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Language

A military coup in 1965 – aimed primarily at destroying the Indonesian Communist Party – effectively ushered in a period of military rule until 1998. General Suharto formally took over as head of state from the independence leader Sukarno in 1967, and the military created a political system dominated by the ruling party, Golkar. In the 1970s demands for a more genuine democracy were spearheaded by university students, who after campaigning against the Communist Party in the mid-1960s enjoyed a somewhat privileged position. Opposition on a broader social front did not develop until the 1980s. Former prominent politicians and generals issued a critical statement in May 1980 and a degree of liberalization in the 1980s prompted wider dissent, especially by intellectuals, but including small scale protests on various economic issues and a growing number of workers strikes from 1988 into the 1990s.

By the 1990s popular dissent spilt over into the ‘official’ opposition parties (especially with widespread support for Sukarno’s daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri as leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party and a symbol of reform after she had been ousted from her post by the government in 1996). Popular discontent was manifested in the election of 1997. However, the government maintained control until 1998, when widespread popular anger sparked by the Asian economic crisis, and a militant role assumed by students coordinating opposition, prompted splits within the regime and defection of many military leaders from Suharto.

Anderson, Benedict R. O’G., [Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia](#) [1], Ithaca, Cornell University Press, Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2001, pp. 247

Essays exploring the institutionalised violence under Suharto and its legacy, with studies of the police and the military. (Also essay on East Timor.)

Aspinall, Edward ; Feith, Herb ; van Klinken, Gerry, [The Last Days of Suharto](#) [2], Melbourne, Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1999, pp. 171

Boudreau, Vincent, [Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia](#) [3], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 290

Compares democracy movements in Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines from a social movement perspective. Charts post-colonial evolution. On Indonesia, examines the Sukarno years, the 1965 coup and anti-communist massacres, initial student protests in the 1970s under Suharto, and the complexities of party politics in the 1980s and 1990s. Ch. 10 ‘Indonesia’s Democracy Protests’ (pp. 215-37) covers the build-up of resistance to Suharto, the role of the student demonstrations and the end of the Suharto regime.

Forrester, Geoff ; May, R.J., [The Fall of Soeharto](#) [4], London, Hurst, 1998, pp. 261

Produced by Australian National University Research Unit. Examines how and why Suharto was forced to step down.

See also Lee, [Military Cohesion and Regime Maintenance : Explaining the Role of the Military in 1989 China and 1998 Indonesia](#) [5] (C. II.1.c. Tiananmen. The Mass Protests of 1989 [6]) and Lee, [The Armed Forces and Transitions from Authoritarian Rule](#) [7] (E. II.8.a. Resisting Marcos. 1983-86 [8]) .



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