STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN INDONESIA

edited by

Arief Budiman

Monash Papers on Southeast Asia - No. 22
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication v
Preface vi
Acknowledgments xi
Notes on Contributors xiii

Introduction:

CHAPTER 1
From Conference to a Book
Arief Budiman 1

PART I:
Theories of the Capitalist Nature of the State in Indonesia

CHAPTER 2
The Political Economy of the New Order State
Pierre James 15

CHAPTER 3
Rent Capitalism, State, and Democracy
Olle Tornquist 29

CHAPTER 4
Oil, Iggi and US Hegemony:
Global Pre-Conditions
Richard Tanter 51
Yap Thiam Hien was invited to the conference to talk about the legal system and human rights in Indonesia. Unlike other speakers, who were mostly academics, Yap spoke as a humanist. He spoke with his heart, fully and sincerely involved with every word he said. He was the star of the conference.

It is fitting then that his moving extemporaneous address to the conference forms the preface to this book.

Although he looked a little bit old and tired (he was 75 years old then), he never thought of retiring. At the end of April 1989, he went to Belgium to participate in a meeting organized by the International NGO forum for Indonesia (INGI). Although, as always, his spirits were high, finally his body failed him. He felt ill after an overnight flight in a fully-booked airplane, and died the next day, April 23, 1989.

It is an honour to dedicate this book to Yap Thiam Hien. His spirit is the spirit of the book.
Chapter 11

PART III: THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF STATE AND SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION: STATE IDEOLOGY AND CIVIL DISCOURSE

Ariel Heryanto

"It can be argued that the central, indeed defining, problem of historical materialism is that of reproduction. This is a problem at both material and symbolic level. That is to say it involves explaining not only how in social formations ... the action of human agents are coordinated so as to ensure the inter-generational reproduction of the material conditions of existence ... but also how the set of unequal class relations produced by that co-ordination is itself legitimised such that reproduction takes place relatively free from social conflict... This of course also implies its converse, namely the problem of specifying the conditions under which reproduction does not take place leading to the more or less rapid transformation of the social formation..."1

The New Order's success both in economic development programs, and in maintaining political stability has been well acknowledged and documented. What remains challenging and curious is to explain how this impressive success has been achieved, how long it will continue, and the possible threats to it in the future. What follows is not an attempt to suggest any positive answers to these crucial and complex questions. Rather, it
is only concerned with illustrating the relationship between these basic questions and certain points raised in the following three contributions.

Despite its remarkable achievements, the New Order has not been free from conflicts and difficulties at both material and symbolic levels. One field of particular interest to this chapter on culture is the New Order’s problems in securing and maintaining its legitimation. In simplistic terms, one can say that this regime has derived its legitimation largely from five sources: (i) nationalism; (ii) Pancasila; (iii) the 1945 constitution and its formal embodiment; (iv) development programs; and (v) propaganda on stability and order. Furthermore, one can probably argue that these five cultural products are hierarchically structured; crudely speaking, the list above may suggest an order of their importance, with each determined to some significant degree by the levels which precede it on the list. In this light, opposition to the lower level of legitimation implies less radical challenge to the state. The lower levels are relatively less stable, less abstract, more frequently and more readily the target of direct opposition. Indeed, the rhetoric and enforcement of stability and order seem to have been least likely to be viewed as legitimate in the eyes of many. On the other extreme, to question the validity or legitimacy of any sort of nationalism seems the rarest or most distant phenomenon.

How do these various elements of the state ideology find their expression in New Order Indonesia? The modern state, Benedict Anderson convincingly argues, "finds in the nation its modern legitimation", without which it "can never justify its demand on a community's labour, time, and wealth simply by its existence". Nationalism is by no means the exclusive preserve of the New Order state; neither has its significance been continuously uniform and static since the Indonesian state gained national legitimation. Nevertheless, in the New Order, nationalistic gestures appear to have become a constant necessity. At very least, they function to gloss over the often alleged and seemingly inevitable 'westernisation' of the state-sponsored all-encompassing Development programs. The contemporary significance of Pancasila stems from two sources. It functions as the ideological basis of the New Order's primary claim to have saved the nation from the so-called 1965 communist coup. In later years, appeals to Pancasila have proved effective as a means of undercutting recurrently perceived Islamic-based opposition. The 1945 Constitution provides the formalities necessary to legitimate the desired institutions of government. These three elements - nationalism, Pancasila, and the 1945 constitution - have been sanctified by their association with the Indonesian state since its inception. Both development programs and the observation of stability and order, however, specifically characterise New Order Indonesia. Compared to the other elements of New Order state ideology, developmentalism and stability plus order embody things that are more pragmatic in nature, and responding to more immediate needs.

Having relied for its legitimacy on these sources, the New Order attempts to identify itself with them. Repeatedly it denounces any expression of dissent by branding it as the enemy of one or more of the five sources of legitimation. To be accused of being anti-nation, anti-Pancasila, or anti-1945 Constitution is much more serious than to be accused of being anti-development, or disrupting stability and order, although these charges often mean either anti the New Order state, or even merely anti certain individual state bureaucrats.

It goes without saying that the power of the New Order's legitimation is neither innate nor self-generating. The fact that its legitimation remains intact and upheld is due to a wide range of interrelated material conditions and practices of the state apparatus, most of which are the subject of analyses in other contributions in this book. These include extensive military participation in social activities, intimidation, extensive and rigorous surveillance, retarded mechanism of rule of law, overt extra-judicial operations, and the tight control of the press and education establishments. These exist on top of the deeply internalised trauma of the aftermath of 1966 on the one hand, and the New Order's success in material terms (economic growth, infrastructure construction, population, health, and schooling programs) and symbolic ones (vigorous propaganda) on the other. It only needs to be stressed here that both the successes of the new Order state and the disempowerment of the 'nation', or 'civil society' have taken place gradually.

Challenges recur from time to time, but the state has managed to dissolve most of them one by one. Step by step also the state has taken preventive measures to ensure the desired stability and order. Here, the crucial examples are the implementation of the 'floating mass' regulation, the restructuring of political parties, and then mass organisations, abolition of student government bodies, and intensified control of the mass media.

No hegemony is so powerful that it exhausts all the resources for resistance. "This is not merely a negative proposition ...", Raymond Williams argued. "On the contrary it is a fact about the modes of domination, that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of human practice." Despite the extremely strong state in New Order Indonesia, resistance continues to occur. The following three contributions in this chapter...
illuminates the point, and we can appreciate them properly with the perspective outlined above. Williams distinguished two forms of cultures being alternative to a dominant one: the residual, and the emergent. By residual, he refers to culture that "has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active". The emergent refers to a new relationships and kinds of relationship that are substantially alternative or oppositional, "rather than merely novel".

Each of the following three essays concentrates on one or more of these three categories in contemporary Indonesian cultural practice. In Ignas Kleden's, the residual seems prominent. Barbara Hatley gives an introductory note on the dominant, but her major, rich analysis concerns the various alternative cultures. Keith Foulcher provides a broader view of the dominant culture, showing its inherent contradictions, and examining two kinds of attempted strategies to counter the dominant culture. Each of these essays is significant, complete and instructive in itself. Nevertheless, I wish to explore the problem of mediation in resistance under study here, with particular reference to Kleden's paper. Given the current relations of the state and civil society as suggested in the foregoing, we must give our chief attention to the way domination and resistance are mediated in social practice. The experience of the contemporary Indonesian press provides considerable material for further analysis.

The death of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX on the second day of November 1988 was, in the words of Ignas Kleden, "for sure the biggest news in Indonesia in 1988" and his funeral was "the most celebrated one in Indonesia since independence". Kleden's essay concentrates more on the life than the death of the Sultan. Nevertheless, he questions why the Sultan's death was so news-making and the funeral so celebrated. His answer consists of two main arguments. Firstly, Sultan Hamengkubuwono was an extremely 'unusual' figure in the political and cultural history of both Java and New Order Indonesia. Secondly, events following the Sultan's death were "living evidence as to how much those people love their king ... how much the people miss their cultural ideal of political leadership".

Undoubtedly, Kleden makes an important contribution to this volume by dealing with something unequivocally important to contemporary Indonesian people. What I wish to suggest in the following is not immediately related to the central issues of Kleden's essay. Instead, I shall explore how the mass media contributed to the significance and meaning of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX's death and funeral.

Kleden's protagonist is the dead Sultan; mine are the living mass media in contemporary Indonesia. The year 1988 witnessed not only the eventual death and funeral of the Sultan, but also the phenomenal mass media coverage of those events. According to a recent survey by the Balai Penelitian Pers dan Pendidapat Umum ("The Press and Public Opinion Research Bureau") of Yogyakarta, clippings from twenty six newspapers and nine magazines between 3 October 1988 and 10 January 1989 on various topics related to Sultan Hamengkubuwono reached a total of 2,645 pages! This 'record-breaking' figure is itself news-worthy to most journalists, and the journalists seemed to self-consciously indulge in both constructing this phenomenon and commenting it.

Two things characterise the general set up of the current press in New Order Indonesia. It has increasingly become a highly capital-intensive business (some prefer to call it an 'industry'), and it operates under the constant and intimidating pressure of government bans, restrictions, and censorship. These two factors have conversely resulted in the diminishing power of the press to function as a legitimate institution, presenting checks and balances. On the occasion of the 1989 Indonesian Press Anniversary, the Minister of Information stressed that no opposition exists or should exist in the Indonesian press. Understandably then, when Dra. Roekmini Koesoemo Astoeti Soejono, member of the military faction in the parliament, described the contemporary press in the country as having been reduced to a "government bulletin", she initiated one of the most exciting and welcome controversies in 1989.

By law, access to publishing newspapers and magazines is restricted only to those who have thousands of millions of rupiah as an initial investment in the business. Consequently, the press has become a business enterprise, run by a few gigantic firms whose capital spills over into various fields. Profit making has naturally become the primary (though not sole) orientation, and anything that seems to threaten this huge capital investment will be avoided. Despite the political deprivation that it has to endure, the business of publication seems to offer quick, and considerable profit.

From experience, anyone in the press knows well the limited range of what can appear in publication. There are more than enough lessons in the immediate past to show that if the government deems it necessary, it has the power to ban any publication, or even publisher, at anytime and without trial. Prior experience, and perhaps some perceptiveness to occasional occurrence of subtle and largely silent changes in the political dynamics of the top state leadership, have taught them which areas are strictly proscribed, which are conditionally publishable, which are permissible,
and which are imperative. Thus, knowing precisely the substance and boundaries of these categories will help a great deal in reading pages of the Indonesian press. Otherwise, we should keep in mind at least the fact that these constraints exist.

By no means have these constraints turned all the surviving mass media simply into mouthpieces of the powers that be. Within the limited free space, editors, journalists, and freelance essayists make their ways to express their critical, and somewhat independent views. Thus, not only the editors and reporters but also their readers need to develop and learn the 'grammar' of this 'shadow language' for an active exchange of added meanings on the printed page. Of course, this creative activity is not always easy. I recall the comment of a friend who compared reading editorials of major newspapers to interpreting metaphysical poetry. In a recent interview with the journal *Prisma*, Mochtar Lubis complained that it took a great labour to grasp meanings from the printed pages of the Indonesian press.

Not everything that the press brings to the public every day, of course, contains covert oppositional or subversive messages, but certainly sometimes it does. The fact that a senior figure in the history of the Indonesian press like Lubis saw fit to complain about the difficulty of grasping these covert meanings implies that it is a common, ongoing practice. Rather than condemning the press for having done little to inform, he demands that it be more bold and explicit.

One common and effective pattern of resistance against imposed restrictions upon the press has been to evoke extended or added meanings, parallelism, or imagination. This is done by presenting 'permissible' topics in such a way as to speak the otherwise unspoken and unspeakable. International affairs provide one of the best sources of material to this end. The fall of Ferdinand Marcos, the preceding mass show of Philippines 'people's power', and the role of the Philippines military in these affairs were discussed extensively. They all rang a bell that sounded familiar and relevant at home. Indonesian reporters were extremely excited and enthusiastic about expanding reports, interviews, and discussion of these events to the extent that certain individuals in Jakarta were seriously concerned and produced counter views in publication.

Another international report of extreme importance was the public apology and confession made by former authoritarian South Korean President Chung Doo-hwan prior to his exile. No one among the Indonesian readership could miss the added message. Other recent examples include reports from student demonstrations in the People's Republic of China, South Korea, and Burma, and the serious friction within the Mahathir regime in Malaysia. Anticipation and questions of succession confronting Indonesia's neighbouring countries have always tended to attract great attention. Reports disclosing scandals and corruption allegedly committed by families or close relatives of the head of state in different countries have been unmistakably popular, too. The 'over-reaction' from Jakarta to David Jenkins' article in *Sydney Morning Herald* about the wealth and business of Indonesian top officials, according to Harold Crouch, revealed more internal conflicts within the Indonesian ruling elites than an expression of genuine hostility towards any Australians.

In sum, the contemporary Indonesian press is dense with highly figurative language. My friend was right to suggest that following the content of the Indonesian press can be compared to appreciating a work of art. Unless one has patience, sensitivity, and some familiarity with the immediate context, pages of the contemporary Indonesian press may appear to have everything, except anything politically serious, interesting, important, informative, or educational. One may also compare reading the Indonesian press to enjoying humour, where one will not (and will not like to) be told when or why one should burst into laughter.

Some element of 'oppositional' journalistic writing seems to have been contained in the voluminous reports on the death and funeral of the Sultan. Perhaps one should not pinpoint particular texts in the printed media and try to discover particular oppositional messages. The generous coverage of the event is the message. It is a case where quantitative growth gives shape to some qualitative significance. Although it was not an international affair, it provided similar possibilities for the journalists to exert their resistance against the existing hegemony. Thus, this is neither to say that the ceremonies in Yogyakarta have been distorted, appropriated, or falsified, nor to suggest that the extensive press reporting is the only or the most significant aspect of the whole event. Rather than curtailing the significance of the events, such as Kleden has documented well, it is only to suggest an enquiry into added significance of the happenings around the Sultan's death.

Please note I purposefully use the term 'added'. I am not speaking of any sort of 'hidden', or supposedly 'true(r)' meanings, which require some special expertise to decipher for the mass public. The message we are dealing with here is generally not concealed at all from the public awareness. It is simply suggested, hinted, added, or extended from the largely familiar use of plain and official discourse sanctioned by the government. This account is probably more apt than the earlier analogy to metaphysical poems.
The death and funeral of the Sultan was not the first case of a 'national affair' that is both a permissible topic for the headlines or cover stories, and a resource for evoking the proscribed issues. Other cases provide various degrees of provocation, but one salient and famous example was the 1986 issue of Dice's death. Dice was a prominent photographer and fashion model, who was shot at close range in her car. Widespread rumour has it that she had some affair with certain top elite individuals in Jakarta which led her to her death. A current and notable topic is the reporting surrounding controversial Gen. (Retired) Rudini, Minister of Home Affairs, and his provocative statements on the need to strive for a clean, accountable, and respectful government. The 1989 student demonstrations and the issue of political 'openness' initiated by the military fraction of the parliament as previously mentioned are more recent examples.

Ignas Kleden was not alone in reflecting on the life, death, and funeral of the Sultan. In fact, these issues have been the most common major question among observers. While the Sultan was indeed a notable figure, and the huge mass gathering at his funeral was a reality, what remains unclear from discussions such as Kleden's is why only then the Sultan was so remarkably glorified, both by the mass and mass media in New Order Indonesia to that extent. The Sultan withdrew from the Indonesian political arena during his final years, and he was only minimally heard of by the general public. His biographical book, \textit{Taha Untuk Rakyat}, published by one of the most prominent periodicals in the nation had circulated since 1982, but significantly attracted the public only after his death and (of?) the mass media coverage of it. This brings us to another figure of great importance, Soekarno.

Rhoma Irama, Rebecca Gilling, and Mick Jagger have also attracted enthusiastic tens of thousands of contemporary Indonesians into huge gatherings and great hysteria. Unlike these celebrities, however, Sukarno not only brought together greater crowds in streets and public places during the latest general election (1987), but more importantly crowds with a political cause directly confrontational to the powers that be. In the living memory of Indonesians, huge gatherings in the streets have been associated with some kind of (expected) significant social change. Although the everyday lives of most Indonesians have always been highly communal, gatherings on the people's initiative have tended to excite and intimidate New Order authorities. Precisely for this reason the New Order, capitalising the martial law-like stability and order framework, has minimised gatherings which it does not sponsor. A notorious example was the government restrictions that did not allow citizens to attend the 1983 monumental solar eclipse, except via its sponsored television network\textsuperscript{11}. Since March 1989, security authorities cancelled a series of permits already issued to recreational shows (circus, opera, play production, and rock music concerts) to be performed in the cities of Sumatra and Java. Reminding us of societies where martial law was necessarily imposed, in Indonesia today one is formally supposed to get a special permission to hold any meeting of more than five people.

To some extent, though for different reasons, the glorification of Sultan Hamengkubuwono was comparable to that of Soekarno. They both took place in the New Order Indonesia only posthumously. Though the dead but idolised Soekarno could never replace Suharto, the pervasive sympathy for Soekarno worried the New Order core group a great deal. The president's instruction (immediately after the 1987 general election) on rewriting standard history (particularly in reference to the period between 1950 to 1965), the publication of Soegiarto Soerojo's controversial Siapa Menabur Angin Akan Menuai Badai in 1988, and the 1989 state-sponsored movie production Djakarta 1966 can be best understood in this context.

Indeed, the dead Soekarno was significantly the only prominent figure to rival the renominated Suharto in the 1987 general election. In the case of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, death provides some of the disaffected with a legitimate mediation upon which to project resistance before the public. The funeral provides them with legitimate mediation and free permission for mass gatherings and sharing their common feelings about the existing social order and its anticipated future. This apparently has been one of the major characteristics of cultural resistance in contemporary Indonesia; confronting the existing state's power through the non-existente. This is probably why intellectuals and artists have found in fiction, as opposed to the meetings of the legislative assembly or political parties, relatively spacious possibilities for more independent expression. Barbara Hatley's essay in this collection attests to this tendency. While the dominant culture has tried to insist that its constructions are truly factual and historical, the dissidents have been obliged to comment on perceived facts and lived history as imaginary fairy tales of the never-never-land.

I have discussed the issue of the mass media at some length. Not only does it deserve our attention as we follow what the media has to say overtly about contemporary Indonesian state and civil society, but we must also attempt to appreciate its added messages. The mass media also appear to be one the most important battle grounds for competing ideologies, and a determining force in present and future politico-economic relations in Indonesia. Its strength is not as visible as the Indonesian Armed Forces, but its power is certainly not less significant.
The mass media, including the press and particularly the electronic media, have been the most important area of maintenance and reproduction of the New Order’s legitimation. Conversely, they have offered the most resourceful forms of mediation for resisting the regime. The state has purposefully monopolised radio news production all over the country, tightly controlled and constantly intimidated the press, and invested an immense amount of capital in movie production, satellite installation, and monopolised television network. Both materially and symbolically the importance of Satelit Palapa to the New Order is comparable to what Sumpah Palapa was to Majaphat. Understandably, the Indonesian press has been an institution of cultural practice that went through the most severe and most frequent blows of the state.

The mass media have proved to be the most important force of production, reproduction, and nurturing of some of the fundamental principles of legitimation of the state. Their essential being, by nature, reconfirms and consolidates the work of imagining the heterogeneous communities of the archipelago as one nation. They serve as the best agents for cultivating and developing the imposed official and legitimate Bahasa Indonesia as a national language. To some important degree, the mass media will undoubtedly constitute a determining force in future change or continuity in Indonesian social formation. This, in turn, depends on a wide range of other conditions, some of which are directly related to internal dynamics and others deriving more from external sources.

Economic difficulties will not only affect the nature and performance of the mass media today. This highly capital-intensive industry will conversely assert its own stance and response to these changes for securing its own interests. Political turmoil overseas, or more importantly aggravated political friction within the Indonesian ruling group will surely find their best expressions in, and considerable response from the mass media, which will subsequently aggravate and spread the antagonism even more. The activities of Indonesian NGOs, independent intellectuals, and artists have always been inseparable from, and to some degree mutually dependent on the mass media. This will continue. Resistance, as the following papers demonstrate, has constantly been part of the existing hegemony. One persistently formidable question is: what kind of alternative social formation do these forces of dissent visualise beyond fictional imagery? Another is: how alternative are the proposed alternatives? Ruling regimes may come and go, without radical transformation of the social order, or even the state. Nonetheless, I wish to end on a more realistic and less pessimistic note, by going to the source of the quotation that opens this whole introductory note. Contrary to the common practice of many, Garnham and Williams did not make a dichotomous separation between a revolutionary social transformation and a social reformation. Because, they argued,

"Reformation points us towards the spaces that are opened up in conjunctural situations in which the dominant class is objectively weakened and which thus offers opportunities for real innovation in the social structure, for shifts in the structure of power in the field of class relations which, while falling short of ‘revolution’ in the classical sense, are nonetheless of real and substantial historical importance and are objectively ‘revolutionary’ within a longer historical rhythm.”

NOTES


5. See ‘Kliping Berita Sultan HB IX Mencapai Tebal 2,645 Halaman’, *Kompas*, 6 February 1989, hal. VI.

6. In contemporary Indonesia, this function is commonly referred to as kontrol sosial, which means just the opposite of the English phrase ‘social control’.

7. Her famous remark was quickly refuted by the Armed Forces Commander, General Try Soetrisno. To some degree, General Soetrisno was correct to say that various newspapers in Indonesia retain their own characteristics. Interestingly, however, General Soetrisno also added that certain measures would be taken to assure that members of the military fraction in parliament complied with the official stance of the corps under his command, now enjoying
a significant share in the executive body. Some of the problematics of the legitimate constitution of 1945 become evident here.


12. It is curious that the key 1989 protesting students found it necessary to visit the Kalibata National Memorial complex (Jakarta) and sought to have a 'dialogue' with the spirits of the dead heroes. This was done soon after their secular and notable rallies in Boyolali, Semarang, and Jakarta in March 1989 for the Kedong Ombo villagers.

13. The first 'private', cable, television network restricted for subscribers in the capital city of Jakarta just recently went on the air. This network belongs to the president's son.