



Book Review

Peer Holm Jorgensen's work, *The Missing History: Based on the True Story of Dewa Soeradjana*

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Introduction

This article was originally a paper when the author was asked to discuss Peer Holm Jorgensen's work, *The Missing History: Based on the True Story of Dewa Soeradjana*, which was organized by the Bali Study Center-Udayana University in collaboration with Bentara Budaya. The title given by the author in connection with the discussion of the contents of the book is assessing the Witness of a Person in History Before the Events of September 30, 1965.

It should be noted that until now, the development of Indonesian historiography is still far from the

expectation of writing a complete and comprehensive history. This is because in addition to the limited historical sources available relating to the periods made in the writing of Indonesian history itself, such as between the classical historical period, modern history and contemporary history which entered into the realm of cultural studies as the post-modern era. The existence of gaps between these periods, especially in the post-revolutionary period, seems to be caused by the spirit of the times that developed after the end of the New Order era, where there was a demand for a forward total history writing. This means that there is now a demand for an

open history writing, without any cover-up, so that Indonesian society in general and historians (professional historians), history enthusiasts, amateur historians, and students will be able to fully understand the history of their nation.

The hope that this demand will get a chance, now that the New Order regime which ruled for more than 32 years in a centralized and authoritarian manner has ended. The hopes include the need to represent studies related to the demands of the reform era which want transparency, accountability, openness and provide defense to minority groups, and marginalized people as a result of policies that benefit the majority group. This condition gave the majority group an opportunity to legitimize its power, various strategies are carried out so that it was hoped that it would not provide opportunities for political groups or opponents to defend themselves.

That is what occurred in September 30, 1965, abbreviated here on as G30S, which until now seems to have created a vacuum of understanding. This happens, if we try to examine the realm of post-revolutionary history that occurred in 1965 comprehensively and thoroughly. In this case, who is actually considered the “mastermind” is still a matter of debate (historical debates) among historians. Among the possible culprits were the “masterminds” of Soekarno, Suharto, PKI, the Islamic radical organization, the security component

(army), Russian Political Bureau, Central Intelligence of America (CIA), China, or certain other parties?

Due to the difficulty in determining the “mastermind”, it cannot be concluded definitively who did what around this heartbreaking event which still leaves suffering among the Indonesian people in general, and the victims of the incident in particular. This is where it is significant for this book to be discussed, namely in the context of understanding the dynamics of Indonesian history in the post-revolutionary period and secondly in relation to our understanding of the dynamics of national, regional and global politics.

Who are Jorgensen and Soeradjana?

The presence of a book written by Peer Holm Jorgensen, *The Missing History: Based on the True Story of Dewa Soeradjana* who had interviewed Soeradjana’s own key informant, seems important to be discussed in understanding the political dynamics leading up to the events of 1965.

Jorgensen was born in Aars in Denmark on March 3, 1946. He was a writer who wanted to pen narratives with a historical background in several of his writings.

Meanwhile, Soeradjana whom he interviewed in depth was a man born in Bali on February 12, 1938. He had an educational background obtained

in Ljubljana, Slovenia and because of the political dynamics in Indonesia he decided to continue his education and earned a doctorate in the field of chemistry at the University of Ljubljana in 1981. He has significant experience and knowledge in the dynamics of Indonesian history in the 1970s. This man, who has a Slovenian wife, plays an important role between Slovenia and Indonesia in the fields of culture and business.

Against this background, it is very important to look at his experience and its role in contributing to deciphering the dark side of Indonesian history, especially in the post-revolutionary period. In accordance with the title given to the book, it seems that the author wants to emphasize the importance of the existence of the book, which is considered to contain important data that are not widely available in references to the post-revolutionary period so far.

Jorgensen's Work with Reference to Indonesian History

Everyone can write their history, and can be considered as their own historian. Thus it is said in the expression, "everyman has its own history", meaning that each person is his own historian. This also means that he can write the story of his life as long as it contains meaning in his life. Of course, not all events that occur daily are historical events. A fallen tree on the

road opens a historical event in relation to historical meanings concerning political history, for example. A fallen tree occurs in the street and causes the death of a ruler is said to be a historical event, because it will affect his own life as well as his group or even his nation. This is generally what happens in the writing of political history that puts forward "great figures", as if the course of the history of a nation is only determined by the life stories of those great figures. However, it seems that the role of "little people" seems to have begun to receive attention in writing the history of society such as the history of the peasant society and so on.

Compared to historical stories carried out by big figures, the role of the little people is still limited, it is also done in writing history in the form of limited materials such as historical sources. However, although there is a kind of historical dictum which states that "no document, no history" as expressed by Leopold von Ranke, that history is "*was es eigentlich gewesen ist*" means that history is what actually happened, based on written document materials. This means that if there are no documents, then there is no history. However, in relation to contemporary historical issues where the actors and stories that are told are still widely remembered by historical figures, it seems that this historical period was still written in a limited manner. Among other things, the sensitivity

of the material to be presented seems to make historical actors reluctant to disclose it. This unwritten rule to leave things be as they are (feeling of *ewuh pakewuh* in Javanese) seems to be a problem in seeing why there are difficulties in writing history. The vacuum of writing historical data about the post-revolutionary period, especially regarding the events of 1965, seems inseparable from the discourse on this issue. This seems to be an important aspect of why writing about this period has received less attention, both among professional historians and among amateur historians.

For this reason, in relation to efforts to overcome this problem, historians should not write a historical work entirely depending on previously existing written sources, but try to find oral history which is one of the efforts to overcome this impasse. In addition, if it is only based on written sources, it could be that previous writings were heavily influenced by the previous ruling authorities, so that what is considered to be something that could threaten its existence will be ignored from previous historical writings. This is the atmosphere of the times that needs to be discussed, so that the presence of Peer Holm Jorgensen's book is felt for its contribution and meaning in completing our repertoire of thought in understanding a period of history which is still limited to the present.

In the past, there were various

views or opinions about communism. For example, how the events of the communist movement in the early years of the establishment of the communist party in Indonesia were considered a movement that contributed to its struggle at the beginning of the independence era. Communism was able to tap into the notions against colonialism and imperialism in Indonesia. The book written by Jorgensen, *The Missing History*, admits that the Indonesian Communist Party movement also played a role in confronting the Dutch colonial rulers in 1926 (2015: 62). Such is the work of Petrus J. Th. Blumberger, *De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*. Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon N / V, 1931) and his other works, namely, *Politieke Partijen en Stroomingen in Nederlandsch-Indie*. Leiden: N. V. Leidesche Uitgeversmaatschappij 1934) and Ruth T. McVey's *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*. Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1965. See also: Bernhard Dahm's work, *Sukarnos Kumpfum Indonesiens Unabhangigkeit*. Berlin/Frankfurt am Main: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1966 and also read: Bernhard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1971. I Ketut Ardhana, *Nusa Tenggara nach Einrichtung der Kolonialherrschaft 191 bis 1950*. Passau: Richard Rothe, 2000 which describes the role of the

Indonesian Communist Party in the Dutch colonial era.

The question that arises is how a communist movement as an ideology in the era of the national movement which lasted from 1908 to 1945, has caused a change in the meaning of the communist movement, after the post-revolutionary period? New discourses on the writing of the post-revolutionary period seem to have had a chance when historical awareness among historians and rulers alike emerged to have a comprehensive view of the events of 1965 which he considered still had some confusion and controversy in the interpretation surrounding the events of 1965. Compared to works on books on nationalism and Islam, it seems that books on communist ideology that are linked with the G30S (G 30S / PKI) as seen during the New Order era were still limited. Even though the PKI is not necessarily the “mastermind”. That is the reason why now the G 30S is no longer alone and there is no PKI word (G 30S). For this reason, it is important to discuss this issue. Misinterpretation in history continues, thus misleading the present and future generations of young people.

Among our historians such as Taufik Abdullah as a senior historian at LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta), for example, has written a lot about nationalism and Islamic issues in Indonesian historical discourse, especially during the national

movement to the era of independence. However, it was only in 2012 that historian Taufik Abdullah initiated the writing of communist issues to be raised in the dynamics of Indonesian history. Among them in Indonesia, up to now, the first few writings on the issue of the G30S Movement were published in December 2012 with the general editor, Taufik Abdullah and a historian from the University of Indonesia, A. B. Lopian, namely, *Indonesia in the Flow of History*, especially volume VII on Post-revolutionary Jakarta: PT Ikhtiar Baru van Hoeve, especially chapter 20 written by Aminuddin Kasdi who discussed September (G30S).

Books written and edited by Abdullah, Abdurrachman, and Gunawan entitled, *The 1965 Disaster Night in the Wind of the National Crisis*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2012 volume I focused on reconstruction in debate and volume II written by Abdullah, Gunawan, Abdurrachman and Ardhana, *The 1965 Disaster Night in a National Crisis*, which discusses “Local Conflict After Failed Coup Effort”, especially the writing of Ardhana and Wirawan, with the title “*Hell of the World’ on the Island of the Gods.*”

In addition, there are several books written by Robinson in his work, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1988 and also the work of Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings: PKI massacres in Java and Bali 1965-*

1966. Yogyakarta: Indonesian company. These are some of the important books that appear to have appeared in the reform era which represent the desire of historians to study this period of history which is considered to be still limited, in this case in relation to obtaining a more comprehensive discussion in viewing the reconstruction of 1965 history and the debates that followed. The presence of the book *The Missing History* is expected to gain a better understanding of the events surrounding why the 1965 coup occurred which had an impact on political dynamics at the local, national and regional levels in Southeast Asia.

Jorgensen's Peer Work Contribution

Jorgensen's work focuses on how a historical event full of massacres in 1965 can be traced back to previous episodes that did not occur where the events of the massacre took place, but can initially be traced to their origins that took place outside the region. What is conveyed will complement the understanding of the history of the 1965 story internationally, even though the person being interviewed is a Balinese born son, he has important experiences in the international world. This historical interpretation is significant, even though it is written in a novel form, it can be considered as a historical literary work. Thus, the issues discussed can shed some light on how

a historical story can be reconstructed, so that a better understanding of the lost episodes in Indonesian history is obtained, namely political history, military history, the history of the youth movement towards towards a comprehensive Indonesian history writing.

Political Transition from Soekarno to Soeharto

Seen as a whole from Jorgensen's work on "lost history" or *The Missing History* regarding the events of 1965, it certainly has its advantages and disadvantages. The drawback is the lack of comparative data given to arguments which state that the incident should also be seen from what happened in Jakarta, the United States, Russia, and China including the need for data from the army, archival sources from the Islamic component, youth, Chinese and so on. With the availability of this material, it is hoped that comparative data can be obtained in analyzing events that occurred before, during and after 1965. At least in the context of completing existing data which is perceived to be biased, then at least the presence of this book is the first step to complement existing data, so that the background of the massacres at that time can provide more insightful views. especially on aspects of Indonesian political history.

The essence of writing this book is based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted by the author of Soeradjana, who at that time had the

opportunity to pursue higher education in Europe, especially Eastern Europe. In his presentation, the writer interviewed Soeradjana, whose story begins when he began his experience on January 21, 1961, departing by plane from Jakarta, transiting in Singapore and finally arriving in Yugoslavia. When he was in Slovenia, he went to the office of the Indonesian Ambassador, which was then held by Soepardjo. There are things that are strange to see while in the office. The problem is that hanging on the wall where the Ambassador sits should be a photo of Soekarno, next to it should be Hatta, Indonesia's first Vice President. But the photos were not there, so this raised a question in his mind, as if on his first arrival there had shown a different political atmosphere than it should have been (p. 24). There were several problems that caused Soeradjana to be depressed, because the Ambassador asked him various questions about why he had arrived in this foreign country. Soeradjana did not return to his homeland in 1965 or in 1967, because he knew that his younger brother had been being targeted by the Indonesian Student Action Unit (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia) since 1965 (p. 35). It seems that he did not accept the behavior of the US group which he considered "a ruthless regime group that attacked only because his younger brother was a supporter of Soekarno".

Furthermore, what he was

constantly asked about was an interrogation attempt because he was told that he was said to have to leave that foreign country and return to his homeland, because his educational assignment had been completed on 19 October 1965 (pp. 34-35). From what is being told, the reader seems to get an interpretation that there has been a change in the national and international political map of what will happen in Jakarta in particular, and in Indonesia in general. Based on this story, it seems that what was conveyed could contribute to the dynamics of Indonesian political history, especially when Soekarno was told that he was already in his downfall.

Difficulty Finding the "Puppeteer":

The book written by Jorgensen reveals the role that the Soeharto regime, which came from the army, played in the 1965 massacre. However, it is not clear who the "mastermind" was. Because in his discussion, he mentioned the roles of America, Russia, and China, but who was the mastermind, he could not successfully reveal.

Jorgensen, for example, indeed illustrates America's role in dominating world regulations and squeezing other countries. It was stated that the countries that opposed this idea were those who were reluctant to follow Soekarno's idea, because they were afraid of retribution from the American government (p. 74). Here

we try to show how the feud between Kennedy and Chrusjtjov showed, which highlighted that there was an anti-American attitude which was also shown before Soekarno's fall. However, it is not explained how the further political conditions in America itself played its part, such as the Cuban crisis in October 1962 (p. 76)?

Likewise, trying to assess Soekarno's attitude was difficult in the period before the 1965 massacre. On the other hand, in Jorgensen's book, it is mentioned how the role of ethnic Chinese descent in the business sector had been increasing since the Dutch colonial era (p. 82). It was also stated that Soekarno's role was closer to Mao than Moscow (Russia) or Eastern Europe as happened in the mid 1950s. However, it is not clear why many students were sent to Russia as well as Soeradjana himself (p. 82). Is it true that the argument given, that Soekarno had an open mind? For this reason, it is necessary to conduct a study in Moscow itself to obtain historical data as happened between the relationship between Soekarno and Moscow at that time (p. 82).

Soekarno was said to have led the Indonesian people to things that were not common. It is stated that Soekarno's leadership style changed from mutual cooperation to consensus to unlimited power in Guided Democracy. In fact, he emphasized the role of the international community such as the role of the

World Bank institution, the International Monetary Fund and Indonesia's withdrawal as a member of the United Nations (p. 79). In fact, Soekarno is said to have a motto (p. 83):

"Indonesia tidak mau dan tidak akan pernah mau menerima dikte dan dominasi dari Amerika dalam bentuk apapun. Indonesia harus sepenuhnya berdiri di atas kaki sendiri dalam menentukan segala kebijakan walaupun kita harus makan batu."

"Indonesia does not want and will never want to accept dictation and domination from America in any form. Indonesia must fully stand on its own feet in determining all policies even though we have to eat stones."

Can this be considered a policy mistake taken by Soekarno, so that he can be said to be playing the role of his "mastermind"? It was explained, based on an interview with Dewa Soeradjana, that the Soeharto regime was also analogous to the role played by the Dutch rulers during the colonial period, where the politics of "*divide et empera*" (politics of division) were applied, so that Suharto was expected to come out as the winner. The implementation of this politics is seen primarily by Suharto as having succeeded in taking power into his hands. He pointed out that the regime used indigenous people to massacre its political opponents especially after 1965. Many parties were forced to slaughter their own family members (p. 62). But the question is if Suharto was the "mastermind" why did the massacre

continue? Did not Soekarno at that time appoint himself president of Indonesia for life? Likewise, if it is related to the Supersemar issue as a document signed by Soekarno as president on March 11, 1966. It is stated that (p.85):

”Isinya menyangkut pemberian mandat kepada Jenderal Soeharto untuk bertanggung jawab memulihkan ketertiban dengan segala macam cara dan upaya. Namun, apa pun yang tertuang di dalam dokumen tersebut saya sendiri meragukan bahwa Soekarno menginstruksikan Soeharto untuk menghabisi semua pengikutnya.”

“It contained a mandate for General Soeharto to be responsible for restoring order by all kinds of means and efforts. However, whatever is contained in the document I myself doubt that Soekarno instructed Suharto to kill all of his followers.”

From this statement, does this mean that Suharto is considered the “mastermind” of the massacre, because it is believed that the contents of Supersemar’s letter did not contain the intention of carrying out the massacre? This is a question that the author has not completely interpreted through the interview he conducted with Soeradjana (p. 84).

Death of Democracy among Students?

The political atmosphere above, caused a change in the atmosphere among Indonesian students abroad known as the Indonesian Student Association (PPI). At that time, the PPI was said to have been weak in

facing the Soeharto regime before they returned to their homeland. The students were also careful in expressing something, incase it was interpreted as an attitude against the Soeharto regime (p. 38). 1966 saw the removal of all embassy staff and replaced by Suharto’s men. The declaration to support Soekarno at a PPI meeting eventually changed its direction to support Soeharto. This was done considering their family problems in Indonesia. This is where Soeradjana’s interpretation emerges that all these changes were caused by Suharto’s role. This can be seen when Soeradjana said that:

“...setelah selesai melancarkan serangan perburuan para pengikut Soekarno dalam KAMI, apakah Soeharto merasa selayaknya seorang pahlawan karena mampu memaksa para mahasiswa untuk membanting haluan dari sayap kiri ke kanan, dibandingkan menarik pendukung dengan cara yang dia ciptakan. Persis seperti cara yang telah ditunjukkan Soekarno (hal. 39).

“... after completing the hunting attack of Soekarno’s followers in the US, did Suharto feel like a hero because he was able to force the students to slam from the left wing to the right, rather than attracting supporters in the way he created. Exactly the method Soekarno had shown (p. 39).

From the students’ circles there was a desire that Soekarno would survive, but in fact, after hearing the news of the massacre on October 1, 1965, the atmosphere became more and more uncertain. In 1967, Soeradjana completed his master’s education. He

also applied to be able to attend high school, because he would be awarded a scholarship to complete his Ph.D program. However, the reality was different, when Minister Councillor refused and was required to return to his homeland without delay. The forms of interrogation that were carefully planned by military counselors and attaches seemed to be a further interpretation in seeing how far the military was involved in relation to the G30S event? (p. 45). From Soeradjana's experience, he wanted to convey how political issues should be separated from education problems (p.36). Among them are mentioned as follows:

"Kami mencintai Indonesia sama seperti orang lain! Itulah kami memutuskan untuk meninggalkan keluarga kami selama bertahun-tahun untuk pergi belajar ke luar negeri. Bukan untuk keuntungan diri sendiri. Melainkan untuk keuntungan Indonesia dan rakyatnya! Kami seharusnya tidak diminta bertanggung jawab atas situasi pelik yang dihadapi Indonesia!"

"We love Indonesia as much as anyone else! That's why we decided to leave our family behind for years to go study abroad. Not for your own benefit. But for the benefit of Indonesia and its people! We shouldn't be held responsible for the complicated situation facing Indonesia!"

The existence of the book written by Jorgensen is considered to have contributed to our understanding in understanding the dynamics of post-revolutionary Indonesian history as it relates to the massacres that

occurred after 1965. The contents of this book conclude and reinforce the suspicion that plans have occurred from the beginning regarding Suharto's involvement in this matter. This was as a representation of the army at that time. He got the opportunity when foreign parties, in this case America's role, succeeded in creating a political situation and conditions that allowed for a power struggle through what was called the Supersemar. The plans that have been formed, can be seen when the writer returns or makes a flashback of the condition, in which Soekarno is said to be closer to the Mao sect in his foreign policy, compared to Moscow (Russia) or Eastern Europe as happened in the mid 1950s. This is understandable, because the Americans at that time considered China or Russia as their political opponents in carrying out world policies at that time. But the problem does not stop there, in this case to discuss the problem of who is the more certain "mastermind", further studies are needed in several countries such as examining historical documents found in America, China, Russia, and Indonesia itself, so that a better understanding will be obtained in understanding what happened before, during and after the events of the September 30 Movement.

However, the conclusion drawn is a conclusion to what is discussed in the novel written by Jorgensen who has interviewed Soeradjana from the time

he received his education in Slovenia Yugoslavia until he lived there with his family, so as to get a complete perspective on what he experienced while in the country. Therefore, what is conveyed in Jorgensen's book based on the interviews conducted, it is understandable the book is simplistic because the atmosphere of the era. The location of the character's experiences seem to support his interpretation and analysis about the historical events of post-revolutionary Indonesia from the opposite point of view of the interpretation developed in the New Order era. The New Order era has ended, and the Reformation era has begun, so various interpretations of history have ample space to be expressed based on transparency, so it is time to reveal the imbalances in the writing of contemporary Indonesian history, where the perpetrators are partly still alive.

Therefore, the existence of a different era atmosphere and providing space to convey different perspectives to the public, is expected to be able to fill in the vacuum of history that occurred which is considered as the Missing History. Therefore, although the contents of this book reinforce the allegations of Suharto's involvement, the army, supported by the Americans on the one hand, seems to strengthen the perspectives or views of the opposing groups towards what happened. However, in-depth studies and discussions from other sides of the controversy are still needed, so that the present and future generations have a treasure trove of homeland history, namely the history of Indonesia that is comprehensive.[]

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