



PROJECT MUSE®

Indonesia

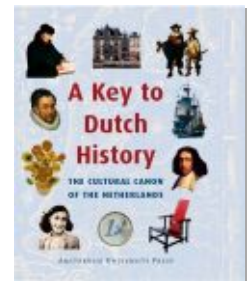
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Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

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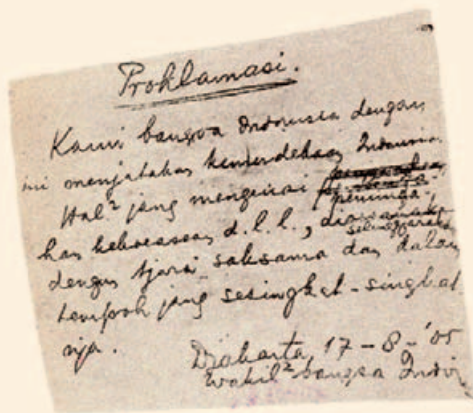
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1945 - 1949

Indonesia

A colony fights for freedom

Proklamasi. Kami bangsa Indonesia dengan ini menjatakan kemerdekaan Indonesia...

We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia...

On 17 August 1945, in a brief ceremony on the streets of Jakarta, Sukarno made a short statement proclaiming to the world that colonial rule of the Dutch East Indies had ended. Two days earlier, Japan had surrendered after the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With Japan's surrender, World War II in Asia was brought to an end.

A widespread independence movement had existed in the Dutch East Indies before World War II. Nationalist leaders like Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir wanted their country to be free of the Netherlands, others simply wanted more autonomy. The Dutch administration, however, kept a tight hand on the reins.

And then came the Japanese invasion in 1942. On 27 February, the allied forces were defeated in the Java Sea Battle and

their surrender followed on 8 March. The allied troops became prisoners of war, most Dutch citizens were interned in civilian camps, and many men were taken into forced labour. The Japanese dismantled the administration system of the Dutch East Indies and in reality this signalled the end of the existence of the Dutch East Indies.

After 1945, the Netherlands tried to restore its colonial administration through negotiations and with force, in two police actions. However, on 27 December 1949, under a great deal of international pressure, it accepted Indonesian independence. Dutch New Guinea was only relinquished in 1962, and finally, after a transition period under UN supervision and a plebiscite held among the Papuans, the territory was ceded to Indonesia. This meant that from 1969, the national borders of modern-day Indonesia were the same as those of the former Dutch East Indies.

Fighting was heavy during the struggle for independence. By the 1960s, a total of

over 300,000 Dutch people, Indo-Europeans, Papuans and Indonesians had left the country. Most of these travelled to the Netherlands. They included 12,500 Moluccan soldiers of the former Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) and their families. In 1951, they arrived in the Netherlands where their military service was terminated.

This decolonisation is not yet a thing of the past. In 2005, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the

celebrations surrounding the sixtieth anniversary of Indonesian independence. In this way, the Netherlands accepted that Indonesia had gained independence not in 1949, but on 17 August 1945. Minister Bot expressed regret that the Netherlands at that time “had stood on the wrong side of history, as it were” and had caused a great deal of suffering in so doing. This was an important, sometimes confrontational speech for everyone involved – in Indonesia and the Netherlands alike.



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Sub-topics

Primary education sector

A map of Indonesia (including New Guinea)
Sukarno, the struggle for independence and police actions

Indo-Europeans (from Indonesia and the Moluccas)

Secondary education sector

The legacy of the Dutch in Indonesia

The war in the Pacific

The police actions and the transfer of sovereignty

The history of the decolonisation of South Asia and

South-East Asia: India, Indonesia, Vietnam

Settling in the Netherlands: the history of Indo-Europeans (from the Moluccas and Indonesia)

Past and Present

Relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia since independence

In the Treasure Chest

Picture of the coat of arms of Indonesia (with an explanation)

Batik

References

Places to Go

Monuments in numerous towns (the Indonesian monument in The Hague, etc.)

Utrecht: Moluccan Historical Museum

Arnhem: Open-air Museum, Bronbeek

Amsterdam: Tropical Museum, Resistance Museum

Indonesian restaurants

Books for young people

Marion Bloem, *Matabia, of een lange donkere nacht* (9+)

Wieteke van Dort, *Kind in Surabaya, Indische herinneringen* (9+)

Vivian den Hollander, *Alleen Beer mocht mee* (9+)

Robin Raven, *De vloek van Pak* (9+)

Hella Haasse, *Oeroeg* (14+)

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Guerrilla familie* (14+)

Background literature

Frans Glissenaar, *Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren.* (Verloren Verleden 19), Hilversum 2003

Websites

www.nationaalarchief.nl [...] Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL)