it could not help appealing to Dutch sources. It is reported that the principles of history education at the schools during the first years of independence were almost wholly based on the works of F. W. Stapel. Therefore, even though the name was changed to "Indonesian history," what was actually being taught was hardly different from the history of the Netherlands Indies.<sup>28</sup> It was not until the latter part of the nineteen-fifties that Indonesian scholars began re-examining the conditions of Indonesian historiography.

#### IV. DEBATES ON INDONESIAN NATIONAL HISTORY

A series of symposia on the historical studies of Southeast Asia were held at the University of London during the years of 1956-58. The results of these symposia were published in 1961 as *Historians of South-East Asia* under the editorship of D. G. E. Hall. Together with many other specialists on Southeast Asian history, Bambang Oetomo wrote an article on the development of Indonesian historical studies to date, and stated: "there is as yet no sign of a renaissance in Indonesian historiography."<sup>29</sup> He meant that Indonesian society was still in a period of transition, and he concludes the article with the remarks: "Only the future can disclose the answer to those questions [pertaining to Indonesian historiography]."<sup>30</sup> His seemingly pessimistic views, however, should not be regarded as an expression of disappointment in the situation of Indonesian historiography, still less as a longing for the heritage of scholarly works which had been produced under Dutch colonial rule. Instead, it should be noted that his statement was based on his deep insight into the most desirable direction for Indonesian historiography in the future. In other words, while he appreciated the fact that consciousness of their national history was the most decisive stimulus for revolution and independ-

<sup>27</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Mohammad Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Oetomo, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

ence, he was of the opinion that the role of historical writings as propaganda, such as those of Sukarno, should be ended.<sup>31</sup>

While these symposia were being held, the Ministry of Education of Indonesia, in 1957, commissioned Gadjah Mada University in Djokjakarta and the Indonesia University in Djakarta to form a council to propose new approaches for historical research, history education, and many other problems concerning Indonesian national history and historiography. Mohammad Ali enumerated the suggested problems in his article:<sup>32</sup>

1. The philosophical concept of national history
2. Periodization of Indonesian history
3. Requirements for the writing of a textbook on Indonesian national history
4. Teaching Indonesian national history in the schools
5. The training of historians
6. The preservation and use of historical materials

Although it is regrettable that the data for the activities of the Indonesia University have not been available, Gadjah Mada University reportedly organized in December 1957 seminars on these subjects in which Muhammad Yamin and Soedjatmoko among others expressed their opinions. While what Muhammad Yamin had to say on this particular occasion is obscure, Soedjatmoko's presentation, entitled "An Approach to Indonesian History: Towards an Open Future,"<sup>33</sup> was published by Cornell University in 1960.

In this article Soedjatmoko first stated: "Indeed historians lately seem to concern themselves with the philosophy of history."<sup>34</sup> Admitting that he himself was not a specialist in historiography, he could not help revealing his deep concern about Indonesian history because of his "awareness of the inseparable ties which link the future we want with our choices in the present and our concept of the past."<sup>35</sup> Since Indonesia's fate had hitherto always been determined by forces from the outside, it was no wonder, he further stated that the Dutch-centered view of Indonesian history had prevailed. Now that Indonesia had become independent, fully aware of her own strength emanating from within, it was high time to write the truly "autonomous history" which the country deserved. Up to this point, his viewpoint might seem to be another form of amateurism similar to those mentioned before. The point to be made, however, was that he stood against the formation of a specific philosophy of Indonesian national history. Referring to the historical instinct unique to Javanese aristocrats from ancient times,<sup>36</sup> Soedjatmoko claimed that historical thinking is nothing but the view that "the experience

<sup>31</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> Mohammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Soedjatmoko, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Personally, however, I tend to disagree with Soedjatmoko in pointing out the historical instinct of the Javanese aristocrats, for the reasons mentioned above, see Section I.

of mankind is as a series of events which can and must be understood in terms purely of secular factors."<sup>37</sup> Philosophy of history, according to him, should be based on world history, and no study of history should favor any particular nation at the expense of others. This prejudice, he emphasized, was as dangerous as the passive apathy of the Indonesians in the past. He stated that a philosophy of history should be created from the accumulation of objective studies on specific subjects and periods of history. Accordingly, while he admitted that it would be quite feasible to start the search for technical terms of historiography and for periodization with the theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, or other social scientists, he warned against excessive reliance upon these theories at the expense of individual historical facts.

Soedjatmoko's views are significant not only in the fields of philosophy and theory of history but also in the more specific aspects of Indonesian history. The method usually employed by the Dutch historians, who began their research of Indonesia after the nineteenth century when the colonial rule was at its zenith, led them to an overestimation of the Dutch power during the preceding centuries. In the hope of correcting this distortion, Soedjatmoko suggested re-evaluating the Dutch position in Indonesia during the preceding centuries in terms of not more than one of the local kingdoms which were scattered all over the area. His well-balanced viewpoint owes much to the works of J. C. van Leur mentioned earlier.<sup>38</sup> After citing a few examples of the postwar contributions of Dutch scholars to Indonesian historiography, Soedjatmoko concluded his article with words to the effect that true philosophy could be created on the basis of the kind of sound historical research he proposed.<sup>39</sup>

It is doubtful whether the views of Soedjatmoko were at all persuasive in the seminars. There was such a split of opinion among Indonesian historians at that time that they would not have listened objectively to any particular view no matter how valid. The failure to adopt any uniform philosophy of history at the end of these seminars<sup>40</sup> may well reflect the confusion that prevailed. In the meantime, Indonesia was gradually moving toward the "Guided Democracy" instituted by Sukarno after 1959.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it should not be at all surprising if Soedjatmoko was referring to the increasingly dictatorial tendency of Sukarno when he characterized contemporary trends of historical writing in Indonesia as *gesocializeerd geschiedsverhaal* or "socialized historical narrative."<sup>42</sup> The increasing pressure on Soedjatmoko

<sup>37</sup> Soedjatmoko, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>38</sup> See p. 211 above.

<sup>39</sup> Soedjatmoko, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>40</sup> Mohammad Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> From about October 1956, Sukarno had already been calling for the dissolution of the political parties. In February 1957 he made an important speech proposing "Guided Democracy." See Yoichi Itagaki ed., *Indoneshia no seiiji shakai kōzō* (Politico-Social Structure of Indonesia), Research Report Series No. 13, Tokyo, Institute of Asian Economic Affairs, 1961, pp. 222-227.

<sup>42</sup> Soedjatmoko, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

by the government in the years preceding the Coup d'état of September 30, 1965,<sup>43</sup> may have been related to his criticism of Sukarno's policy.

It still seems premature to undertake an analysis of the whole process and significance of the Coup of September 30, 1965, especially because of continuing excessive emotional involvement as well as of the lack of important sources. Nevertheless, at least one thing can be said concerning the changes in the intellectual climate which were brought about by a series of political changes following the Coup: Indonesian nationalism, which grew out of the resistance to colonial rule, now liberated itself from the spell of its own myth. In another of his articles written around 1964, "The Indonesian Historian and His Times," Soedjatmoko explicitly pointed out the danger that the a historical way of thinking, together with the irrational elements of nationalism, might survive the revolution and independence. He also stated that historians could contribute to the creation of history by sometimes rejecting the superficial demands of the times.<sup>44</sup> His assertion on the whole sounds quite reasonable. With all due respect to the upsurge of Indonesian nationalism, one could not but admit that an exclusive nationalist approach to history would, after all, not further the study of world history—within which the histories of all nations are necessarily juxtaposed and interrelated. Recalling the opening remarks of this article, one might observe that now, for the first time, Indonesians began to be interested in their own past.

#### V. FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF INDONESIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Hitherto we have reviewed the trend of the studies of Indonesian history with a special emphasis on how the Indonesians regarded their own history. As non-Indonesians who are interested in the history of Indonesia, we cannot be indifferent to the changes in the concept of history on the part of the Indonesians. Furthermore, what we nowadays call "area studies" necessarily has resulted in increased contact and communication among area specialists throughout the world. One may sometimes wonder whether a non-Indonesian can truly understand Indonesian society; or, to put it more generally, whether one's nationality is an important factor when one is studying another nation. This would apply not only to the history of other Southeast Asian countries but to all the area studies. John R. W. Smail wrote a revealing article entitled "An Autonomous History of South-East Asia" which is germane to this problem.<sup>45</sup> He first classified the approaches of the study of Southeast Asian history into two major types, i. e., Europe-centric and Asia-centric, and examined each of these two types under the following four categories:<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> This fact was confirmed in my interview with Soedjatmoko at Djakarta on March 30, 1967.

<sup>44</sup> Soedjatmoko, "The Indonesian Historian and His Time," in Soedjatmoko *et al.* eds., *op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> *Journal of South-East Asian History*, II-2 (July 1961).

1. Ethnic difference
2. Thought world
3. Value judgment
4. Perspective

The first category refers to the assumption that only studies carried out by Asians could be regarded as Asia-centric. This he rejected as meaningless since, if it were true, no non-Asians could expect to study Asia. The second category refers to the distinction between the world outlook of Asians and of non-Asians. Although this might look more than the first category, Smail stated that this distinction, after all, is not feasible either, because there are no longer separate thought-worlds, but an integral world history, and because there is no actual difference in thought-worlds among most of the intellectuals throughout the world because they have invariably received a Western education.

Connected with this is the third category, that of value judgment. This problem of value judgment, in Smail's opinion, indicates a dichotomy between two extremes: the attitude that advocates if not justifies the Western domination of colonies as inevitable, and the attitude that attacks colonial rule as the source of all evil. These two extremes represent discrete, mutually exclusive, closed images of the world, and as intellectual constructs are more imaginary than real. In fact, the two views are like the extremes of a continuum with infinite gradations between: with the result that a historian will always criticize other historians for occupying a position elsewhere along the continuum, for maintaining a more or a less anti-colonial stance from his own. Such criticism and the ensuing arguments can lead to no conclusion; no constructive dialogue can be conducted so long as historians adhere to their differing images of the world and permit these to influence their value judgments.

Smail then discusses the fourth category: perspective. Regardless of the abundance and greater reliability of European source materials on Asia, the peoples of Southeast Asia continued to play the most important roles in Southeast Asian history. Therefore, Smail stated, in writing the history of these areas, not only should adequate space be given to these people, but also they should receive the primary importance that their role deserves. This statement would be of a greater significance, if one thinks of fields of history other than politics.

Although people tend to think that Dutch political domination of Indonesia started much earlier, it could not possibly date back earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century as has been suggested in the preceding pages of this article, even if one limits his scope to Java alone. Furthermore, as Smail stated, even after the expansion of Dutch rule the societies and cultures of the various parts of Indonesia were kept intact and maintained their identities until later. Smail ended his article by suggesting that Southeast

<sup>46</sup> These categories and the following paragraphs are not direct quotations, but just an outline of Smail's arguments as I understand them.

Asian, especially Indonesian, historiography in the future would develop more conspicuously in the fields of social and cultural history than in that of political history, and in the field of local rather than national history.

It is significant that almost all the authors who have been introduced in this article agree that the truly scientific study of history in Indonesia should start now, and that it will start. It is self-evident that the general history of any country can only improve through the gradual accumulation of specialized books and monographs on more technical subjects. These individual studies, in their turn, would enrich the heritage of "autonomous Indonesian history," which has just come into being.