

Indonesia will never be a nation until the national revolution is complete

Monday 28 May 2007, by [RIEKASAPTI Tussie Ayu](#) (Date first published: 24 May 2007).

Jakarta — May 1998. Students from throughout the country spilled into the hall and occupied the national parliament building. The State Palace also was not spared the invasion of large numbers of uninvited guests.

"One-one, Bring down Suharto. Two-two, Bring down Suharto. Three-three, Bring down Suharto. One, Two, Three, Bring down Suharto!" they sang. The lyrics used in the children's song reflected the fact that they wanted one thing only: to bring down Suharto.

May 21, 1998. Suharto finally resigns from his post as president of the Republic of Indonesia. His power, which was embedded so strongly for 33 years, had finally disintegrated. Then the call that was taken up was reformasi total! But what did we do after that?

Max Lane, in his new book titled "An Unfinished Nation", attempts to answer these questions. During the launch of his book at the Grand Melia Hotel in Kuningan, South Jakarta on Tuesday May 22, he said that almost all nations in the world were born out of revolution. "Suharto was brought down using the weapon of mass action. This is one of the rich lessons of the Indonesian national revolution", said the man from Australia.

The analysis that is laid out in the book concludes that Suharto did not just fall from power, but was overthrown. The movement that forcibly removed him from power was a result of a tortuous process that was propelled forward by mass based political consciousness, that was indeed aimed at bringing down the dictator. This analysis is different from the majority of Western works on the subject that emphasis the role of foreign powers or the elite as the principle cause of his down fall.

Nevertheless, the fall of the dictator did not meant that our work as a nation was complete. "The

Indonesian people must re-win the memories of the revolution. It must re-win its revolutionary history and the populist ideological wealth that represents the weapon of national liberation that also [most] effective", said the man who has been coming to Indonesia since he was 17.

Lane said he regretted that major works written by revolutionaries in Indonesia are not being read at school. "How can a nation be able to learn if it does not read about its own national revolution?", he asked.

This month it is exactly nine years after latest in numerous revolutions in Indonesia (sic). It seems however that this revolution is also not over. "As long as the revolution remains incomplete Indonesian will not fully become nation", said Lane accompanied by applause from those present.

Perhaps indeed we haven't completed it yet because we do not really want to become a complete nation. But if it is already complete, then the question that follows is what else are we to do? Because the job of building the nation will indeed never been completed. (Tussie Ayu Riekasapti)

P.S.

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