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INDONESIAN NATIONALISM TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE¹

Benedict R. O'G. Anderson

In my experience nationalism is frequently misunderstood. For that reason this morning I will begin my remarks by discussing briefly two common kinds of misunderstanding, using Indonesia as an example of a phenomenon almost universal in this century which is now crawling to its end.

The first is that nationalism is something very old and is inherited from, of course, "absolutely splendid ancestors." Thus it is something that arises "naturally" in the blood and flesh of each of us. In fact, nationalism is something rather new, and today is little more than two centuries old. The first Declaration of Independence, proclaimed in Philadelphia in 1776, said not a word about "ancestors," indeed made no mention of Americans. Sukarno's and Hatta's Declaration of Independence on August 17, 1945, was essentially similar. By contrast, the mania for seeking "absolutely splendid ancestors" typically gives rise to nonsense, and often very dangerous nonsense.

A nice local example is Prince Diponegoro, who in the 1950s was anointed as No. 1 National Hero, as if the Prince had led a movement for Indonesia's national independence from the clutches of Dutch colonialism. But if one looks at what the Prince himself said in his memoirs, his actual words about his political goal were that he intended to "subjugate"—yes, "subjugate"—Java. The concept "Indonesia" was wholly foreign to him (as was the idea of "freedom"). Indeed we all know that this strange Graeco-Roman neologism is very new; it started to become well known only

¹ This is the text of a keynote speech presented on March 4, 1999, in the Hotel Borobudur, Jakarta, as part of the celebration of *Tempo's* twenty-eighth anniversary. It also represented Benedict Anderson's first public appearance in Indonesia since 1972.

about eighty years ago. The very first organization to use the word in its name was the Communist Party of Indonesia—in 1920 (when my mother was already a girl of fifteen).

The second misunderstanding is that “nation” and “state” are, if not exactly identical, at least like a happy husband and wife in their relationship. But the historical reality is often just the opposite. Perhaps 85 percent of nationalist movements started life as movements aimed against colonial or feudal-absolutist states. Nation and state “got married” very late on, and the marriage was far from always happy. The general rule is that the state—or what in my circle of friends we often call the Spook—is much older than the nation. Indonesia once again affords a fine example. The genealogy of the state in Indonesia goes back to early seventeenth-century Batavia. Its continuity is quite apparent even though the stretch of its territory increased vastly over time. The present stretch of Indonesia is—with the exception of East Timor—exactly that of the Netherlands East Indies when it completed its final conquests of Aceh, Southern Bali, and Irian at the beginning of this century. Furthermore, we should always bear in mind that in its last days, during the 1930s, 90 percent—I repeat 90 percent—of its officials were “natives.” There were of course some changes—extrusions and additions—during the Revolution, but for the greater part the personnel of the young Republic’s state was continuous with that of the colonial state. The first post-1950 parliament was also full of former collaborators with colonialism, and the new Republican army also included plenty of soldiers and officers who had fought against the Republic during the Revolution. (Furthermore, both General Nasution, creator of the post-revolutionary army, and General Suharto started their adult careers as soldiers in the prewar colonial military. In the case of Suharto, it is well known that he had no involvement whatever with the movement for independence in the Dutch time, but rather joined KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger, Royal Netherlands-Indies Army), the great enemy of the movement, and then later Peta, the creation of the Japanese occupiers.)

In relation to the national territory there is an irony that General Sayidiman was among the first to point out. Because the Suharto regime made the 1945 Constitution into something sacred—though in fact it was drawn up in great haste in August 1945 in a confused and emergency situation—its detailed specification of the new nation’s borders could not be changed (for fear this would undermine its sacral character). This meant that the annexation of East Timor, which lies outside those specified borders, was from the start absolutely unconstitutional. Luckily for him, Sayidiman was a General, so not in much danger for saying such a thing.

In a word: what I have just said is meant merely as a kind of warning. Beware of people who make a sacred idol of the State, and beware of those who talk a lot about “our splendid ancestors.” Your pocket is about to be picked.

Then what really is nationalism? If one studies its brief global history, one can say that it is not something inherited from the ancient past, but is rather a “common project” for the present and the future. And this project demands self-sacrifice, not the sacrificing of others. This is why it never occurred to the founders of the independence movement that they had the right to kill other Indonesians; rather they felt obliged to have the courage to be jailed, to be beaten up, and to be exiled for the sake of the future happiness and freedom of their fellows.

Nationalism arises when, in a certain physical territory, the inhabitants begin to feel that they share a common destiny, a common future. Or, as I once wrote, they feel bound by a deep horizontal comradeship. Typically, it arises quickly and suddenly in one generation, a clear sign of its novelty. One can see how much nationalism is tied to visions and hopes for the future if one looks at the names of the early organizations that joined the independence movement in the beginning of our century: Jong Java (Young Java), Indonesia Muda (Young Indonesia), Jong Islamietenbond (League of Young Muslims), Jong Minahasa (Young Minahasa), and so on. There were no organizations that called themselves Old Java, Eternal Bali, et cetera. Their orientation was to the future and their social basis was youth. (Even today, the peculiar political power of students lies in their social position as symbols of the nation's future.) Beyond that, the youngsters of those days signaled their regional origins not in the name of separatist local nationalisms, but in their committing of these regional origins to a colony-wide joint and common project of liberation. They paid no mind to the fact that Acehnese kings had once "colonized" the coastal regions of Minangkabau, that Buginese kings had enslaved Torajanese hillpeople, that Javanese aristocrats had tried to subjugate the Sunda highlands, or that Balinese overlords had successfully conquered the island of the Sasak.

If we could go back to 1945-49 and talk with the fighters for independence of that period, you can be sure they would find it impossible to believe that fifty years later the function of the Republic's armed forces would no longer be defending the country against external enemies, but rather oppressing their own people, in this way actually picking up the traditions of the colonial military. But this is what too often has actually happened. Perhaps the old-timers were unaware of the possible consequences of the marriage of nation with State.

* * *

If nationalism is a common project for the present and the future, its fulfillment is never finally complete. It must be struggled for in every generation. In the eyes of its parents, and the State, a baby born in Madura, say, may already be "an Indonesian," but the baby herself does not yet think this way. The process whereby she will become *for herself* an Indonesian, with an Indonesian spirit, an Indonesia commitment, and an Indonesian culture is a long one, and there is no guarantee of success. In this way we can also see that the "continuity" of a nation is fundamentally an open question, and also a kind of wager.

The wager is that the idea "the future of Indonesia" will be sufficiently rooted in the spirit of the country's legal citizens that each new candidate-member of the nation will be ready to set aside where necessary personal ambitions and loyalties for that grand idea. This wager is winnable in the long run only if the Indonesian nation, like other nations, is large-hearted and broad minded enough to accept the real variety and complexity of the national society (which in Indonesia's case numbers two hundred million people). The modern world has shown us sufficient examples of nations that have broken up because too many of its citizens have had shriveled hearts and dwarfish minds—to say nothing of excessive lust for domination over their fellows.

When I was a little boy, my mother bought me secondhand a children's *History of English Literature*. I remember vividly that the first chapter of this book was devoted to

the story of Cuchulain and The Brown Cow (actually a bull) as recorded in the twelfth century in Old Irish (i.e. before the English language existed). Why this oddity? Because the edition my mother bought was dated about 1900, when Ireland was still colonized by the English, who tried very hard to "integrate" the local people, rather like the way the Suharto regime tried to "integrate" the East Timorese. Years later I found a new edition of this book, published about 1930, and I was amused to see that Chapter 1 had disappeared, because in the meantime the Republic of Ireland (of which I am a citizen) had achieved its freedom—a mere twenty-two years before Indonesia. From this little story one can see how easy it actually is to create, and to eliminate, "splendid ancestors" according to political circumstances. The truth is that today not a single English person misses "The Brown Cow." On the other hand, most Irish people speak English rather than Irish, so that many can only read the story of the Brown Cow in English translation. And relations between free Ireland and England today are far better than they were 150 years ago, when tens of thousands of Irish peasants were forced by colonial famine to flee to America. There is a lesson here for Indonesia in its relations with East Timor.

I mention this little episode simply because I see too many Indonesians still inclined to think of Indonesia as an "inheritance," not as a challenge nor as a common project. Where one has inheritances, one has inheritors, and too often bitter quarrels among them as to who has "rights" to the inheritance: sometimes to the point of great violence. People who think that the "abstract" Indonesia is an "inheritance" to be preserved at all costs may end up doing terrible damage to the living citizens of that abstract geographical space.

Let us take two very concrete examples now much in the news: Aceh and Irian. During the whole history of the independence movement from the late-colonial period on, no Acehnese I've heard of ever had aspirations for an "independent Aceh." During the Revolution, Aceh was the only province where the Dutch didn't dare come back. But far from taking the chance to declare an Independent Aceh, the Acehnese made, on a fully voluntary basis—I want to emphasize voluntary—huge contributions to the revolutionary cause in terms both of manpower and economic-financial resources. They did so because in those days Jogjakarta had neither the means nor any intention of acting like Diponegoro, i.e. of "subjugating" Aceh. It is true that in the early 1950s, under Daud Beureueh, some Acehnese rebelled because they were upset by certain policies pursued by Jakarta; but the rebellion was intended to get these policies changed, not to separate Aceh from Indonesia. In the 1970s Aceh was peaceful and prosperous under a civilian governor, and no one would then have believed that at the end of the next decade the province would be a horror-filled Military Operations Zone. In those days Hasan di Tiro was taken seriously by no one, given his long absence from the country and his known past CIA connections. That "Independent Aceh" or "Free Aceh" began to become suddenly popular in the late 1980s was because more and more Acehnese were losing any hope and confidence that they had a share in a common Indonesian project. The astounding greed of the rulers in Jakarta, and of their provincial minions and errandboys, as well as the replacement of local-son civilian rule by the military originating very often from Java, increasingly seemed to say to the Acehnese: "We don't need you; what we need are your natural resources. How wonderful it would be if Aceh were emptied of the Acehnese." Here was the origin of the atrocities which the newspapers have recently laid bare.

Irian's story is in many ways comparable. The OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, Organization for a Free Papua) arose not *before* the Orde Baru—which I will from now on call the Orde Kropos (Dry-Rot Order)—came into being, but *afterward*. And its language remains the Indonesian language. But the menaces and manipulations orchestrated by Ali Murtopo and his accomplices to give the appearance that all Irianese were obedient servants of the Dry-Rot Order quickly showed the local people that, in the eyes of the Center, Irian mattered, not the people who lived there. In all their real diversity, they were lumped together as a primitive population named after the province. Once again Jakarta was understood to be saying: "What a pity there are Irianese in Irian." The people of Irian were never seriously invited into the common project, so it is only natural that they quickly began to feel that they were being colonized. (In passing I note that there still seem to be Indonesians who think that colonialism can only be practiced by Westerners over non-Westerners. This is a dangerous and historically ignorant illusion.) Out of this Dry-Rot Order colonial attitude came characteristic horrors. The Legal Aid Institute's branch on the spot recorded, for example, under the savage rule of General Abinowo, a case where a village suspected of harboring OPM guerrillas had half its inhabitants burned alive in their homes by the military, while the other half were forced by that same military to eat the roasted flesh of their families and neighbors. Planned horrors of this kind were inconceivable during the Revolution, and even in the era of the PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia)² and DI (Darul Islam, Abode of Islam).³ They sufficiently show that for sections of the armed forces under the Dry-Rot Order, the Irianese were simply not fellow-Indonesians, but simply "possessions" of the Spook.

One concludes then that the Independent Aceh and OPM movements came into being as a reaction to the mentality, policies, and practices of the Dry-Rot Order, with the basic attitude: "Too bad there are Acehnese in Aceh and Irianese in Irian," and a view of these remote peoples not as Indonesians but as "objects," "possessions," "servants," and "obstacles" for the Spook. The situation is today very serious and can only be remedied by a radical change in the mindset of the political leaders in Jakarta. It is essential that Aceh and Irian be accorded genuine and full autonomy so that they once again can feel that they are masters in their own house. This will require regular and free local elections, and provincial and district officials locally chosen—not chosen by the Ministry of the Interior. It will require local assemblies from which "military fractions," unelected and composed of people mainly from Western Indonesia, are excluded. I have no doubt that if these changes occur quickly and genuinely, separatist movements will lose their steam. I also have no doubt that there will be difficulties, local quarrels, corruption, and even violence, in part the residues of thirty-three years of brutal and corrupt Dry-Rot Order rule. But they should be temporary, and in any case they will pale to insignificance by comparison with the exploitation and the atrocities of the Dry-Rot era. In this manner the Acehnese and Irianese will once again be invited seriously back into the common project and the deep horizontal comradeship from which they should never have been excluded.

² PRRI: This was the government of the "regional rebellions" of 1957-58.

³ DI: An extremist Islamic rebellion that originated in West and Central Java in 1948-49, then spread to parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi in the 1950s and was defeated only in the early 1960s.

We should also be realistic and recognize that genuine autonomy, not the “fake autonomy” that is represented today by the status of Special Region, will mean the federalization of Indonesia. This is completely normal. Almost all the big countries in the world have federal institutions of various kinds: Canada, Brazil, the United States, India, Nigeria, Germany, Russia, and so on. China is the obvious exception, and I doubt if many Indonesians feel the system of China is one they wish to take as a model. I am sure there will be people in Jakarta who will shout, knee-jerk fashion, that a federal Indonesia was/is a Dutch colonial project: despite the fact that the Dutch have had no significant role in Indonesia for close to half a century. Others will say federalism is a foreign-inspired scheme to dismember the unitary Republic. Who are the foreigners who would have any interest in this dismemberment in the present post-Cold War world? I can think of none. Quite the opposite. The disaster of Yugoslavia has made all the important states eager to help prevent anything like that tragedy happening elsewhere. Still others, stuck with the Dry-Rot mentality, will complain that federalism is contradictory to the 1945 Constitution. But constitutions are man-made, not god-made, and to survive in changing circumstances they need constantly to be adapted. If the American Founding Fathers could be resurrected today, they would be astonished at how much the document they put together two centuries ago has been altered in text and spirit. The 1945 Constitution is completely out of date. Indeed it was already out of date in 1950, and would never have been restored in 1959 but for an opportunistic alliance between a power-hungry military and an increasingly authoritarian President Sukarno. This constitution needs, if not scrapping, at least a radical overhaul.

* * *

If the “common project” is to be revived and made a strong living reality, it is also essential that end be made to the pervasive practices of sadistic brutality. One could start at the bottom. If one reads the memoirs of activists who ran afoul of the colonial regime one rarely finds mention of beatings and tortures, let alone electrodes being attached to genitals, and the like. But over the past thirty years these have become “normal” activities of police and military men at the lowest levels. These days, it is normal to beat up someone arrested even before he or she is interrogated; and to execute prisoners on the pretext that they are “attempting to escape.” Some of these things happened in the 1950s and 1960s, but they were not “routine.” That they have become routine means that those who are supposed to uphold the authority of the law in fact violate this law every day with complete impunity. This situation not only corrupts the morals of the law-enforcers, but tends to corrupt their victims too. There are plenty of prisoners who, seeing their captors as extortionists, sadists, and even executioners, tend to follow their example. Here is one major source of the rapid rise in the last fifteen years of a widening group of brutalized *preman* who often function as the “left hand” of the Spook. We are all aware of how far the process of “premanization” or “gangsterization” of Indonesian politics has gone. Political parties have their *preman*, as do businesses and government agencies. And the press has played its own part by more or less glorifying notorious *preman* such as Yorries Raweyai, Sumargono, Anton Medan, Yapto, Hercules, and various others.

But the process of brutalization actually started long before the 1980s. During the nationalist movement there were frequent, even violent, quarrels between various groups within it. But I don't believe it ever occurred to any of them that their antagonists deserved to be tortured or executed. Antagonists were antagonists, not "animals." There was still an element of gentlemanliness in their conflicts. After that there was a slow deterioration. Serious atrocities were committed by both sides in the Madiun Affair of 1948, in a situation of national emergency and huge social and economic tensions. People had started to see their political enemies not as fellow Indonesians, but as pawns of foreigners—NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration), CIA, NKVD (Narodny Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Dyel, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs),⁴ and so forth. But two years after Madiun, the defeated party, the Communists, were back as normal members of parliament, i.e. as fellow Indonesians once again.

The big change came in 1965-66. And so long as "65-66" is not faced up to, openly and honestly, by living Indonesians, the processes of dry-rot and brutalization will continue. Today I do not intend to go into "65-66" in any detail. I wish only to underline two vital points.

1. On October 4, 1965, Suharto and his group received a detailed autopsy carried out by military and civilian forensic experts on the bodies of the generals killed on October 1. The report made it quite clear that the generals had been shot to death, and their corpses further damaged by being dumped down a deep well at Lubang Buaya. But on October 6, the mass media, wholly controlled by Suharto forces, launched a campaign to the effect that the generals had had their eyes gouged out and their genitals severed by sadistic Gerwani women. This lying campaign was carried out in cold blood by people who knew exactly what they were doing. If you wish to read an extraordinary fictional portrait of these icy sadists, you can do no better than read Putu Wijaya's extraordinary novel, *Nyali*. The propaganda campaign did more than anything to create the atmosphere of hysteria across Indonesia which made it possible in the following months for more than half a million members of the common project to be murdered in the most horrible ways, completely outside the law, and with not a single murderer ever brought before a court of justice. One could put it bluntly this way: that the foundation of the so-called New Order was a mountain of skeletons.

2. The consequences are felt to this very day. Leaving the planners of the atrocities aside—i.e. Suharto and his circle—one can ask the following. Has Abdurahman Wahid, famous for his speeches in support of human rights and religious tolerance, ever asked forgiveness for his NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) for the tens of thousands of people murdered by Ansor in 65-66?⁵ I believe the answer is no. Has Megawati, who regards herself as a victim of Suharto, ever asked forgiveness for her PNI-PDI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Party; Partai Demokrat Indonesia,

⁴ NICA: When the Dutch colonialists returned to Indonesia in the autumn of 1945, they had no military units available and were dependent on British imperial forces under the overall command of Louis Mountbatten. Hence they could create only a "Civil Administration," which lasted until late 1946 when The Hague had sent sufficient troops to replace those under London's command. NKVD: The official name of the Soviet Union's secret police from 1934-46, descendant of the legendary Cheka and ancestor of the KGB.

⁵ Ansor: Youth arm of the NU.

Indonesian Democratic Party)⁶ for the tens of thousands (including leftwing members of the PNI itself) murdered by PNI youth gangs, especially in Bali? Again, I think the answer is no. Have well-known Catholics of the New Order such as Benny Murdani, Frans Seda, Liem Bian-kie, and Harry Tjan Silalahi ever asked forgiveness for the complicity of young Catholics in the slaughter? Again no. The Protestants? The former PSI (Partai Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Party)?⁷ The intellectuals? The academicians? Almost not a word. I remember only my much-missed young colleague Soe Hok-gie having the courage already in 1967 to speak out on the issue. From this angle we can see that virtually the entire "opposition" today is not fundamentally a real opposition to the Dry-Rot Order, and the Indonesia they wish to rebuild will therefore still have a mountain of skeletons buried in its cellars. All continue to evade facing the facts of their own political pasts, asking forgiveness, committing themselves never to permit anything like 65-66 to happen again, and welcoming back into the common project the miserable relics and descendants of the victims of 65-66. And in school, children continue to be fobbed off with vague historical talk about a "national trauma" or "national tragedy"—period!

The horror of 1965-66, when millions of Indonesians were regarded by other Indonesians as animals or devils, who therefore could and should be treated with the worst sadism and outside all legality, has had many fateful consequences down to our own time. A culture has developed in the military according to which in "security" matters every element of human decency can be set aside, with complete impunity: provided "the boss" gives them the orders. The political consequences first became clearly evident in the process of the "annexation" of East Timor after 1975. It is well-known now that between 1977 and 1980 about one third of the entire population of the former Portuguese colony died unnaturally—killed by gunfire, burned by napalm, starved to death in "resettlement camps," or the victims of contagious diseases which spread rapidly under inhuman occupation conditions. Torture became standard operating procedure, to say nothing of rapes and executions. If we applied the above percentage to the Javanese, it would mean the unnatural deaths of at least 25 million people in three years. Terrifying? Absolutely. A vast crime? Can anyone doubt it?

Why did it happen? No one should be deceived by the rhetoric of "welcoming our comrades into the embrace of Ibu Pertiwi" or of the East Timorese gladly and willingly joining the common project. The operations in East Timor, for the most part concealed from the Indonesian nation, were a "subjugating" project of the Spook in direct lineal descent from van Heutsz, Diponegoro, and his far more brutal predecessor Sultan Agung. How often one heard high officials complaining about the "ingratitude" of the East Timorese for all the good things Jakarta had brought them. I am sure none of these officials were aware that they were simply echoing their "splendid Dutch colonial ancestors," who were accustomed to grumble at the "ingratitude" of the (Indonesian) natives for all the benefits that colonial *rust en orde* as well as *opbouw* (*pembangunan!*) had brought them. (To feel the force of this, one should imagine how weird it would be if a high official complained publicly at how ungrateful the Javanese or Sundanese have

⁶ The PNI was the major secular nationalist party of Indonesian politics from the Revolutionary era up until the early 1970s, when it was compelled to merge with other non-Islamic parties into the PDI.

⁷ The PSI was formed in 1948, then forcibly dissolved by the Sukarno regime in 1960 on grounds of implication in the PRRI.

been for the benefits the Dry-Rot Order brought them.) In East Timor, too, one gets the overwhelming impression of Spook thinking: "Too bad there are East Timorese in East Timor."

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, East Timor was a region closed not only to foreigners, but even to most Indonesians (who had to have a special pass to go there). Thus it became a region where "anything went." Kopassus became the pioneer and exemplar for every kind of atrocity. Rapes, tortures, and executions were "normal." "Ninjas" started there too, hooded gangsters working as the left hand of the Spook. Over time, this "occupation culture" leaked out into the rest of Indonesia. We saw it in the mass murders engineered by Suharto, Murdani, and Kopassus in the *petrus* campaign of 1983. From there it moved to Aceh, Lampung, Irian, and elsewhere. Once peaceful regions became "troubled," not by their own will, but because they were "troubled" by the agents of the Spectre. Think of it this way: if we simply try to estimate the total number of people who died violently or unnaturally in the course of the Dry-Rot Order era—and leave aside the maimed, the psychologically broken, the orphaned, and so on, we might make a list as follows: 1965-66, at least 500,000; East Timor, 200,000; *petrus* 7,000; Aceh perhaps 3,000; Irian perhaps 7,000. At least three quarters of a million people, putative members of the common project every one. If you think about this, you will better understand why I can only shake my head in disbelief at the way that the "opposition" today demands that Suharto and his family be called to account for stealing so much money (perhaps it thinks of it as "its" money?), and largely turns a blind eye to crimes a thousand times worse: systematic, planned murder on a scale never before seen in the history of the archipelago.

And now a further ironic twist. President Habibie has been reviled and abused as Suharto's *anak mas* and pawn. But aside from freeing the press, and releasing most political prisoners, he has had the real courage to decide to put an end to his former master's "subjugating" project in East Timor. Meanwhile, with the very honorable exception of Amien Rais, other "opposition" leaders have sufficiently shown that they still live in the moral darkness of the Dry-Rot era. The most shameful thing is that the daughter of Sukarno—who was deposed, humiliated, and effectively imprisoned for life by Suharto, and who, *nota bene*, never claimed that East Timor was part of Indonesia—has publicly defended Suharto's subjugation project. This is a great pity. One feels, reading her words, that it is no Megawati speaking, merely a Miniwati. Under the long hanging tendrils of the banyan tree only dwarfish, moldy plants can grow.

* * *

What is to be done? We see today that there are a great many organizations and institutions, some local, some foreign, some combined, which work effectively for "human rights" in Indonesia. This is as it should be. What we do not see is anything comparable working for the rights, not of human beings as such, but of Indonesian human beings. What I mean is the right of those people, all of them, fated to be born on Indonesian soil in the time of the Republic, to participate voluntarily, enthusiastically, equally, and without fear in the common project of Indonesian nationalism. Put conversely, their right not to be treated as animals, devils, serfs, or the property of other Indonesians. These "Indonesian human rights" can only be struggled for and realized by Indonesians themselves. Unless this struggle is carried on sincerely and on

a very wide scale, the future of the project is dark. If one starts with: "Too bad there are Acehnese in Aceh," it is easy enough to move on to: Too bad there are Catholics in Flores. Too bad there are Chinese in Semarang. Too bad there are Dayaks in Kalimantan. Logically: Too bad there are Javanese in Java. Outside the logic, only the impossible: "Too bad there are Jakarta people in Jakarta." Because it is in Jakarta, in its ruling class and its complicit middle class that this "Too bad . . ." mentality is entrenched.

In the press and on the Internet we read a good deal about *reformasi* (reform) and once in a while even "revolution." Fine, so long as these words are meant seriously and disinterestedly. But in addition, I believe in (and hope for) a real revival of the common project which was initiated almost a hundred years ago. A great project of this kind tends to produce great men and women. Dr. Soetomo, Natsir, Tan Malaka, Sjahrir, Yap Thiam Hing, Kartini, Haji Misbach, Sukarno, Sjawu Giok Tjan, Chairil Anwar, Suwarsih Djojopoespito, Sudirman, Roem, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Hatta, Mas Marco, Hasjim Ansjari, Sudisman, Armijn Pane, Haji Dahlan, and so many others came out of that era. How sad it is to compare those times with the present. Over the past dozen years I have been accustomed to asking Indonesian youngsters who visit Cornell or come to study there this simple question: Who in Indonesia today do you admire and look up to? The common response is, first, bewilderment at the question, then a long scratching of the head, and finally a hesitant . . . Iwan Fals. Isn't this rather terrifying? I don't mean that everyone can or should become a great man or woman. But I think that every man and woman can decide not to be a dwarf.

A revival of truly national life will require a total overhaul of the governmental system, especially in the direction of regional (not ethnic) autonomy. It will also require the growth of a healthy and gentlemanly political culture, and elimination of political sadism and gangsterism. It will also need love, true love, for national institutions. Let me here offer only one example which is close to my heart as a teacher. It is generally recognized that the quality of Indonesia's universities has been in a long decline at least since the ridiculous Daud Yusuf's Campus Normalization policy of the late 1970s. We know the litany: professors too busy with moneyed make-work governmental projects, consultancies, and real-estate speculation to teach their students seriously. Students who have made a culture out of cheating. Wretched libraries. Corrupt and authoritarian university bureaucracies—and so on. One reason for this decline which is rarely mentioned is the antinational attitude of the ruling class and also of a substantial part of the dependent middle class, who send their children to expensive international schools in Indonesia or to still more expensive colleges and universities overseas. This trend means that in the eyes of these people Indonesia's own universities are really for "second class" citizens, who don't have the right bank accounts or connections. As such, who cares if they go to pot? I sometimes dream of being in a position to ban all study abroad, except at the MA or PhD level, for Indonesians for a recuperation period of ten years. If the ruling class had to send its children to Indonesian universities, perhaps their condition would start to improve. But of course this is an idle dream.

Finally, in a book I recently published, half-jokingly I put forward the slogan "Long Live Shame!" Why so? Because I think that no one can be a true nationalist who is incapable of feeling "ashamed" if his or her state/government commits crimes,

including those against his or her fellow citizens. Although he or she has done nothing individually that is bad, as a member of the common project he or she will feel morally implicated in everything done in that project's name. During the Vietnam War, a good part of the popular opposition came from just this good sense of shame among the American citizenry that "their government" was responsible for the violent deaths of three million people in Indochina, including uncounted numbers of women and children. They felt ashamed that "their" presidents Johnson and Nixon told endless lies to the world and to their fellow-Americans. They felt ashamed that "their" country's history was being stained by cruelties, lies, and betrayals. So they went to work in protest—not merely as advocates of universal human rights, but as Americans who loved the common American project. This kind of political shame is very good and always needed. If this sense of shame can develop healthily in Indonesia, Indonesians will have the courage to face the horrors of the Dry-Rot era, not as "someone else's" doing, but as a common burden. It will mean the ending of the mentality encouraged officially for so long: See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak of No Evil. So please, don't forget my little slogan: Long Live Shame!