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## Writing novels under the New Order: state censorship, complicity, and literary production in Indonesia, 1977-1986

Hanafi, T.

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## Chapter 3

### Inside the Panopticon: Censorship under the New Order

“My work has been nothing other than to monitor closely my own people for the sake of the security and perpetuity of the government. All natives...who so disturbed the peace and serenity of the government — yes, I have and will continue to put them into a house of glass which I will place on my desk.”<sup>174</sup>

Pangemanann<sup>175</sup> in *House of Glass*

A widely shared notion about censorship in Indonesia under the New Order is that it merely followed a pattern of authoritarian governance inherited from the Dutch colonial ruler and Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, and was erratically carried out by understaffed, unskilled, and uncritical censors.<sup>176</sup> But the scholarly literature on censorship in Indonesia and archives from the Attorney General Office, together with my interviews, tell a different story. I argue that the New Order did not only follow censorship mechanisms that were operated under the colonial rule and Sukarno’s regime, but it also perfected the machinery by employing numerous agencies and stakeholders — turning them all into effective censors. The history of the creation, reception, and sudden banning of Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Bumi Manusia*, as described by Farid (2010) and Maier (1999), for example, refutes the notion and actually is against the common perception that has for a long time been assumed.<sup>177</sup>

Shortly after their release from the New Order’s internment camp on Buru Island in Maluku in 1979, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Hasjim Rachman, former

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<sup>174</sup> Excerpt from Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Rumah Kaca*, p. 56. The novel itself was taken out of circulation only a few months after its publication. On June 8, 1988, Sukarton Mamosudjono, the then Attorney General, banned the novel with a decree, SK Jaksa Agung Nomor: KEP - 061/J.A./6/1988, which mentions that ‘after careful analysis, we find that the author with his outstanding skills and by means of historical data has written the novel in such subtle and overt way that it is laden with the teachings of Communism/Marxism – Leninism.’ When Pramoedya published and edited two other novels, namely *Gadis Pantai* (*The Girl from the Coast*) and *Siti Mariah* (*Siti Mariah*), immediately after the decree to ban *Rumah Kaca* was issued, the Attorney General signed another decree on August 3, 1988 that banned *Gadis Pantai* and *Siti Mariah*. Almost every publication that he had written and published was immediately banned.

<sup>175</sup> Pangemanann is police commissioner-cum-main character, narrator of *House of Glass*. He was given the task by the colonial government to oversee the natives, especially Minke, for the sake of security of the government. While conducting the surveillance, he is very keen in gathering information and taking notes of all activities conducted by Minke and the natives at large.

<sup>176</sup> Yusuf 2010, pp. vii, 38, 74, and 176. See also Sen and Hill 2007, pp. 37, 39.

<sup>177</sup> The discussion in the NEXT two paragraphs about the creative processes of Pramoedya’s *Bumi Manusia*, its production and circulation that involved Hasta Mitra, Hasjim Rachman, and Joesoef Isak, draws on Maier 1999, pp. 231-258 and Farid 2010. Hilmar Farid’s blog entitled ‘*Tentang Kelahiran Bumi Manusia*’ (2010b). See [http://hilmarfarid.id/tentang-kelahiran-bumi-manusia/#\\_ftn5](http://hilmarfarid.id/tentang-kelahiran-bumi-manusia/#_ftn5). This blog was written based on a series of interviews; most importantly the interview Farid had with Toer’s publisher of the 1970s Joesoef Isak in Jakarta on July 28, 2007.

editor in chief of the *Harian Bintang Timur*,<sup>178</sup> met Joesoef Isak, a publisher who had also been jailed due to his affiliation to the Indonesian communist party. In the meeting, they discussed the possibility of publishing works by left-wing intellectuals, former political prisoners, and literary authors, and ventured to establish a book publishing company. And in April 1980, they launched *Hasta Mitra*, Javanese words for 'friendly hand'. The three agreed that the first text they chose to publish was *This Earth of Mankind* (*Bumi Manusia*), the first volume of the story of the Indonesian National Movement between 1898 and 1918 written by Pramoedya. Pramoedya began revising the manuscripts that he actually had written in the prison camp in 1975, while Joesoef acted as editor, and Hasjim handled the business and financial affairs. Within three months, the manuscript was ready for print. The first print came out on August 15, 1980. The Jakarta-based national daily *Kompas* was among the first to show support and welcome the publication of the novel. On August 22, it dedicated a whole page to advertise the novel, calling it a pleasant surprise for the nation's 35<sup>th</sup> commemoration of Independence. Within just 12 days, about 5,000 copies were sold, and 50,000 more copies were sold until its fifth printing.<sup>179</sup> In addition to *Kompas*, warm welcomes also came from various literary scholars and journalists. Jakob Sumardjo, among many other Indonesian literary critics, wrote a review in the Bandung-based newspaper *Pikiran Rakyat* on September 10, 1980 and called *This Earth of Mankind* the work of Indonesia's greatest novelist. Even the anti-communist military-owned newspaper *Angkatan Bersendjata*, which had previously campaigned for anti-communist propaganda and against leftist authors, wrote a lengthy complimentary review, calling the book a positive contribution to the Indonesian literary world.<sup>180</sup> The then vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam Malik, gave an equally positive response and endorsement.<sup>181</sup>

But then the tables were suddenly turned. The popularity of *This Earth of Mankind* together with the growing reading public was now seen as a challenge and threat to the authoritarian government.<sup>182</sup> The Attorney General formed a *Panitia Kerja Tetap* (Permanent Working Committee) and had it meet with the Coordinating Minister for the People's Welfare on September 9, 1980.<sup>183</sup> The outcome of the meeting was a conclusive finding that the book contained issues of class conflict, something that the New Order regime was highly allergic to. As a follow-up, *Kadit*

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<sup>178</sup> A daily newspaper of the Indonesian Party (Partindo). It first appeared in 1926. It ceased publishing in 1965 due to the said affiliation to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

<sup>179</sup> Suryowardono 1982, p. 77.

<sup>180</sup> Angkatan Bersenjata, September 23, 1980.

<sup>181</sup> Maier 1999, p. 241. An indication of the vice president's positive response and endorsement to the publication of Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia*, according to Maier, was evident in pictures him with Pramoedya, Joesoef Isak, and Hasjim Rachman in some of the leading newspapers in Jakarta and beyond.

<sup>182</sup> Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Republik Indonesia nomor KEP-052/JA/5/1981 tentang Larangan Peredaran Barang Cetak Berjudul Bumi Manusia dan Anak Semua Bangsa, in 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta

<sup>183</sup> The decree issued by the Attorney General indicates that the Attorney General formed the *Panitia Kerja Tetap* after considering inputs from the KOPKAMTIB.

*Polkam* (Head of the Intelligence Bureau) of the Attorney General Office made a phone call to Hasjim as the director of Hasta Mitra, warning him not to distribute the book until the censor's clearance.<sup>184</sup> A few days afterward, on September 19, the *Kadit Polkam* summoned Hasjim and interrogated him for three consecutive days in relation to the publication of the book and the other three novels that would follow, i.e. *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps*, and *House of Glass*.<sup>185</sup> After the interrogation, the examiners at the bureau concluded that the book and the other three that had yet to be printed were code books that encrypted communist doctrines, namely class struggle, internationalism, the Communist Manifesto, and communist society.

This conclusion was soon echoed by government officials, community leaders, literary scholars, and journalists. In their own ways, they reasoned that the book did contain Marxist teachings even though they never seemed to offer valid analyses on the content of the book. The Attorney General Office pushed forward and began to shift the issue to Pramoedya's status as an ex-political prisoner. Ampat Lima, the printing house, was targeted. The owner was telephoned and warned not to continue to print the novel. Agents and bookstores were raided by officials from the Attorney General Office and security apparatuses. Some other vendors voluntarily handed over the books to the Attorney General Office. Pressure was also put on the press. Around October 10, 1980, newspapers and magazine editors were also telephoned to not publish praising reviews for Pramoedya's work.<sup>186</sup> Rosihan Anwar, the liberal-minded author-cum-senior journalist and supporter of the *Manifest Kebudayaan*, accused the press of playing with fire when writing sympathetically about the novel,<sup>187</sup> while H.B. Jassin, reputedly the custodian of Modern Indonesian literature, said that he could not blame the government for their action.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, government-backed newspapers such as *Suara Karya*, *Pelita*, and *Karya Dharma* began to publish condemnation of *This Earth of Mankind* and the author. IKAPI, which initially had shown support for the publication and asked Hasta Mitra to take part in the association's annual book exhibition, lost interest and sent a letter of cancelation to Hasta Mitra.

Furthermore, Kodam Jaya (the Greater Jakarta Military Regional Command) invited a group of literary authors and intellectuals to a meeting in order to provide the military officials with a scientific and cultural foundation that could be made as reference to reject the book. In mid-April 1981, several youth groups organized a

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<sup>184</sup> Farid 2010b. Also Maier 1999, p. 77. According to Maier, this was a common method in modern Indonesia since the message remains anonymous and unrecorded, the source cannot be traced, because the message is clear in its covertness.

<sup>185</sup> 'Surat Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, No. Pang. 038/D.1/9/1980, 11 September 1980.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>186</sup> Maier 1999, p. 77.

<sup>187</sup> *Pos Kota*, September 23, 1980, quoted in Farid 2010b.

<sup>188</sup> Responding to the banning of Pramoedya's novel, HB Jassin stated that in principle he did not approve the banning of books but also could not blame the government for their action. Keen to secure favor with the state, Jassin tended to leave everything to the authorities. Interestingly, Jassin was jailed after his magazine published a short story that was considered to be disrupting public order. See. 'Buku Pram' 1981, and *Komentari* 1989.

discussion denouncing Pramoedya's work, which was followed by a letter to the editor from a concerned citizen stating that the novel had caused unrest and that Pramoedya should be forbidden to write.<sup>189</sup> All these gave the needed justification for the Attorney General to set a ban. Finally, on May 29, 1981, the Attorney General decreed that *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations* were banned because they 'disturbed the peace and serenity [of the government]'<sup>190</sup> — the book had to be withdrawn from the market, and stock was recalled, confiscated, and destroyed by the police. In this context, Indonesia had, and still has, an uncanny resemblance to Pramoedya's *House of Glass* in which both Pangemanann and the state c.q. Attorney General were always concerned about the security and perpetuity of the government and, therefore, were committed to surveilling and putting those who so disturbed the peace and public order into a house of glass.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, much has been said about censorship and its important role in defining New Order orthodoxy — a colonial inheritance that stemmed from anxiety and fear of the political consequences that could undermine its authoritarian regime (Farid 1996; Maier 1999; Haryanto 1999; Sen&Hill 2007; Yusuf 2010; van Heeren 2012). The case of Pramoedya's *This Earth of Mankind*, therefore, was primarily viewed as a typical case of powerless victim and an overwhelmingly repressive state authority that acted in a sudden and seemingly erratic way. It follows the two general tendencies in the way censorship has been studied predominantly in the West, as characterized as such by Darnton (1995, 2014), Bunn (2015), and Burt (1994) — namely, on the one hand, as 'a story of the struggle between freedom of expression and the attempts to repress it by political authorities,' and on the other hand, as 'an account of constraint of every kind that inhibit[s] communication.'<sup>191</sup> The systematic nature of this mechanism and its management of censorship, however, remained overlooked and underexplored. Based on my research, the case of Pramoedya actually demonstrates that the Attorney General, to which the state delegated the sole authority of censorship, possessed a wide range of abilities in managing and utilizing its overwhelming control in order to get all state organs, as well as the general public to turn against a publication that they initially supported.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, suggestions for censorship or bans might have originated from various other state bodies or civil groups; nonetheless, as this thesis will show, it was the Attorney General who remained the key coordinating actor and, against the common assumption at the time, the Attorney General acted in most cases autonomously. Similarly, in the case of *Bumi Manusia*,

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<sup>189</sup> 'Buku Pram' 1989.

<sup>190</sup> In Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *House of Glass* (1988), the fourth volume of his Buru Quartet, Pangemanann illustrates in details how censorship works, especially with his nitpicking habit of writing down information, events, and names of people, which he believed would bring or maintain public order.

<sup>191</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 17; Bunn, 2015, pp. 25-44; and Burt. 1997. pp. 19-43.

<sup>192</sup> This is not to place Pramoedya outside the dynamics, but to say that he was not part of the state censorship management. He was the one under pursuit, targeted for attack; hence, the game, as implied by Maier (1999).

the Attorney General set the ban in a very deliberate and effective manner, although in the beginning he vacillated.

Under the New Order regime, the state, c.q. the Attorney General developed clear procedures and employed a mechanism of censorship in which both the censors and its subjects (writers, journalists, newspapers, and publishers) were interlinked in a complex interdependent relation. Research material that I collected – through interviews and consultation of the library and archives – in the Office of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET reveals that censorship was not simply about repression by the state in its effort to maintain national stability and social order, which complicates the definition of censorship, but also about the ability to foster more resources. While the Attorney General controlled the literary field as completely as possible, by disciplining authors, publishers, and literary critics, the Attorney General also allowed publishers, editors, and literary authors to react and engage with the productive dimensions of censorship to increase the production of literature as a pillar of national development.

Furthermore, according to the Deputy for Supervision and the Deputy for Intelligence Service, the Attorney General, with which authority to ban publications rested, was always equipped with three political resources, namely: coercive, coordinative, and material resources, including financial abundance allotted by the central government.<sup>193</sup> In two closed meetings of the *Panitia Kerja Tetap* at the Attorney General Office that I attended during my fieldwork, for example, attendees from various departments, publishing houses, and community groups were handed out envelopes filled with Rupiahs as extra official honoraria for censorship-serving tasks. Based on further investigation which I will substantiate later in this chapter in more detail, this practice was not recent. It has been performed by the said office in many previous *Panitia Kerja Tetap* meetings dating back to the 1980s.<sup>194</sup> Especially in the 1980s, when the New Order regime was at its crest of power and experiencing steady economic growth, the Attorney General resorted more to persuasion, using symbolic and ideological approaches, in order to get the public to voluntarily accept the presence of the state and its policies.<sup>195</sup>

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the Attorney General coordinated an interlaced system of state institutions, together with editors, publishers, and, not least, readers, and worked with authors as much as against them, and helped to improve literary works to conform to the state views or standards. Similar to Darnton's finding on censorship in France during the years before the revolution of 1789, where books 'existed by virtue of the king's pleasure, product[s] of the royal grace,' censorship under the New Order also began from the top and 'drove

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moeljarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moeljarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>195</sup> This decade was the period of success of the New Order rulers who established themselves after in the previous decade it had succeeded in suppressing /taming students, political parties, and dissenting generals. See Liddle 1992, pp. 90-104, and 113.

authors/editors/publishers and censors together rather than apart.<sup>196</sup> In addition, with abundant material resources, just like Pangemanann in Pramoedya's *House of Glass*, the Attorney General was intent on gathering information and refining the methodology of censorship into a standard operating procedure. With all these resources, virtually all publications that were printed in the period were surveyed, classified, and analyzed by the state, c.q. Attorney General, and its helpers using panoptic techniques of surveillance through various agencies and hierarchical observation.

Censorship under the New Order Indonesia became pervasive, sophisticated, massive, and more than other scholars presume, effective. To show how, this chapter explores the following questions. What type of machinery did the state operate in exerting its power, especially in relation to supervision and banning of printed materials? What forms of censorship were put into practice? And what role did the Attorney General play? What was his position vis-à-vis other institutions and powerholders? The purpose of these questions is to identify the institutional framework undergirding the management of surveillance and control utilized and coopted by the state in relation to book banning.

### **Censorship in 'New Order': Historical Continuities**

Under the New Order Indonesia, criticisms against the government were regarded as criminal acts, equivalent to thefts.<sup>197</sup> Dozens of people who actively voiced their political views were imprisoned as the government officials 'invoked the provisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code that former Dutch colonial administrators had used to suppress opposition to colonial rule.'<sup>198</sup> Two of the most notorious legal weapons harkened back to colonial-era laws: the vaguely worded *Haatzaai Artikelen* (hate sowing articles), which basically 'prohibited expression of feelings of hostility, hatred, or contempt toward the government;<sup>199</sup> and the *lèse majesté* (criminal code articles 134, 137(1), 207, 208), which criminalized the dissemination, display or posting of material offensive to the state or government officials.<sup>200</sup> Both *Haatzaai Artikelen* and *lese majeste* restricted journalists and targeted the movements that opposed colonial rule.

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<sup>196</sup> Darnton 2014, pp. 28 and. 47.

<sup>197</sup> See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 11.

<sup>198</sup> Broecker 2010, p. 10.

<sup>199</sup> Broecker 2010, p. 10.

<sup>200</sup> See Yamamoto 2011, pp 141 Section 1. Section (1): Any person who disseminates, openly demonstrates or puts up a writing or portrait containing an insult against an authority or public body set up in the Netherlands Indies with the intent to give publicity to the insulting content or to enhance the publicity thereof, shall be punished by a maximum imprisonment of four months or a maximum fine of three hundred guilders at maximum; Section (2): If the offender commits the crime in his profession and during the commission of the crime two years have not yet elapsed since an earlier conviction of the person on account of a similar crime has become final, he may be deprived of said profession. See. Wiratraman 2014. See also, Fauzan 2003, pp. 96-97; Human Rights Watch 1998, p. 53 Broecker 2010, p. 10.

Prior to the introduction of the *Haatzaai Artikelen*, in 1856 the colonial rule introduced the *Reglement of de drukwerken in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Regulation on Printed Matter in the Netherlands Indies, a regulation that aimed at stifling criticism of the colonial government.<sup>201</sup> It introduced a pre-censorship system for the press that made it compulsory for the printing houses or publishers to submit a signed copy to the head of the local administration, public prosecutor, and general secretariat (*Algemene Secretarie*). Violation against this provision was liable to a fine, confiscation, or dissolution of the publisher and printing house.<sup>202</sup> This was then followed by the *Persbreidelordonnantie* 1931 (Press Banning Ordinance) which in its day manifested as a dreaded repressive tool used against writers and newspapers owners.<sup>203</sup> This ordinance gave the right to the Governor-General to ‘ban publications for a maximum of eight days in the interest of public order. If he found that the newspaper concerned was violating public order, he could ban the publication for a longer period, without the involvement of the judiciary.’<sup>204</sup>

After the Proclamation of Independence, leaders of the Republic decided to take over all colonial legal products, and only made necessary and noticeable improvements in order to make the regulations fit the newly independent state. The term ‘king’, for example, was replaced with ‘president,’ and several articles that had been used to tackle the fight for independence were revoked in 1946. However, the entire structure which tended to curb society was maintained.<sup>205</sup> In responding to political crises and increasing tensions and hostilities among military and civil leaders that were often amplified through mass media, pamphlets, and other printed materials, Nasution, the Chief Staff of the Indonesian Army, under the auspices of Sukarno, issued a military ordinance that regulated publication. Article 1 of this ordinance stipulated that:

‘It is prohibited to print, publish, offer statements, broadcast, post, provoke, or possess writings, pictures, clichés, and paintings that contain or portray criticism, insinuations (*insinuatie*) or insults against the President and the Vice President, or against an authority or general assembly, or a civil servant

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<sup>201</sup> The Printing Press Regulation of 1856 obliged all printers and publishers to send a copy of newspapers and periodicals to the chief local authority. The local authority was given the task of exercising pre-publication censorship. It had the power to check the content, change it, and even suspend distribution of the issue. It also had the power to withdraw the license of printers and publishers at any time. See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 21; Yamamoto 2011, pp 30-34. Adam 2018; Maters 2003, p. 51.

<sup>202</sup> Surjomiharjo 1980, p. 171-172.

<sup>203</sup> Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie 1931 No. 394 jo. Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie 1932 No. 44. The original title is ‘*Drukwerken, Bescherming van de openbare orde tegen ongewenschte periodiek verschijnende drukwerken*’ (Printed matters: Protection of public order against undesirable periodical printings).

<sup>204</sup> Mirjam Maters mentioned that the rationale behind this ordinance was a follow up response to the communist uprising in East Java in 1927/1927 which signaled an increasing critical movement against the Dutch colonial government. The government was in favor of a regulated freedom and found that the colonial situation justified the taking of repressive and administrative measures. See Maters 2003, p. 220. See also Wiratraman 2014, p. 55.

<sup>205</sup> Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 15.



when acting on the basis of an official mandate; writings which contain hostility, hatred, and insulting statements against community groups; or writings which contain news or announcements which provoke chaos in society.<sup>206</sup>

This rule did not only apply to writers and publishers, but also to printing houses, distributors and vendors. What was meant by insult and ‘provoke chaos’ was not clearly defined, as if it intentionally sought to leave room for the government, especially the Army, to apply whatever definition they wished. It was the Army themselves that played an important role in banning Pramoedya’s book *Hoakiau di Indonesia (The Chinese in Indonesia)* in 1959. After the book was declared prohibited, the author was sent to prison. A year later, Muhammad Hatta’s *Demokrasi Kita (Our Democracy)*, an article in which he called Sukarno’s Guided Democracy a disguised form of totalitarianism and described Sukarno as a Mephistopheles in reverse, a man who wished to do well but caused evil, was banned.<sup>207</sup> Hamka, the owner and publisher of the Islamic weekly magazine, *Pandji Masyarakat* (Banner of Society), where the article appeared, was arrested and imprisoned for alleged subversive activities, while his magazine was banned.

In addition to the ordinance, another equally important legal product of the Sukarno era is the Presidential Order No. 4 of 1963, which was designed to safeguard the path of the Indonesian Revolution by means of preventing and prohibiting printed matters that could disturb public order. This order came into force on April 23, 1963 with the backdrop of a split between Nasution and Sukarno, and an increasing opposition between the Army and the Sukarno government which received strong support from the communists (PKI) and the nationalists (PNI and Partindo). In this period, a cultural campaign was launched against the influence of imperialism in the lives of the Indonesian people and called for art to promote social progress and reflect social reality, rather than exploring the human psyche and emotions.<sup>208</sup>

One of the targets of the campaign was the *Manifes Kebudayaan*, a military-sanctioned cultural movement signed on August 17, 1963 by non-left intellectuals, poets, and literary writers, including H.B. Jassin, in an effort to promote freedom in creativity and combat the theories of social realism pressed by the members of LEKRA, the cultural arm of the Indonesian communist party, ‘founded on August 17, 1950, with Njoto as the Party’s guiding hand in the central secretariat.’<sup>209</sup> According to Jassin, LEKRA was a tool of the PKI, alongside other organizations that were affiliated with the party. It was, according to him, the tool for dominating the area of literature and culture within the PKI’s wider endeavor to conquer power in Indonesia. LEKRA’s slogan ‘*Politik adalah Panglima*’ (Politics in Command)

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<sup>206</sup> *Peraturan Kepala Staf Angkatan Darat selaku penguasa militer* No. PKM/001/9/1956 on September 14, 1956, quoted in Wiratraman 2014, p. 66; Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, pp. 16-17.

<sup>207</sup> See Hatta 2000.

<sup>208</sup> See Foulcher 1986.

<sup>209</sup> Hindley 1966, p. 184.

was felt by independent artists and intellectuals to be a threat to ‘freedom of thought and creativity.’<sup>210</sup>

Many prohibitions in the series of this cultural campaign took place, especially on the books that were believed to spread liberal views and hinder the course of the revolution. LEKRA was also vocal ‘against those it deemed to be at odds with the movement and against writers and artists alleged to be the promoters of literature and arts for the bourgeois class, capitalists, and imperialists.’<sup>211</sup> LEKRA ‘argued that art and literature should be dedicated to the ‘*rakyat*’ (ordinary people) rather than to the bourgeoisie.’<sup>212</sup> Socialist realism, therefore, was interpreted to ‘represent the real life of the people through the framework of socialist morals’ and contrasted with the ‘universal humanism which was considered a false slogan taken from Western imperialists to conceal their real interests’ via the *Manifes Kebudayaan* camp.<sup>213</sup> Since its ban on May 8, 1964, the writers who were associated with the *Manifes Kebudayaan* were marginalized in social and literary life. They were faced with extreme difficulties as almost all publishers refused to publish their works. *Sastra* magazine, run by Jassin, had to close down due to management and financial problems after the ban. Furthermore, as part of the ‘retooling’ campaign to rid state enterprises and universities of bureaucratic capitalists and people in authority seen to be sympathetic to Western imperialism, Jassin was pressured by Left-wing student organizations to leave his teaching position in the Faculty of Arts, Universitas Indonesia because of his association with the *Manifes Kebudayaan* as early as April 1964.<sup>214</sup> A year later, the Department of Education and Culture instructed that the works of *Manifes Kebudayaan* supporters should no longer be used as teaching materials at schools.

When the New Order came to power, the government set ‘a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, and circulation’<sup>215</sup> of books by using Law No. 4/PNPS/1963 which mimicked the 1856 colonial regulation on the prohibition of printed matters.<sup>216</sup> The 1963 law regulated the preventive and repressive measures on printed matters whose content could disturb public order, including the authority, mechanism of book banning, implementation, as well punishment in the event of violation. It stipulated that the authority to ban rested with the Attorney General who had the coordinating authority to assess and ban books that could disturb public order. It also stipulated that publishers were obliged to

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<sup>210</sup> Ismail 1972, p.ix. This book was initially a thesis published by University Indonesia, written by Ismail, who was at the time supervised by Jassin, Indonesia’s foremost literary critic and a staunch anti-communist. In the early 1970s, this thesis was published as a book, with a foreword by Jassin, which summarized a lopsided account of the cultural element of pre-1965 politics and even became the continued trope of Suharto era.

<sup>211</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, p. 212.

<sup>212</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, p. 212.

<sup>213</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, pp. 212-213.

<sup>214</sup> Foulcher 1987, p. 92.

<sup>215</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 133.

<sup>216</sup> ‘Himpunan Peraturan.’ Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

submit copies of the book within two days after publication and that the authorities were given the rights to confiscate or withdraw the books from the publishers, bookstores, or individuals. It also stipulated that individuals who owned forbidden books were obliged to submit the books to local police or prosecutor offices. Lastly, it also stipulated that each printed matter must be labeled with the name of the printer or publishers and their address. Failure to comply would be faced with penal consequences.

As the title suggests, Law number 4/PNPS/1963 was not entirely a new product of the New Order government. It was an adaptation of the presidential order that was issued by Sukarno in 1963. While the presidential order issued by Sukarno favored all printed materials that were in accordance with the spirit of revolution, this newly adopted law worked in reverse. Major changes occurred in the omission of Sukarnoist traces and terminologies such as the *Nasakom*, *Pemimpin Besar Revolusi*, *Sosialisme*, *Realisme Sosialis*, and *Politics as commander*. As this law was used as the main legal foundation for book ban under the New Order, this law was always referred to in the consideration section of the Attorney General decrees that were issued in the New Order period, even until it was eventually revoked in 2010.<sup>217</sup> In addition to the presidential order, the Attorney General also relied on several other Sukarno-era laws, i.e. Law number 15 of 1961 which regulated the authority of Attorney General; the presidential order number 11/PNPS of 1963 on subversive acts; and the presidential order number 1/PNPS 1965 on defamation of religion.<sup>218</sup>

Furthermore, a colonial anti-communist ideology was shared by the New Order. Legal sources were used to specifically ban publications that supposedly contained or propagated communism, or Marxism-Leninism. In March 1966, the MPRS declared the Indonesian Communist Party illegal by a decree known as *Ketetapan MPRS No. XXV/1966*. With this decree, the tables were turned. Every cultural initiative and creativity produced by members of LEKRA was short-lived, if not immediately banned. This decree was further enhanced by the introduction of Ministerial Instruction Number 32 of 1981 on the Re-education and Supervision of Former Political Prisoners linked with the communist party.<sup>219</sup> As if used to avenge Jassin's forced dismissal from the University of Indonesia, the instruction urged that

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<sup>217</sup> *Lembaran Negara RI Nomor 23 Tahun 1963. Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 4 Tahun 1963 tentang Pengamanan terhadap Barang-Barang Cetakan yang Isinya Dapat Mengganggu Ketertiban Umum. And, Penjelasan atas Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 4 Tahun 1963 tentang Pengamanan terhadap Barang-Barang Cetakan yang Isinya Dapat Mengganggu Ketertiban Umum.* 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>218</sup> 'Himpunan Petunjuk.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>219</sup> *Lampiran Instruksi Menteri Dalam Negeri, Departemen Dalam Negeri Nomor: 32 Tahun 1981 tentang Pembinaan dan Pengawasan terhadap Bekas Tahanan dan Bekas Narapidana G.30.S/PKI, and, Instruksi Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Kebudayaan RI Nomor: 1381 Tahun 1965 Tanggal 30 Nopember 1965 tentang Larangan Mempergunakan Buku-buku Pelajaran, Perpustakaan, dan Kebudayaan yang Dikarang oleh Oknum-oknum dan Anggota-anggota Ormas/Orpol yang Dibekukan untuk Sementara Waktu Kegiatannya.* Both in 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip. SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

the former political prisoners should be prohibited from holding strategic professions that included civil servants, military personnel, teachers, and priests, as well as writers, editors, and translators. When the government found out that Hersri Setiawan, Boejoeng Saleh, and Joebaar Ajoeb, all of whom were former political prisoners in Buru Island, wrote articles in *Prisma* magazine, the Department of Information reprimanded the chief editor and threatened to revoke its printing permit. On March 2, 1983, the Ministry of Information Republic of Indonesia sent a letter directly addressed to the managing director of *Prisma* Magazine. The letter reads:

‘After careful investigations on several issues of *Prisma* Magazine, we found several elements that in our opinion deserve serious attention from you. The special section in your magazine, called ‘*TOKOH*’ (PEOPLE), repeatedly features [problematic] individuals, among others: Mr. Amir Syarifuddin, Aidit, and Cornel Simanjuntak. Based on our assessment, these features were as if an attempt by the communists via *Prisma* Magazine to regain strength and garner sympathy from the society in order for them to be welcomed again in our society, or a campaign to revive the Communist Party in Indonesia. The features appeared in:

1. *Prisma* No.2, February 1982 pp. 73-87, ‘Cornel Simanjuntak Cahaya, Datanglah’ written by Hersri S.
2. *Prisma* No.5, May 1982 pp. 79-96, ‘S.M. Kartosuwiryo, Orang Seiring Bertukar Jalan’ written by Hersri S. and Joebar Ajoeb.
3. *Prisma* No.7, July 1982 pp. 61-79, ‘Aidit dan Partai Pada Tahun 1950’ written by Jacques Leclerc.
4. *Prisma* No.9, September 1982, pp. 68-89, ‘Oerip Soemohardjo Kebungkaman Yang Ampuh’ written by S.I. Poeradisastra.
5. *Prisma* No. 12, December 1982, pp. 53-73 written by Jacques Leclerc.’<sup>220</sup>

The letter that was signed by the Director of Journalism Services Ministry of Information Republic of Indonesia, Drs. Daan S. Sashusilawane concludes with a paragraph that reads:

‘the publications of these articles are against the *Ketetapan MPRS No. XXV/1966* that dictates the disbandment of the PKI and the prohibition of any activities to spread or promote the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and Communism.... In pursuance to this decree, the articles could lead to the closing of your magazine.’<sup>221</sup>

A few weeks later, on April 11, 1983, Dawam Rahardjo, the Managing Director of *Prisma*, Ismid Hadad, Managing Editor, and Daniel Dhakidae, Editor in Chief, were

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<sup>220</sup> <http://prismajurnal.com>. See also, Shofiyanti 2016, p. 73.

<sup>221</sup> Shofiyanti 2016, p. 73. See also Daniel Dhakidae. 2003.

summoned by the State's Attorney in Jakarta in connection with the aforementioned publications.

Furthermore, the state ideology was also referred to by the Attorney General in several decrees issued in late 1960s and early 1970s. *Pancasila* and the Constitution of 1945, which Sukarno once attributed to the efforts of the communist party, were detached from its leftist values and used against them. Article 1 of Law Number 21 year 1982 that replaces Sukarno-era Law Number 11 year 1966 clearly shows the immediate ideological alterations in order to fit the New Order agenda. Point a of the article lists 'Old Order' jargons that were replaced by the New Order into more euphemistic yet dogmatic terminologies.

1. '*Alat revolusi*' (revolutionary tools) was replaced by '*alat Perjuangan Nasional*' (instruments for National Struggle)
2. '*Alat penggerak massa*' (people mobilization tools) was replaced by '*alat penggerak pembangunan bangsa*' (instruments for national development)
3. '*Pengawal revolusi*' (revolutionary guards) was replaced by '*pengawal ideologi Pancasila*' (the guardian of Pancasila Ideology)
4. '*Pers Sosialis Pancasila*' (the Pancasila Socialist Press) was replaced by '*Pers Pancasila*' (the Press of Pancasila)
5. '*Tiga kerangka revolusi*' (the three framework of revolution, inspired by Marxist's concept of *Révolution mondiale*) was replaced by *Tujuan Nasional* (National Goal)
6. '*Progresif*' (progressive) was replaced by '*konstruktif-progresif*' (constructive-progressive)
7. '*Kontra revolusi*' (counter revolution) was replaced by '*menentang Pancasila*' (against Pancasila)
8. '*Berkhianat terhadap revolusi*' (betraying the revolution) was replaced by '*berkhianat terhadap Perjuangan Nasional*' (betraying the national struggle)
9. '*Gotong royong kekeluargaan terpimpin*' (mutual aid and guided society) was replaced by '*secara bersama berdasar atas kekeluargaan*' (collective collaboration based on family values)
10. '*Revolusi*' (revolution) was replaced by '*Perjuangan Nasional*' (National Struggle).<sup>222</sup>

Since the Law specifically connects to the press and print industry, point 'b' of the same article states that the equal position between the government and the press was replaced into a hierarchical scheme. Law Number 11 of 1966 that invited the press to work together with the government (*Pemerintah bersama-sama Dewan Pers*) was

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<sup>222</sup> Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 21 Tahun 1982 tentang Perubahan atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 1966 tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Pers sebagaimana diubah dengan Undang-Undang Nomor 4 Tahun 1967. 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

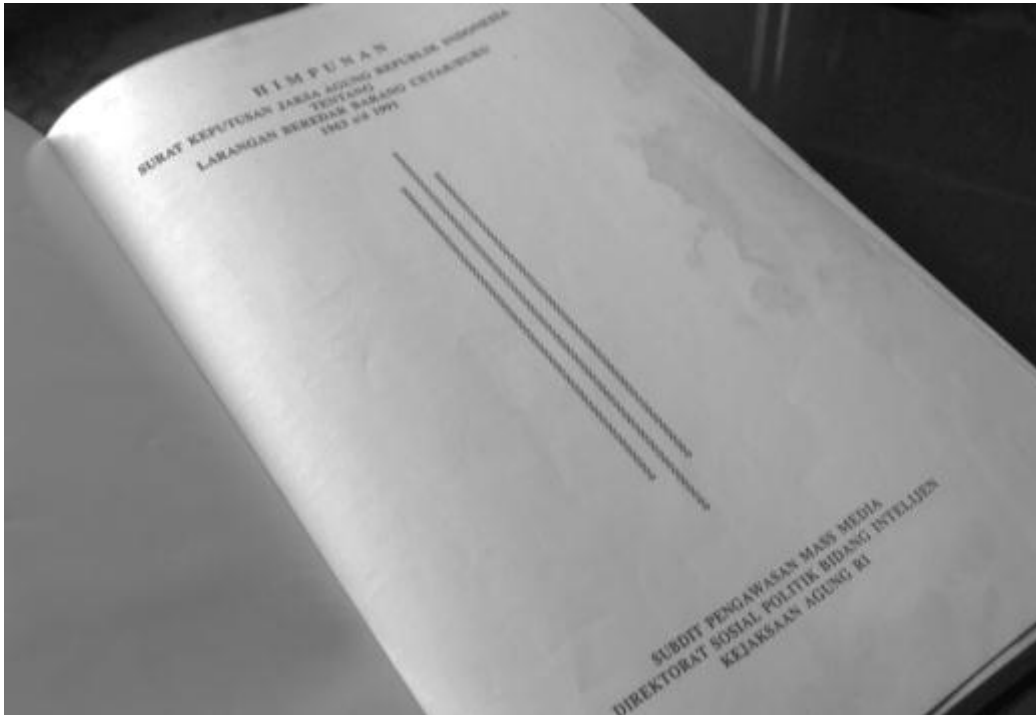
replaced by this new law that positions the press only as state body that gives recommendations (*Pemerintah setelah mendengar pertimbangan Dewan Pers*). As this new ideological language was imposed on society, especially on the press and print industry, the list became a formal ideological guideline for censorship politics in Indonesia under the New Order. Books that propagated communist teachings or that referred to Sukarno's revolutionary jargon and ideas were equivalent to books that undermined or even attacked *Pancasila* and the Constitution of 1945. The ban under the New Order against anything that was communist, socialist, or revolutionary mirrored the ban that the communists under Sukarno directed against intellectuals, poets, and writers of the *Manifes Kebudayaan*.

Understanding the long tradition of censorship in Indonesia, the New Order regime knew what censorship could bring for – in the regime's eyes – the betterment of the state. Immediately after the attempted coup on September 30, 1965 that was solely blamed on the communist party, no less than 60 books were banned and 46 publishers who were accused of being affiliated with communists, making it the first massive censorship action. In addition, 87 names of left intellectuals and writers were targeted for surveillance. This repressive measure, however, was not the scariest of the New Order regime. Whatever the motivation was, whether it was fear or a desire to maintain power, this regime had this self-awareness and understood really well the importance of censorship and the commitment to keep improving it. Within studies on censorship in Indonesia, little or hardly any serious study has been made of how this government worked on the improvement of its censorship because the focus was always given to censored subjects instead of the censors themselves.

An examination of five volumes of the Attorney General's dossiers on banned books and printed matters offers insight into the nature of book banning under the New Order. The five volumes are (a). *Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak Buku 1963-1991* (Compilation of Attorney General Decrees of the Republic of Indonesia on the Prohibition of Printed Matters, 1963-1991), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Surat Keputusan*, (b). *Himpunan Peraturan-Peraturan tentang Barang Cetakan* (Compilation of Laws and Regulations on Printed Matters), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Peraturan*, (c). *Himpunan Petunjuk-Petunjuk, Instruksi-Instruksi, Surat Edaran, Dan Lain-Lain dari Bidang Operasi Kejaksaan Agung RI, 1947-1978* (Compilation of Guidelines, Instructions, Circulars, etc. from the Operation Department Attorney General Office, 1947-1978), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Petunjuk*, (d). *Kewenangan Kejaksaan dalam Pengawasan Barang Cetakan* (The Authority of Prosecutors Office in Supervising Printed Matters), hereafter referred to as *Kewenangan*, and (e). *Undangan Rapat Buku* (Invitation Letters for Book Supervision), hereafter referred to as *Undangan*.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> These dossiers are kept at the Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.



*Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak/Buku 1963-1991* shelved in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta. (Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)

These unpublished documents are semi-confidential, and for internal use only and – still today – used at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Attorney General Office as reference for censorship or bans. Different from the Attorney General’s decree that appeared in national newspapers after a ban was issued, each of these decrees was equipped with a lengthy report and academic analysis of the book that was banned. These reports/analyses were printed separately, all of which are shelved in a storage room which is referred to as a ‘*perpustakaan mini*’ (mini library). Not living up to its name, this library serves as a spacious one-floor working-library at the Attorney General Office in Jakarta and collects extensive dossiers, incoming and outgoing mail, invitations, manuscripts, copies of banned books, and scholarly analyses on the banned books. I obtained these documents and access to the library as a return of favor after I assisted the chief of the directorate for the supervision of printed matters with the editing and scanning of books, documents, and dossiers in the said office.

The *Himpunan Surat Keputusan* shows that the first massive censorship against the works of left-wing intellectuals that was always attributed to the New Order regime was actually carried out by Sukarno’s officials and state apparatus, i.e. the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, which under Sukarno was directed by Leiden-University-trained Javanologist Prijono (whose career, because of his leftist

inclinations career, would end violently after 1965).<sup>224</sup> The instruction for the ban, however, was signed and issued by Colonel Infantry M. Setiadi Kartohadikusumo, who was active personnel of the Indonesian Army stationed at the Ministry as deputy to the minister, and a strong supporter of the New Order.<sup>225</sup>

As evident in the *Himpunan Surat Keputusan*, the first official step the New Order government took in 1966 in relation to printed matters was actually censorship in reverse. The government, via the first Attorney General of the New Order, Major General TNI Soegiharto, revoked decrees on the banning of printed matters that were issued by Sukarno's Attorney Generals, M. Kadarusman, S.H. and A. Soetardhio. On December 12, 1966, Soegiharto revoked the Decree of the Minister/Attorney General No. 007/KPTS/PERS/1964 issued on May 19, 1964, on the banning of the *US News & World Report* magazine. This, according to Soegiharto, was done in an effort to restore the good relations between the United States and the Republic of Indonesia. On the same date, Soegiharto also decreed a revocation of a ban on the *Commonwealth Today*. This revocation was based on the consideration that the Sukarno-era confrontation campaign with Malaysia had to be ended and that Indonesia should now treat Malaysia as an equal partner. In the following month, Soegiharto also revoked the ban on *Harian Operasi* on the basis that the New Order government was determined to justice, truth, and democracy based on Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945. The revocation of the decree also mentioned that the Press should be given space and proper discretion in order for it to be able to perform its function as a means of social control and social participation — an indication that the New Order regime wanted to give the impression that it had a democratic side to it and promoted freedom of expression.<sup>226</sup>

Official banning only began in January 1967, when Attorney General Soegiharto issued a decree for the left-leaning or Chinese-affiliated magazine, *Tiongkok Rakjat*, which was published by the *Pustaka Bahasa Asing Peking*. In the months that followed, several other publications were also banned. But unlike the rationale that Sukarno's attorneys general would simply use, i.e. disrupting public order, Soegiharto stated a more elaborate rationale behind the ban. In the decrees, for example, he mentioned that these publications were prohibited because they based their publications on half-truth in reporting current security and state situation so that

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<sup>224</sup> Prijono, the then Minister of Basic Education and Culture, himself did not issue nor sign the ministerial instruction as he was linked to the left-leaning PKI-affiliated Murba Party and was considered a strong supporter of President Sukarno's ideas. He was later kidnapped by a group of anti-Sukarno students and died in 1969. See Lee 1995, pp. 182–185; Poeze 2007, p. 1716; Bloembergen 2018, pp. 391-413; Jones 2013, p. 98.

<sup>225</sup> The term 'New Order' in this discussion covers two understandings; first, it concerns the New Order as an aspirational group together with its vast supporters. In this sense, the New Order as a collective body has appeared as soon as the September 30 Movement of the PKI broke out. The second understanding concerns the New Order as a formal establishment and order of life of the nation and state, with its government as executor responsible for the implementation of the state.

<sup>226</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.



the government feared it would cause misinformation among the general public.<sup>227</sup> Within the first five year period, 1967-1971, 18 publications were banned.

In comparison M. Kadarusman, Sukarno's Attorney General, banned 15 publications only in a single day in November 1963 by a single decree. These publications were *Newsweek* issues 2, 9, and September 30, 1963, *Newsweek* issues October 7, and November 11 and 25, 1963; *US News & World Report* 18 March 18, April 8 and 15, July 1 and 29; *Reader's Digest* British Edition July 1963; *Far Eastern Economic Review* October 24, 1963; *Konsepsi Negara Demokrasi* by Abdul Qohhar Mudzakkar; and *Petjahnya Revolusi Hongaria (The Revolt of the Mind)* by Tamas Aczel and Tibor Meray. The logic behind the one day ban as evident in the Attorney General's decree Number 066/KPTS/PERS/1963 was that "*madjalah mingguan, bulanan dan buku-buku tersebut...dapat dianggap mengganggu ketertiban umum, djika beredar dalam masyarakat*" (that the said weekly and monthly magazines and the books could disrupt public order, if they were to be circulated in the community). To make matters worse, this was done under Sukarno's regime almost on a daily basis and was followed immediately by revocations of the decree on the following day.<sup>228</sup>

As for the New Order Regime, from 1971 to 1978, prohibition on printed matters practically did not occur. One reason for this was that censorship on printed matters in this period was not on the main agenda of the New Order government. In this period, the government was engrossed with the second government five-year plan that focused on achieving economic stability and 'restoring order by eradicating the remnants of the G30S/PKI and every threat, abuse, and betrayal of Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945.'<sup>229</sup> As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this is the first phase of the New Order's evolution in which the regime still required support from the liberal-minded middle classes and also Islamic groups. Therefore, there was less censorship and relatively more liberalism.

However, in the late 1970s through the 1980s, when the New Order grew stronger and supports from the aforementioned groups were no longer needed, censorship entered its super-active mode. This may be explained by a more stable

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<sup>227</sup> 'Surat Keputusan Djaksa Agung Republik Indonesia No. Kep-002/D.A/1/67 tentang Larangan Peredaran Madjalah "Tiongkok Rakjat' in 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>228</sup> On June 12, 1963, M. Kadarusman, S.H., the Attorney General, issued prohibition decree number 02/KPTS/PERS/1963 stating that *Harian Bintang Timur*, of which Hasjim Rachman was the founder and chief-editor, was banned because the newspaper might cause turmoil and disturb public order. On June 16, 1963, Kadarusman issued another decree, number 03/KPTS/PERS/1963 that revoked the decree that he published four days earlier regarding the prohibition of *Harian Bintang Timur*. See 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>229</sup> 'Mengembalikan ketertiban dan keamanan masyarakat dengan mengikis habis sisa-sisa G30S/PKI dan setiap perongrongan, penyelewengan serta pengkhianatan terhadap Pancasila dan Undang-Undang Dasar 1945.' The fourth program in *Panca Krida* (Five Creeds) of the First Development Cabinet of the New Order. Ketetapan MPRS Nomor XLI/MPRS/1968 tahun 1968. Available at [https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt507649089a6a3/node/657/tap-mprs-no-xli\\_mprs\\_1968-tahun-1968-tugas-pokok-kabinet-pembangunan](https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt507649089a6a3/node/657/tap-mprs-no-xli_mprs_1968-tahun-1968-tugas-pokok-kabinet-pembangunan) [accessed on August 10, 2021].

economic growth, which led to increasing number of publications as one of the outcomes of mushrooming publishing houses; the availability of imported books and magazines which offered new information and perspectives; a growing public awareness of social/political activism; and the release of political prisoners from 1977 onwards, some of whom began voicing their thoughts through printing. From 1979 to 1989, almost two hundred decrees were issued by four Attorneys General, prohibiting books and printed matters that contained direct criticism against the government or that were said to propagate the communist Marxist-Leninist teachings. During my research in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET of the Attorney General Office, I was informed that each decree was supplemented with a lengthy academic report which contained content analysis of publication that was banned. These reports were written by a team of experts consisting of state officials from several ministries/departments, intelligence services, and academia (i.e. university professors).<sup>230</sup> This shows that there was a major change in both methods and consideration in censorship. The neat *modus operandi* in censoring printed matters was both harrowing and impressive because the New Order approached censorship in a careful manner and actually possessed a very serious commitment to repression. In this regard, to call censorship erratic would be suitable or relevant if it was directed at the censorship mechanism in the late years of Sukarno era.

### **Surveillance Society: Censors and Agencies**

On August 16, 2017, I was invited to attend a closed meeting of a so-called focus group to discuss a plan on possible bans of *The Final Report of the International People's Tribunal on Crimes against Humanities in Indonesia 1965*, *Sejarah Gerakan Kiri untuk Pemula* (The History of the Left Movement for Beginners), and several other printed matters on radical Islam. Present in the meeting were representatives from various ministries and state bodies,<sup>231</sup> most importantly the State Intelligence Agency, which promoted the recommendation to supervise and ban the books and printed matters. Participants were given a three-page Pangemanann-like paper containing points for discussion, addresses, and list of names of activists and publishers under state surveillance due to their activities or involvement in the writing, publishing, editing, and distribution of the books to be banned. The list was provided by the intelligence service of the Attorney General with the assistance of the State Intelligence Agency (BIN). A special guest in the meeting was the Head of the History Department of Universitas Indonesia, Dr.

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<sup>230</sup> Information provided by S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym), the head of the subditpakembarcet and D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym), section chair of the printed matters affairs on August 15 and 25, and October 5 and 25, 2017. These reports, according to them, were destroyed regularly together with the books that were banned by the Attorney General. I insisted that I read at least one report; first, they refused and gave me a copy of similar report on the prohibition of religious sect, instead. Unrelated, but this document might shed light on the operation or at least the template of the reports.

<sup>231</sup> BIN (State Intelligence Agency), Bais TNI (The Armed Forces Intelligence Agency), Polri (Indonesian Police), Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Communication and Information, Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Abdurakhman. He was invited by the Attorney General to give a lengthy presentation about the history of the communist rebellious traits in Indonesia.<sup>232</sup> The first slide of his presentation reads: *Belajar dari Sejarah: Peristiwa Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Learning from History: Rebellions by the Communist Party in Indonesia), while the following slides were filled with lopsided analyses of the history of the Indonesian left. The presentation was arranged in such direction that participants would get a uniform understanding about the latent dangers of communism, which then would justify the banning of the books. After the meeting, under the coordination of the Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence, the participants were asked to return to their respective offices and assigned to re-read the books and write analytical reports on the content or aspects that would meet the criteria for a ban.

I had the understanding that the meetings that I attended were a recent procedure, and I was also aware that there was a considerable time gap between the case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia* in 1980, and my experience during fieldwork in 2017 and 2018. To see whether my research experience in the Attorney General Office proves that the same procedure was followed especially in the 1980s, I began to look for more information through interviews and informal conversations with censors at the Attorney General Office, S.H. Pasaribu and D.J. Tampubolon, as well as from Ridwan Darmansyah, S.H., the first Director of the Office of Intelligence of the Attorney General, and Dra. Sri Moelijarti, Deputy Attorney General for Surveillance, to see whether the procedure was recent and had never been used before, especially in the process of banning books during the New Order period. On separate occasions, while referring to dossiers stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office, S.H. Pasaribu, D.J. Tampubolon, and Ridwan Darmansyah, S.H. informed me that the procedure was not new at all. According to them, there have been some changes, but these were insignificant. The meetings were formerly known as *Rapat Panitia Kerja Tetap* (Meeting of the Permanent Working Committee) chaired by the special operation unit of the Attorney General Office and later it was renamed into *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* (Coordinating Security Meeting) organized regularly by the Clearing House, which was first assembled and coordinated by the Minister of Information in 1989.<sup>233</sup>

The Clearing House itself had similar members to previous bodies, consisting of 19 analysts from offices of the Attorney General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Intelligence Coordinating Body (BAKIN), the Coordinating Agency for the

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<sup>232</sup> Archived invitation letters from the 1980s to 2017 stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Attorney General Office, in Jakarta mentioned a list of historians and scholars who were asked for their insight and expertise for censorial tasks. Interesting to note, Asvi Marwan Adam and Anhar Gonggong were printed in the list of invitation. However, they were replaced by historians-cum-academics after both Adam and Gonggong, according to S.H. Pasaribu declined the request of the Attorney General. Conversation with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym), on October 5, 2017. This information implies that printed names on letters do not necessarily mean that historians would want to collaborate, and moreover that they could decline. Also see Adam 2007.

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moelijarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

Maintenance of National Stability (BAKORSTANAS), and the Armed Forces Intelligence Agency, together with academics and representatives from the Department of Information, the Department of Education and Culture, and the Department of Religious Affairs — to decide what copy to censor and which journalists to ban.<sup>234</sup> In addition, D.J. Tampubolon claimed that Gramedia and IKAPI had been regular attendees in the aforementioned meetings and worked together to carry out the tasks of censorship and provide an inventory of their property and submit it to the authorities. This conforms to Darnton's finding of surveillance practice under the British Raj where every publication was 'surveyed, mapped, classified, and counted.'<sup>235</sup> The Indian Civil Service kept a record of every book that appeared in every province of the Raj. Furthermore, just like what was ordered to IKAPI, Gramedia, and other publishers in New Order Indonesia, all Indian publishers were instructed to submit to the ICS 'copies of every book they produced together with the information on the title of the work, its author, language, subject, place of printing, names of printer and publisher, date of publication, number of pages, size, format, pressrun, whether printed or lithographed, and price.'<sup>236</sup> As a matter of fact, prior to the order, Ajip Rosidi, who chaired the IKAPI, had his own initiative to print and publish for internal use a booklet that lists publishers across the country, together with their addresses and the authors whose books were printed by the publishers included in the list. The booklet came in handy for the Attorney General and was used as a preliminary reference as well as an inspiration to order every publisher to submit similar information.<sup>237</sup>

Besides verbal confirmation from my sources in the Attorney General Office, the Compilation and invitation letters as well as meeting materials that were stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office and the so-called mini library supported their claim. The reading and consideration sections of several decrees issued in the 1970s and 1980s often mentioned the state agencies that recommended bans for certain books or printed materials. These agencies were BAKIN (*Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*, State Intelligence Coordinating Body), KOPKAMTIB (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*, Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), Bakorstanas (the Coordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability), BAIS ABRI (*Badan Intelijen Strategis*, The Armed Forces

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<sup>234</sup> On December 30, 1993, an Indonesian language text written by Prof. E who is also a prominent literary scholar was addressed to the Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi. In her view, Pramoedya's book should be banned because it propagated communism. The document can be found in the mini library, also at Special Collection at Leiden University with call numbers DS H 1327 1071 and DS H 1327 1117 - *Indonesischtalige circulaire van de uitgeverij Hasta Mitra te Jakarta met aankondiging van de verschijning van de roman Bumi Manusia van Pramoedya Ananta Toer. 1980. Fotokopie. 1 stuk 19--* Leclerc, J. Collectie J. Leclerc.

<sup>235</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 103.

<sup>236</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 104.

<sup>237</sup> In 1987, the Ministry of Information published a complete list of names and addresses of prints and publishers. This document was used by the ministry as well as as a source of reference for censors at the Attorney General Office. See Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia 1988. Information provided by S.H. Pasaribu on October 25, 2017.

Intelligence Agency), Polri (*Polisi Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Police), Department of Education, Department of Information, and Department of Religious Affairs. In the case of Pramoedya's *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations*, for instance, the decree stated that the Attorney General, prior to issue the ban, had read the *Surat PANKOPKAMTIB Nomor: K-22/KOPKAM/1981 tanggal 22 Mei 1981 perihal larangan beredarnya buku "Bumi Manusia" dan "Anak Semua Bangsa"* (Letter from PANKOPKAMTIB Number: K-22/KOPKAM/1981 dated May 22, 1981 on the prohibition for the distribution of *Bumi Manusia* and *Anak Semua Bangsa*).<sup>238</sup> In another decree, 21 books were banned after the Attorney General considered the insights, letter, and report from the Ministry of Religious Affairs No. P/TL/ 0/1186/1985 of December 4, 1985.<sup>239</sup> These formal letters suggest that these institutions played roles in the overall process of censorship.

A less formal relationship between the Attorney General Office and these agencies or concerned citizens could be traced from the position of Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence, which had always been filled by high ranking military officers with a background in the intelligence services.<sup>240</sup> The Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence was responsible for conducting judicial intelligence activities in the fields of ideology, politics, economics, finance, socio-cultural matters, and defense and security to support repressive law enforcement and justice policies; carry out and or organize public order and peace; and safeguard national development based on legislation and policies established by the Attorney General. With such broad authority, the Deputy Attorney General of Intelligence was given unlimited access to every law enforcement body or state apparatus, including the Regional Leadership Council (*Musyawaharah Pimpinan Daerah*, MUSPIDA), which brought together local heads of the military, *pamong praja*, police, and the prosecutor's office on a regular basis to discuss security issues and coordinate strategies. At the provincial level, this institution involved the head of Public Prosecutor Office (*Jaksa Tinggi*), Governor, Military Region Commander (*Pangdam*), and Regional Police Chief (*Kapolda*), while at the district level it consisted of the Head of the District Prosecutor's Office, the District Head or Mayor, the District Military Commander (*Dandim*) and the Resort Police Chief (*Polres*). 'Security disturbances' such as the circulation of 'dangerous' books were often

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<sup>238</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta. This letter was sent by the Commander of KOPKAMTIB, a secret police operation in the New Order, on May 22, 1981. In just four working days, i.e. May 29, 1981, an official ban was issued and signed by the Attorney General Ismail Saleh, S.H., which is indicative of the decisive role the KOPKAMTIB had in the overall state censorship mechanism. In 1988, Suharto closed down the organization and replaced it with the Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional/Bakorstanas (The Agency for Coordination of Assistance for the Consolidation of National Security).

<sup>239</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>240</sup> The Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence headed five directorates responsible for maintaining political, security, social, and cultural affairs. See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 33; Fauzan 2003, p. 135.

discussed in this institution, which then led the local Prosecutor's Offices to consider taking action, sometimes preceding the Attorney General's decision.

Initially, 'most censorship decisions were initiated by one of New Order security and intelligence bodies,' generally involving the military with immense authority.<sup>241</sup> The most important institution was the KOPKAMTIB, the regime's secret police formed on October 10, 1965. The authority to supervise and prohibit publication was centralized in the hands of KOPKAMTIB, while other control institutions would submit to the authority or provide assistance. KOPKAMTIB could also exert its authority to give instructions to the Attorney General Office to impose a ban. It also controlled all media channels and required publishing and printing businesses to get permission from this institution. If deemed necessary, the KOPKAMTIB revoked the permit without giving prior notice. This was evident in the event of the first massive book ban in November 1965, mentioned above, with the issuance of the instruction from the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. As indicated earlier, the banning was local but had a national effect. With the direct order from the KOPKAMTIB, personnel from the Regional Military Authority (*Pelperada*) across the country referred to this ministerial instruction in order to start confiscating banned books from publishing houses, bookstores, vendors, public and private libraries, and schools. A special team, *Tim Pelaksana dan Pengawas Muda Wira Jaksa* (Surveillance Team of the Prosecutors Office) which was especially formed to supervise and eradicate the teaching of communism-Marxism/Leninism, did likewise. They made impromptu visits to villages and instructed regents, village heads, and community leaders to start neighborhood watches and collect 'suspicious' printed materials and hand them in to local authorities.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 46.

<sup>242</sup> See Buku *Marxisme*, 1966.



‘*CETAKAN TERLARANG*’ (PROHIBITED PUBLICATION) – labeled, catalogued, and shelved in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta. (Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)

From the 1970s onward, the power to assess and prohibit books rested only with the Attorney General as coordinating body; and any ban that it issued was valid in all jurisdictions in the Republic of Indonesia. The shift in the management of control, however, did not mean that KOPKAMTIB and other intelligence bodies lost the authority to take part in activities related to book banning. In fact, they were now involved in participatory supervision<sup>243</sup> that elevates the ubiquitous surveillance that symbolizes modern authoritarianism<sup>244</sup> of the New Order regime — to the point that it seemed to turn into totalitarianism. They still could take the initiative to examine ‘books and make censorship recommendations directly to the attorney general.’<sup>245</sup>

### **Building a Panopticon**

As this case demonstrates, the Attorney General Office was hardly understaffed, and as a matter of fact, it had access to abundant institutional resources. The Attorney General Office benefited from their resources and broad authorities, as they could have total control and surveillance of book publication and authors with little effort.

<sup>243</sup> Within the KOPKAMTIB, for example, a special research team (*Tim Penelitian Karya Tulis-Publication Investigation Unit*) was specifically formed and tasked to provide analysis on printed materials and give input to the Attorney General in the case of prohibition. I first heard about this research team in one of those meetings in the Attorney General Office. Some literatures have also mentioned this team. See Honna 1999, pp. 77-126. See also Anderson 2000, p. 72.

<sup>244</sup> Foucault 1995, p. 57.

<sup>245</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 46.

In Foucault's work, such ubiquitous surveillance under the authority of the state is the definitive emblem of modern power. Panoptic institutions multiplied through the society, wielding power at the very foundation of society, and disciplining the population as people internalized the views of, and being viewed by, the state.<sup>246</sup>

In addition to coercive policies coordinated through multiple institutions with vast resources, the Attorney General's budget grew continuously. Since the implementation of the first five-year development plan on March 31, 1968, the Attorney General Office had grown considerably, adding 436 offices and occupational houses for prosecutors throughout the country. The funding also enabled the Attorney General Office to establish the Center for Training and Education (*Pusat Pendidikan dan Pelatihan*, PUSDIKLAT), which had 1,561 newly-trained personnel, and 3,100 recent law graduates (*sarjana hukum*), an increase of more than 80 percent of the total prosecutors that Indonesia then had. Individual salaries increased by 250 percent, as stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 44/1983.<sup>247</sup>

With these financial resources, in March 1981 the Attorney General launched a new program called *Jaksa Masuk Desa* (JMD, Prosecutor Enters the Village), similar to that of *ABRI Masuk Desa* (AMD, ABRI Enters the Village), a civic mission initiated in 1980 by the Armed Forces Commander-cum-Minister of Defense, General Yusuf, which was intended to assist community development in various fields. The university students and teachers who took part in the programs were turned into immediate censors without them knowing it. Officially, the program aimed to give equal opportunity to obtain justice through activities of providing legal assistance and legal consultation, especially for the underprivileged. President Suharto himself gave a positive response to this project and stated that the program could be used to increase the political awareness of the public and provide a platform for political education, especially in relation to the values of Pancasila, the state ideology. The program also invited public and private universities to collaborate and conduct a one-year community service program, which was divided into four sections, namely observation and data collection (April to June), identification (July-September), legal assistance and counseling program (October-December), and, lastly, report (January-March).<sup>248</sup>

In every village, there were at least 6 or 7 prosecutors providing legal assistance to community members, in addition to the surveillance team *Tim Pelaksana dan Pengawas Muda Wira Jaksa*. They approached the public through a method they called PEKA, which stands for persuasive, educational, communicative, and accommodative. The word PEKA itself is an Indonesian term for sensitive or considerate, which signifies that the program was intended to attract and guarantee the widespread participation of the community members in the program.

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<sup>246</sup> Foucault 1995, p. 57.

<sup>247</sup> Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia 1985, p. 209.

<sup>248</sup> Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Nomor. B-075 /A-6A/1981 tanggal April 23, 1981. See. Departemen Penerangan 1984, p. 8.



The JMD was also sustained by a supporting program called *Koran Masuk Desa* (KMD, Newspapers Enter the Village), initiated by the Department of Information.<sup>249</sup> The program aimed to overcome the imbalance in the flow of information to rural areas since the circulation of newspapers was focused on or limited to urban areas only, and to stimulate community participation in national development.

In 1985, a similar program was launched in addition to the JMD. The program was called *Jaksa Masuk Laut* (JML, Prosecutors Enters the Sea) and aimed to supervise the enforcement of law in ports and custom offices in case of illegal imports of commodities, especially printed materials. Its targets were ship captains, crews, customs officers, and water police units. Three years later, the new Attorney General added several other programs called *Pos Penyuluhan/Penerangan Terpadu* (Poskumdu, Post for Integrated Counseling and Information) in collaboration with the *Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa* (LKMD, Institute for Rural Community Sustainability) and the Office of Religious Affairs.

All of these programs, however, were easily transformed into grassroots surveillance tools to monitor citizens, gather data, keep civil society under check, prevent an increase in the bargaining power of any other sector of society, spy on any form of resistance to the state's rule, and to increase political leverage to remain in power. Interestingly, the state was not shy in admitting that. This was evident in the statement that Harmoko, the Minister of Information, made on October 13, 1983 in Karangmulya, Cirebon, where he stated that the JMD and KMD aimed at disseminating proper information so that the villagers could augment social awareness and understand their rights and obligations as citizens. He added that the program necessitated that the villagers know which information products were in accordance with Pancasila, and which products were anti-development or propagated the communist philosophy.<sup>250</sup>

The presence of prosecutors among citizens in villages, together with other state bodies, contextually reminded that the watchtower was there and that they were being observed. It attempted to possibly subject the villagers to a form of behavioral modification resulting from the omnipresence of the state apparatus. It instilled a fear of being watched, in the hopes that this would cause the villagers to act 'lawfully' to avoid being punished. Bentham assumed this fear of a continuous omnipresence would remain with the subject long after his stay in the panopticon, and cause the subject to avoid crime. In this manner, the subject aids in his own constraint, as noted by Michel Foucault:

'He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself: he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he

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<sup>249</sup> Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia 1985, pp. 244-245.

<sup>250</sup> Report on the *Saresehan* (Gathering) of Readers, Listeners, and Learning Circles with the Attorney General and Minister of Information. Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia 1984, p. 28.

simultaneously plays both rules; he becomes the principle of his own objection.<sup>251</sup>

The state translated the panopticon as more than a prison building. It was the embodiment of a set of four principles, namely (a) pervasive power: the state sees into every cell and sees everything that goes on so it can regulate everything; and (b) obscure power: the state sees into the cell, but the subjects cannot do likewise. They cannot ever know when, how, or why they are being observed; so (c) direct violence is replaced by structural violence. Bentham emphasizes that overt coercion through beating or chains becomes unnecessary. What the prisoner does not realize is that the structure of the panopticon itself is coercive. It subjugates the prisoners just by being there; and (d) structural violence made profitable, i.e. taking the structural violence and using it for the benefits of those in power.

By using these four principles, the state expanded its power into every aspect of people's lives and molded them into submissive subjects that the state wanted. Without ruling out state repression and constant threats — an understanding that the state could employ (mass) violence like in 1965, as well as gentle but consistent exclusion from the society, there was little need for arms, physical violence, or material constraints. Just a gaze that each individual under its eye will end by internalizing state authority to the point that he is his own overseer.<sup>252</sup> Despite individuals such as Hasjim Rachman, Joesoef Isak, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, as well as Yogyakarta students Bambang Isti Nugroho and Bambang Subono who looked back, protested, and facilitated production of books that challenged the ideology of the regime, the New Order employed its own people to join in the bureaucratic structures against their fellow citizens and serve the regime's expanding power, allowing the state to penetrate and regulate more completely. Civil society was instrumentalized to keep society under surveillance.

### **Censorship in Action: Mechanism and Procedure**

According to Law No. 4/ PNPS/1963, the procedure of book banning consists of four stages, namely, material collection, investigation/research, decision making, and confiscation. Article 2 of the law required every printing press to send the printout to the Head of the local state prosecutor, no later than 48 hours after printing. Every book had to be approved for publication. A team of experts in the intelligence division of the Attorney General Office conducted an analysis on the content of the book to see whether it could disturb public order. They worked in a focus group discussion to examine the content of the book, the impact that it might have on readers, and whether the book could actually disturb public order. Inputs from community members, therefore, played a role in this process. In the case of Pramoedya's novels *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations*, the team and

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<sup>251</sup> Foucault 1995, p 203.

<sup>252</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 155.

the Attorney General took into consideration a letter from the Commander of KOPKAMTIB dated May 22, 1981 and suggestions from educators, religious leaders, university students, all of whom claimed to have read the novels and urged that the novels should be prohibited and that Pramoedya should be forbidden to write.<sup>253</sup> The Attorney General actually paid attention to this and took the input into consideration and listed them as one of the reasons for the ban. Recommendation for censorship also came from the Department of Religious Affairs, Department of Information, Department of Education and Culture, National Defense Agency, Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Operational Command for Restoring Security and Order, Strategic Intelligence Agency of the Armed Forces, the Indonesian Police, and the Indonesian Council of Ulama, all of whom claimed to have read and written an analysis of the book.

Up to this point, we see an almost ritualistic emphasis on procedure, which was a fundamental characteristic of the New Order, i.e. the appearance and performance of order.<sup>254</sup> According to Vickers, ‘while the bureaucracy produced the appearance of rational administration, it consisted of inefficient clusters of largely incompetent institutions with overlapping responsibilities and underpaid employees.’<sup>255</sup> Vickers argues further that as a strong bureaucratic state, the New Order is better termed an *asal bapak senang* (ABS) state — meaning a bureaucracy whose main function is to ‘keep the boss’ (or whoever is higher up in the bureaucratic or corporate ladder) ‘happy’. While it is true that this behavior influenced every aspect of life from the political to the social and personal, my research finds that in the case of censorship, reason also came into play. In addition to internal assessment and public inputs, the deputy Attorney General for Intelligence invited representatives from other state bodies and ministries to discuss their findings in the *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam*.

From the meeting notes archived in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, it was evident that they brainstormed the plan and reasons for censorship or ban on particular publications. One example was the case of *Tingkah Laku Politik Panglima Besar Soedirman* (The Political Behavior of General Soedirman, 1983). The book, which was written by General Abdul Haris Nasution, Roeslan Abdulgani, S.I. Poeradisastra, and Sides Sudyarto, hinted at General Soedirman’s involvement with the *Persatuan Perjuangan* (Struggle Front), a coalition that Tan Malaka was organizing during the Indonesian Revolution. This fact was considered to potentially raise doubts about the immaculate reputation and service of General Soedirman during the war of Independence. Representatives from BAKIN insisted that

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<sup>253</sup> Early in April 1981, in Jakarta, Dolf Soepamena, an avid reader, gathered members of Indonesian Council of Ulemas, DGI, MAWI, university teachers, AMPI, and KNPI in a discussion forum called Kelompok Diskusi Tjujubelas. According to him, the forum found that Pramoedya was on a mission, every novel that he wrote was consistently loaded with communist teachings. Therefore, the forum urged the government to not simply ban the book but also forbid Pramoedya from writing. See Buku Pram’ 1981.

<sup>254</sup> Vickers 2001, pp. 72-84.

<sup>255</sup> Vickers 2001, p. 77; Schulte Nordholt & van Klinken 2007, p. 6.

censorship on several parts of the book was necessary, but not a complete ban. Other censors from the Ministry of Education, the Head of Research at KOPKAMTIB, and BAIS ABRI, however, opted for ban. Another consideration for this eventual ban was the fact that one of the writers was a former political prisoner in Buru Island and member of disbanded LEKRA.<sup>256</sup> Relatedly, in the *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* in 2017, I witnessed such debates where one party resorted to prohibition while the other argued that books were not supposed to be banned as they contained ideas, and ideas cannot be murdered. Surprisingly, the latter who were against censorship and bans, were representatives from the state intelligence agency (*Badan Intelijen Negara*, BIN), from which recommendations for bans usually come.<sup>257</sup>

Furthermore, if the analysis remained inconclusive, the representatives would return to their respective institution and have their own team conduct a separate content analysis of the book. Often, professionals, scholars, and university professors were involved in this process.<sup>258</sup> The outcome of this stage was a lengthy academic report which contained a thorough examination of the banned book and rationale behind its ban — a supplement to the decree which, according to S.H. Pasaribu and D.J. Tampubolon, was never published or made available to the public.<sup>259</sup> During archival research in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, I had rare opportunities to access piles of aged papers that present details on considerations leading to bans from the 1980s to 2016. I was given permission to skim them, but not to make copies. Nonetheless, with the help of an unsuspecting librarian at the said library, I was allowed to take pictures of a 5-page document entitled *Butir-Butir Permasalahan tentang Pelarangan Peredaran Buku Berjudul Rumah Kaca Karangan Pramoedya Ananta Toer* (Bulleted Points on the Prohibition of the Circulation of the Book entitled *Rumah Kaca* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer). The document, written in 1988 prior to the issuance of the Attorney General's banning decree, opens with:

*‘Dengan kepandaiannya menulis, dalam buku Serie ke IV ini Pramoedya Ananta Toer menyusun ungkapan, dialog-dialog dan pernyataan, yang bersifat agitatif, propaganda, serta ajaran-ajaran ideology komunis secara terselubung dan halus namun mendasar.’*

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<sup>256</sup>See also Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Republik Indonesia nomor KEP-167/JA/8/1984 tentang Larangan Peredaran Barang Cetakan/Buku Berjudul Tindakan Laku Politik Panglima Besar Soedirman. ‘Himpunan Surat Keputusan.’ Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>257</sup> *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* mengenai Rencana Penyusunan Peraturan Pemerintah mengenai Sistem Perbukuan: Khusus mengenai Pengawasan on October 25, 2017 in Ruang Rapat Jaksa Agung Muda Intelijen, Gedung Utama Lantai III, Attorney General Office, Jakarta.

<sup>258</sup> The dossier, especially the invitation letters, at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office reveals names of literary scholars and professors from Universitas Indonesia who were involved in drafting the documents.

<sup>259</sup> Interview with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym) and D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym) on October 5, 2017 in Jakarta.

(With his excellent writing skills, in this fourth volume (of the Buru Quartet), Pramoedya Ananta Toer compiles expressions, dialogues, and statements which are agitative in nature, propaganda, and teachings of communist ideology in a veiled and subtle, yet fundamental way.)

What follows the opening are 11 bullet points that outline the reasons and considerations for the banning of the book — from anti-religious sentiments that the book implicitly promotes to Marxist concept of labor, which *Rumah Kaca* highlights. Interestingly, an immaculate English version of the document, also written in 1988, was also made available by the Attorney General Office, entitled *Considerations Leading to the Banning from Circulation of the Book Entitled “Glasshouse” Written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. When asked about the reason behind the English translation and to whom this document was directed, which readers, the librarian evaded the questions and responded instead by saying that after the document and its English translation, a thorough analysis on the ban, with more pages than the outline, followed. Besides the document, D.J. Tampubolon and S.H. Pasaribu, while refusing further access to the piles of aged papers that I mentioned above, gave me a copy of *Kompilasi Kajian Tim Pakem Tingkat Pusat terhadap Ormas Gerakan Fajar Nusantara – GAFATAR* (Analyses Compiled by the Central Supervision Team on the Mass Organizations the Dawn Movement of Nusantara – GAFATAR) written in 2016. For my research, the document is irrelevant, but as D.J. Tampubolon and S.H. Pasaribu said, it gives a general description and template of how a thorough analysis that provides academic reasoning on a ban is formulated and finally written.

The next stage is the decision to ban. After hearing input from the Clearing House and other agencies, the Attorney General issued a decree. In this decree, the Attorney General always referred to Law No. 15/1961 concerning the Attorney General’s Authority (later replaced by Law No. 5/1991) and Law No. 4/Pnps/1963 as the legal bases of the ban. This Attorney General's decision was then announced to the public through newspapers or other mass media. Authors and publishers were almost never told directly that their printed material had been prohibited and they generally were informed by the mass media. The Attorney General's decree was usually followed by instructions to the heads of the High Prosecutor's Office and the District Attorney's Office throughout Indonesia to take security measures against banned books. The prosecutor's office and the police then went to the address of the publisher and the printing press, if listed, and confiscated all the remaining forbidden books. The confiscation at the publisher was followed by confiscation in bookstores or vendors. The books that were seized by the prosecutor's office or other security apparatus were then sent to the local prosecutor's office to be destroyed by burning.

In the event of rejection or resistance from publishers, bookstores, or book owners to submit banned books, the authority could bring the case to the legal domain. The fact that the work of Pramoedya was forbidden did not only have consequences for him, but also for the people who read his books. Bambang Isti Nugroho and Bambang Subono, both university students in Yogyakarta, were arrested and charged in 1988 for slanderous (subversive) activities based on the anti-

subversion law of 1963: they possessed prohibited literature and discussed it. They were the first of the post-1966 generation accused of propagating the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The forbidden books that they had in their possession were works of Pramoedya: *The Girl from the Coast*, *This Earth of Mankind*, and other works.



Admiral Soedomo, Minister for Political and Security Affairs and Sukarton Marmosujono, Attorney General, holding a copy of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai*, during press conference for the book ban in 1988. Photo Collection of SUBDITPAKEMBARCET

In 1989, the trials started against the two Bambang, who were charged with the death penalty because they owned, borrowed, and sold books of Pramoedya Ananta Toer. They were given eight and seven years in prison, respectively.<sup>260</sup> Bonar Tigor Naipospos (a student in Yogya) was also charged with subversive activities. Bonar was only tried in 1990, more than a year after his arrest, and was finally jailed for eight year and six months. In 1978, Heri Akhmadi, a student from Bandung, was sentenced for circulating *Buku Putih Perjuangan Mahasiswa* (White Book of the 1978 Student's Struggle), which 'lambasts the government for endemic corruption, economic policies which facilitate self-enrichment at the expense of social welfare, repression of independent political voices, and losing touch with the people.'<sup>261</sup> In the following year, *Mendobrak Belenggu Penindasan Rakyat Indonesia – Pembelaan di Depan Pengadilan Mahasiswa* (Breaking the Shackles of Oppression of the Indonesian People – a Plea before a Trial of a Student), a plea that he wrote and eventually printed for brief distribution was also banned.

<sup>260</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 20.

<sup>261</sup> Students of Bandung Institute of Technology 1978, pp. 151-182.

## Criteria for a Ban

An important aspect in the banning of books was the vague and fluid nature of the criteria developed by the Attorney General Office. These criteria were never specifically formulated; however, they appeared in every consideration section of each decree that was issued from 1963 to 1991. The main criterion to ban a book was that it could “disturb public order.” Conveniently vague, this term made the arbitrarily taken decisions look rational and consistent. This broad and ambiguous term found its definition in law no. 4/PNPS of 1963. The explanation section of the law stated that disturbing public order is equivalent to damaging the trust of the people toward the revolution, socialism, and the state leaders. Furthermore, disturbing public order could also be defined as promoting indecency. Interestingly, the law also understood the vagueness that the term “disturbing public order” brings. It mentioned that “writings that could not be tolerated or read by society depend on the spatial and temporal condition of the society or the state.”

In addition to the explanation section of the law, the Attorney General published a list of criteria that explained and gave definition to the phrase ‘disturbing public order.’<sup>262</sup> Books were considered to be disturbing public order and therefore fit for banning if they were:

1. Against the state ideology Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945;
2. Propagating the teachings of Marxism-Leninism/Communism;
3. Damaging the unity of the Indonesian people, the nation, and the state;
4. Damaging public trust in the national leadership;
5. Damaging morals and stimulating lewd acts and pornography;
6. Teaching anti-God, anti-religion and defamation of religion, religious conflict;
7. Disrupting the development program and the results that follow;
8. Creating horizontal conflicts among ethnic groups, race, and religion;
9. Against the Indonesian Guideline of State Policy;<sup>263</sup>
10. *Dll.* (etc.)

This list appears to be more complete than the explanation section of law no. 4/PNPS of 1963. It also attempts to highlight the flexible nature of the term ‘disturbing public order.’ This is evident in the criterion number 2, which is clearly a definition that deflected the original law issued during the Sukarno era. Propagating the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and Communism never disturbed public order except under the anti-communist New Order regime. However, even though more explanatory, several criteria overlapped each other, points number 6 and 8 on religious conflicts,

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<sup>262</sup> Interview with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta. Also republished in *Jakarta Jakarta*, No. 273, September 21-27, 1989, p. 21.

<sup>263</sup> GBHN, *Garis Besar Haluan Negara*, was a set of political, economic, and social principles enacted every five years by the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) as a guideline for prosperity of Indonesia and the Indonesian people — a centralized national development planning scheme.

and 1 and 9 on the fact that the guidelines were based on the Pancasila and Constitution of 1945. In addition to the overlap, the list ends with point number 10, which in its original text is ‘dll.’, the abbreviation of ‘dan lain-lain.’ This indicates that the list is not complete and that there are other criteria for ‘disturbing public order’ beside the ones that are explicitly mentioned. Therefore, despite its explanatory appearance, the list allows the Attorney General to still take the liberty in interpreting or deciding which publications fall under the category of ‘disturbing public order’ and become subject to censorship or ban.



Indonesian translation of Harold Crouch’s *Army and Politics in Indonesia*. Banned on the basis that it disturbed public order and damaged public trust in the national leadership. Several hundred copies of the books were labeled, catalogued, and shelved in the mini library of SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta.  
(Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)

Besides the criteria, book bans could also be based on the political affiliations of the authors with reference to the Instruction issued by the Minister of Domestic Affairs on the Re-education and Supervision of Former Political Prisoners linked with the communist party. Books that were banned on this basis were all books that were written or edited by Pramoedya Ananta Toer — to name but a few, *This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footstep*, *House of Glass*, and *the Pioneer*. Book banning that targeted authors generated protest from Ajip Rosidi, one of the authors central in this thesis who was also the chair of IKAPI, and the owner of a major



publishing house at the time, Pustaka Jaya. He wrote a news article demanding that the government spare the communist writers.<sup>264</sup>

The flexibility of these criteria could easily cause confusion. It created anxiety among writers and intellectuals because they understood that such flexibility was subject to abuse of authority. Such secretive, arbitrary criteria inside an inscrutable bureaucracy could instill fear in society, especially among writers and publishers. Some developed further into a cynical and apathetic attitude that results in the loss of creativity. However, in the eyes of the state, this was deliberate. The fact that the state had broad, flexible powers to define what was hostile and could disturb public order shows how the regime had all the means necessary to maintain and exert power. These criteria manifested into a panopticon tower that instilled another level of fear, in the hopes that this would cause the writers/publisher to write 'lawfully' to avoid being punished. This flexibility on the side of power explains the rigidity on the side of print industry in following state guidelines and orders, particularly Gramedia that claims to have always adhered to Pancasila values in their process of literary production.<sup>265</sup>

## Conclusion

Censorship under the New Order was heavily influenced by the history of its own birth. In the political changes of the mid-1960s, a large number of literary and creative writers disappeared from the world of literature, generally because they were sent to internment camps for their involvement in the aborted coup of 1965. Others fled because they were found to be 'unclean' (*tidak bersih diri*), such as being a member of or sympathetic to the LEKRA, which was banned by the government following the dissolution of the Indonesian Communist Party. The Sukarno era's concept of politics as the commander in literary writings was canceled under the New Order, as were works that raised social issues in society, especially those that depicted the resistance of the poor or the opposition in society. Literature was separated as much as possible from politics and moved to various arts centers such as Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta and other arts councils in every region which were then guarded by a number of official literature publications such as *Horison*. These institutions then, through various festivals, awards, and official publications, gradually developed the formalized or legalized literature. In addition, as the government emphasized the importance of economic growth, alternative political activities were dubbed disturbances of stability, and easily labeled as communist. The prohibition of literary works thus occurred in accordance with the interests of

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<sup>264</sup> This article, *Laranglah Buku, Jangan Pengarang* (Ban the Book, Not the Author) was reprinted in Rosidi 1973, p. 67.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Anastasia Mustika Widjaja, Fiction Editorial Manager, on September 11, 2017 in Jakarta. The interview was interestingly held in one room called Secret in Gedung Kompas Gramedia Palmerah Barat. Throughout the interview, she constantly referred to Pancasila as their main guideline in publishing literary works. According to her, this was the company's commitment to following state regulations, in addition to avoiding production costs that may have been lost due to violation in production or censorship.

publishers and authors on the one hand and the political rulers on the other. While publishers and authors had an interest in protecting literature from political contamination, political rulers had an interest in maintaining stability by preventing elements of subversion from entering cultural field. Censorship, therefore, 'operated in terms of complicity and collaboration between the state and its various apparatuses as censors, and literary producers, authors, and critics, rather than in terms of radical oppositions between dumb censors and intelligent literary writers.'<sup>266</sup>

The modus operandi of state, in this case the Attorney General, in treating its subjects works similarly to that of Jacques Pangemanann, the main character-cum-narrator in Pramoedya's *House of Glass*. Excellent at taking notes, observation, and management of information, Pangemanann puts each of his objects of investigation and surveillance inside a house of glass which he put on his desk — forever contained, controlled, and constantly visible. For Pangemanann, almost everything is under scrutiny. Similarly, the Attorney General spied on the population (of writers, editors, and publishers) and their activities through a vast network of departments, intelligence agencies, students, and citizens-turned-informants. He continued to consolidate in a game of management by integrating control, giving assignments, instilling fear, developing stringent measures as well as blending in with the people. The upshot of this panoptic principle is that its subjects behave themselves simply by knowing that they are visible, which underscores the concern that surveillance plays a key mechanism of social control and 'seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms.'<sup>267</sup> The subjects, therefore, are both susceptible to censorship and allowed to create. The notion of censors as political bureaucrats ignorant of literature who carried out censorship tasks only to maintain some professional pride often distorts the real picture of censorship. While, indeed, the state, c.q. Attorney General, played the leading role, censorship was not exclusively carried out by state institutions but rather operated more diffusely, as the collective result of censorial subjects within the censorship system.

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<sup>266</sup> Burt 1998, p. 21.

<sup>267</sup> Judith Butler quoted in Muller 2004, p. 6.