

LEMBARAN SEJARAH

State and Economy during Modern Indonesia's Change of Regime

Special guest editor: J. Thomas Lindblad

State and Economy during Modern Indonesia's Change of Regime. A Synthesis
J. Thomas Lindblad
1-16

**State and Economy during Indonesia's Transition to Sovereignty. A Comparison with
the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan**
Thee KianWie
17-30

**The Political Framework of Economic Decision-making in Indonesia and Vietnam,
1945-1950**
Pham Van Thuy
31-44

**Economic Regimes in the Long Decolonization of Indonesia. The Nexus between State
and Business, 1930s-1950s**
Remco Raben
45-59

The Politics of Food and Food Security during Indonesia's Old Order (1945-1965)
Nawiyanto
60-73

The Indonesianization of Social Medicine
Vivek Neelakantan
74-86

**'Guided Economics'. The Construction of Post-colonial Political Images,
1950s-1960s**
Bambang Purwanto
87-95

Institutional Reforms of the Guided Democracy
Farabi Fakh
96-113

LEMBARAN SEJARAH	Volume 10	Nomor 1	Halaman 1-113	Yogyakarta April 2013	ISSN 1410 - 4962
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The Politics of Food and Food Security during Indonesia's Old Order (1945-1965)

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Abstract

The early decades of Indonesian independence have often been described as a time of economic hardship. Food crises appeared to illustrate the absence of a strong state creating prosperity for the Indonesian people. By examining food-related policies on both the production and the consumption side, this article seeks to offer a more balanced view of the actual role of the state in achieving food self-sufficiency and food security. I argue that there was a strong belief during the Old Order period that the state should play an important role in the food sector rather than letting the market mechanism determine. Various policies were executed by the government in order to increase food production and improve distribution. They were brought in practice in the field and clearly indicate the active role that the state assumed in managing foodstuffs and food sufficiency issues. The fact that food crises persisted, even later contributing to the regime change in the mid-1960s, was apparently not due to the absence of the state in the food sector, but rather to the failure of the state to overcome the hurdles of rapid population growth increasing the need for food as well as the failure to establish the political stability required for an effective and sustainable implementation of food policies.

Abstrak

Dua dekade awal kemerdekaan sering digambarkan dalam historiografi Indonesia sebagai masa sulit dalam kehidupan ekonomi. Krisis bahan pangan sering dijadikan ilustrasi untuk menunjukkan tiadanya peran negara dalam mewujudkan kesejahteraan masyarakat. Dengan melihat kebijakan pemerintah, sisi produksi dan konsumsi pangan, tulisan ini bermaksud melihat secara lebih berimbang dan faktual peran negara dalam mewujudkan ketercukupan bahan makanan dan ketahanan pangan di Indonesia. Dalam tulisan ini diargumentasikan bahwa selama dua dekade periode dekolonisasi terdapat keyakinan kuat akan keharusan peran negara dalam menangani sektor pangan, ketimbang semata-mata diserahkan pada mekanisme pasar. Beragam kebijakan dikeluarkan oleh pemerintah dalam rangka meningkatkan produksi pangan, mengelola distribusi, dan menangani aspek konsumsi bahan pangan. Semua ini mengindikasikan adanya peran negara yang cukup aktif dalam menangani permasalahan bahan makanan. Fakta bahwa krisis pangan masih berlangsung dan bahkan kemudian ikut menjadi faktor yang menyebabkan perubahan regim pada pertengahan 1960-an, tampaknya bukan karena tiadanya peran negara dalam menangani sektor pangan, melainkan karena kegagalan dalam mengatasi permasalahan pertumbuhan penduduk yang pesat, yang menyumbang peningkatan kebutuhan pangan, serta kegagalan dalam mewujudkan stabilitas politik yang menjamin implementasi program secara berkesinambungan.

Keywords: *food security, food politics, decolonization period, Indonesia*
