

Alternative Media Criticism Towards the New Order Government Ahead of The July 27th, 1996, Incident

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Abstract: *This research aims to explain how alternative media in Jakarta criticized the New Order ahead of the July 27th, 1996, Incident. The research method used in this study is historical method, which consists of topic selection, heuristics, verification or source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. In heuristic stage, the researcher collects writing sources, both primary sources such as interviews with historical actors, and secondary sources such as books related to the July 27th, 1996, Incident, and the New Order. The results of this study indicate that the July 27th, 1996, Incident was triggered by the New Order government intervention in PDI in June 1996. This situation then triggered anti-government and pro-democracy groups to criticize the New Order Government through alternative media, in the form of tabloids, magazines, and leaflets. The groups include MARI, PIJAR, AJI, and FKPMJ. After the July 27th, 1996, Incident occurred, the New Order government intensified the narrative that the PRD was the mastermind the incident and detained other activists.*

Keywords: *Alternative Media, PDI, and 27th July 1996 Incident*

Introduction

The emerge of alternative media during the New Order era was a consequence of the regime's policies that controlled and monopolized the mainstream media. The policy was the obligation for press publishers to had a Publishing Permit (Surat Izin Terbit/SIT) and a Print Permit (Surat Izin Cetak/SIC). This policy had been in effect since December 12, 1966 (Ministry of Information, 1966), based on the Basic Press Law No. 11 of 1966. This law was later replaced by the Basic Press Law No. 21 of 1982. Since this Law came into effect, the press had been required to had a Press Publishing Business License (Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers/SIUPP), meanwhile SIT was abolished and SIC had been abolished since May 1977.

The policy was there to control press criticism of the regime, such as highlighting the phenomenon of corruption in among state officials. The regime was wary of this critical attitude because it was worried that it would create an atmosphere that was considered to disrupt political stability (Alfian, 1992). As for political stability, the New Order regime needed it because it was considered a condition for economic development, which was a priority for the New Order (Hermawan Sulistyono, 1983).

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With the implementation of this policy, any publication that was considered potentially bring chaos and disrupt the stability of the country, would had been revoked and banned. Such was the case after the 1974 Malari Incident, where 12 publications were banned. Then in 1978 there was also a ban on 14 publications. Then from 1982 to 1994, there were 11 publications that were banned.

Each banning usually spurs the emergence of alternative media, such as tabloids, magazines, bulletins to leaflets that were critical to demands for change against the government. They usually represented the organization of groups, which then carry out protests against the regime, especially those led by students. This often resulted in the implementation of policies that hindered their dynamics, such as the Normalization of Life, Normalization of Campus Life/Student Coordinating Board (NKK/BKK) in 1977-1978 and the College Student Senate (SMPT) in 1990. This condition had them to act "underground".

However, in late 1980s and early 1990s, pro-democracy groups and the alternative media they initiated came to the fore. There was more coverage of protests than in previous years. This was the impact of the international world's demands for political openness or democracy. What was surprising was the banning of three media, Tempo, DeTIK, and Editor in June 1994.

This ban was then followed by various protests against the regime, especially demands for freedom of expression and freedom of the press. However, this issue expanded into all problematic aspects of the New Order, from economics to politics. There were various pro-democracy and anti-government groups from various regions demanding the regime to address these problems, there were even a demand to bring down Suharto. In Jakarta, these groups include: the Jabodetabek Student Press Forum (FKPMJ), the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), and the Information Center Foundation and Action Network for Reform (PIJAR).

Entering 1996, the New Order found Megawati Sukarnoputri, the General Chairperson of the Indonesian Democratic Party for the 1993-1998 period, as the strongest political opposition. The New Order government then intervened PDI in June 1996 by proposing a congress to elect a new party leader. The proposal for this congress arised on June 3, 1996. Since this proposal was made until Suryadi was appointed and approved by the New Order government as the new chairperson of the PDI—after the Medan Congress on June 20-22 1996, Megawati supporters and pro-democracy groups did not accept it. These groups gathered at the PDI Central DPP office, Jakarta to hold a free pulpit and guard the office from falling into supporters of Suryadi or status quo. The climax was on June 24th 1996 when 30 organizations formed a coalition to form the Indonesian People's Assembly (MARI) and made the Central DPP office for meetings as well as a free pulpit. At that time, MARI also helped disseminate alternative media. The free pulpit and mass consolidation ocured almost every day and the masses who participate in the free pulpit were increasing every day (Peter Kasenda, 2013). The government with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI) had prohibited the free pulpit because it was considered as an attempt to treason. However, this prohibition was ignored by Megawati supporters and pro-democracy activists.

Then the July 27, 1996 incident happened, where a mass that claimed as a supporters of Suryadi seized the Central DPP office from supporters of Megawati. In the end, this office became part of status quo regime. According to a report by the National Human Rights

Commission (Komnas HAM), this riot lead the death of five people, 149 injuries, 23 missing, and 136 arrests. In addition, material losses were estimated 100 billion rupiah. Komnas HAM also assessed that there were six forms of human rights violations, there were: violations of the principles of freedom of assembly and association; violation of the principle of freedom from fear; violation of the principle of freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment; violation of the protection of the human soul; and violation of the principle of protection of property.

After this incident, protests continued to follow and escalated, and spread to various major cities in Indonesia. According to the records of the Insan Politika Foundation (YIP), the number of protests in 1996 was quite significant 143 protests. Previously, in 1995, YIP recorded 55 protests (uncertain). As for the economic crisis that befell the country in the future, the people became increasingly antipathetic, so that the demands for Suharto's removal were also getting louder. In turn, demonstrations contributed to the overthrow of Suharto in May 1998.

Ahead of July 27th Incident in Jakarta, the position of alternative media should be considered. Besides being a forum for pro-democracy and anti-government groups to convey ideas and demands for change to the regime, alternative media could consolidate mass and make mobilization or demonstrations possible. Therefore, the researcher wants to know how alternative media in Jakarta ahead of July 27, 1996 . The researcher also wanted to see how the reaction of government after the incident. However, at first the researchers wanted to know in advance why the incident occurred.

Research Methods

The research method used in this research was historical method consisting of source collection (heuristics), source criticism (verification), interpretation (source analysis and synthesis), and historical writing (historiography).

In the heuristic or data collection stage, the researcher looked for research sources that were relevant to the topic. There were two sources that were explored, primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources in this research were an archive of alternative media, such as tabloids, magazines, newsletters to leaflets in Jakarta from June to December 1996— which will be explored and interviewing historical actors. They were directly involved with mass groups or organizations and its alternative media ahead July 27th 1996 incident, including: Ridwan Saidi (Chairman of MARI), Marlin Dinamikanto (PIJAR), and Yana Supriyatna (FKPMJ).

Meanwhile, secondary sources were books about the New Order, PDI, and the 27 July 1996 Incident. This includes books related to social theory as well as articles, newspapers and journals relevant to the topic. All of these sources could be obtained from some places, such as the National Library, the University of Indonesia Library, and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

Next, the researcher conducts source criticism to ensure whether the collected sources were valid or not. Criticism was done externally (authenticity or authenticity) and internally (credibility). External criticism is carried out to ensure the authenticity of the source, including research on the source, date, time, and who the author was. Meanwhile, internal criticism was to ensure whether the data could be trusted or not, by looking at the content of the source, including content, language used, situation at the time of writing and idea.

Then the stage of interpretation was carried out through two steps, analysis and synthesis. With analysis, the researcher described the source to find the facts. Furthermore, by synthesizing the facts with theories, these facts were compiled in a comprehensive and chronological interpretation according to a descriptive narrative approach.

The last stage was historiography or writing history. At this stage, the researcher showed the synthesis and analysis of the facts obtained in chronological writing. The data was presented in a descriptive narrative, where the writing would be arranged based on chronological principles while paying attention to the causality of events.

Research Methods

Alternative Media Research in the New Order Period

Alternative in the New Order Era: Tamed to Silence written by Aryo Subarkah Eddyono. This study explains how the alternative press during the New Order was silenced if it violated government regulations, and had to be willing to compromise if it wanted to continue producing information content. However, this research shows that the silence did not dampen the enthusiasm of alternative media to bring news or news that was not picked up by the mainstream media—which became the mouthpiece of the rulers and only preached "good" things for the stability of the country during the New Order.

The emergence of alternative media during the New Order was actually a consequence of the policies of regime that controlled and monopolized the mainstream media. Alternative media, in general, present a point of view that the mainstream media cannot or does not bring, such as ethnic minorities and politics, the urban poor, to workers. This media is often referred to as the antithesis of mainstream media coverage. This media is actually a form of anti-hegemony or resistance to various dominant values and beliefs in a culture, in line with what Antonio Gramsci said. This content is also what makes the difference between mainstream media and alternative media.

Another thing that makes the difference between alternative media and mainstream media is the way of production and distribution. Alternative media tend to be non-commercial and small-scale. However, the alternative forms of media themselves are the same as media in general, such as print media, blogs, videos and films, as well as audio or radio. There is also a form of street art, such as graphics, poetry, or songs as a criticism to the regime.

Communications professor John DH Downing in his book *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* says that such media serve "to express the opposition's point of view vertically, from the bottom straight to power, and counter its behavior". Downing called this alternative media as a radical media. In addition, this media also has a role "to build support, solidarity and networks laterally against policies, or even against the continuity of power structures". So, with these functions and roles, the presence of alternative media is crucial to representing the opposition group of regime and consolidating the masses.

Party Fusion and PDI Conflict

In addition, regarding the July 27th 1996 incident, there is a thesis entitled "The July 27 1996 Incident (Conflict in the Indonesian Democratic Party between the Megawati and Suryadi camps)" written by Aam Amaliah Rahmat. This study describes the causes and impacts of the July 27th 1996 Incident. Then there is also an article published in the *Historical Education*

Journal entitled "ABRI Dual Functions in the 1976-1998 PDI Internal Conflict". This article, written by Alphonsius R. Eko, explains how ABRI's intervention caused internal discord within the PDI, which led to the events of the July 27th 1996 incident.

The New Order government simplified or fused political parties (parpols) in 1973 into two: the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and the United Development Party (PPP). Since this party fusion, Indonesia has only known three political parties, namely PPP, PDI, and Golkar. Meanwhile, Golkar had dominated since the 1971 general election. At the same time, Suharto tried to weaken the influence of other political parties through the involvement of the Army (AD). Suharto put his chosen people into political parties, and this was run by the Intelligence Coordinating Agency (BAKIN). The goal was to replace party leaders who were potentially or considered as radical and anti-government.

For political parties, fusion would certainly bring consequences for the internal political parties themselves. Conflicts between factions happened often. This keeps the political parties busy in their own internal affairs and divides their supporters—as happened internally with the PDI. Of course this was beneficial for Golkar, as a dominant political party of the New Order.

Because of that, Suharto succeeded in establishing himself as the dominant political force, especially since the mid-1980s. Suharto had no rival political power, at least before Megawati was joined to the PDI in 1987 as vote getter.

Research Results

The leader of the New Order regime, Suharto, viewed political mobilization as a serious obstacle to consolidating the power of regime and could disrupt stability. Therefore, the floating mass policy was implemented so that individuals did not have certain ties to political parties, except during elections. This policy also allowed the government to monitor community movements through organizations approved or formed by the government. Suharto also used a command and centralized political structure model through the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI), which was called the Dwi Function of ABRI. By policy, ABRI also had a social and political role, in addition to the role of defense and security. The application of such a government model helped the New Order realized the trilogy of development: political stability, economic growth, and equitable development. Meanwhile, economic development was a priority and political stability was a prerequisite for that. Based on this frame of mind, political repression was increased and prevailed more generally. This led to the systematic depoliticization of the masses, such as the simplification or fusion of political parties in 1973 into two: the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and the United Development Party (PPP).

Since the 1973 party fusion, Indonesia had only known three political parties, namely PPP, PDI, and Golkar. Meanwhile, Golkar has dominated party life since the 1971 general election. At the same time, Suharto tried to weaken the influence of other political parties through the involvement of the Army (AD). Suharto put his chosen people into political parties, and this was run by the Intelligence Coordinating Agency (BAKIN). The goal is to replace party leaders who have the potential or are considered radical and anti-government.

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beneficial for Golkar, which was the political vehicle of the New Order. Because of that, Suharto succeeded in establishing himself as the dominant political force, especially since the mid-1980s. Suharto had no rival political power.

The discor of regime began to appear throughout 1996 (Ricklefs, 2007). The political opposition was recognized and the strongest was Megawati Sukarnoputri, who led the PDI for the period 1993-1998. This party was supported by the wider community, including the urban poor, the rural and urban middle class, to the intellectuals (Ricklefs, 2007). Not to mention the experience of the 1987 and 1992 elections, Megawati, who entered the PDI as a vote getter, proved to be able to increase the percentage of vote gains by more than 10%. In 1987 general election, PDI received 10.9% of the vote, up 4% from the 1982 general election which only received 6.6%. Then in the 1992 general election, PDI got 14.9% of the vote. Seeing that the PDI under Megawati had the potential to threaten the status quo of the New Order, Suharto strengthened his intervention in the PDI to weaken the party.

In 1996, PDI received reports that officials from the Department of Internal Affairs and ABRI were pressuring PDI at the regional level to sign an agreement to hold a congress. A total of 215 of the 305 PDI branches visited the Department of Internal Affairs on 3 June 1996 (Edward Aspinall, 2005). They asked for permission to hold the congress. Then the next day, the chairman of the PDI faction in the DPR, Fatimah Achmad, who was known to be close to Suryadi, formed a congress organizing committee. In this case, Fatimah was supported by 15 PDI DPP functionaries. The congress was planned to be held at the end of June 1996 in Medan, North Sumatra. The Minister of Internal Affairs Yogie S. Memet and the ABRI Commander General Feisal Tanjung also supported the congress. Both argued that the Medan Congress could resolve the party internal crises, in which clashes between factions that happend often. However, this initiative were odd considering that the following year elections would be held (Stefan Eklöf, 2003). The polemic of dualism within the PDI (between Megawati's supporters and Suryadi's supporters) was very complicated.

The conflict related to the Medan Congress dragged other parties outside the PDI. Since mid-June 1996, groups supporting Megawati and pro-democracy, as well as those opposing the New Order regime, had taken to the streets to protest. They rejected the Medan Congress plan and government intervention, and strongly opposed those who were considered "traitors of the PDI". The protest action not only raised the issue of PDI, but also raised issues of broader issues that occurred in the government—starting from economic, social, and political aspects. For example, demands for improving the fate of workers and civil servants, reducing the cost of education, and reforming.

One of the active participants in this protest was the People's Democratic Party (PRD). Apart from PRD, there were also activists from the Information Center and Action Network for Reform (PIJAR)—an organization formed by campus press activists from Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta. They called for "Megawati! Reform!" during the protest in Jakarta, in addition to releasing the bulletin. There was also the Alliance of Indonesian Journalists (AJI) and the Jabodetabek Student Press Communication Forum (FKPMJ) who also showed their stance through their magazines. However, despite many protests and criticisms, the Medan Congress was still held on June 20-22 1996. Then Suryadi was elected as Chairman of the PDI.

Megawati's supporters and pro-democracy activists do not recognize the results of the Medan Congress. They still controlled the PDI Central DPP office on Jalan Diponegoro, Central

Jakarta and guarded it day and night. In the following days, they held free pulpit actions and demonstrations. The peak of the protest occurred on June 24, 1996, when as many as 30 organizations announced to form a coalition called the Indonesian People's Assembly (MARI), chaired by Ridwan Saidi. MARI represented a wide spectrum of organizations, most of which oppose and strongly criticize the government (Stefan Eklöf, 2003).

On July 23, 1996, the Head of the Metro Jaya Regional Police (Kapolda) sent a letter to the PDI DPP and instructed that the free pulpit activities should be stopped. However, the next day, Megawati replied that there was no strong and basic reason to stop the free pulpit activities. Megawati's supporters also tried to resist the regime's intervention through legal channels. The Indonesian Democracy Defenders Team (TPDI), which represents Megawati's PDI, is suing Fatimah Achmad along with 15 other functionaries, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Armed Forces Commander, and the Chief of the Indonesian National Police. The Minister of Internal Affairs and Armed Forces Commander were sued for allegedly being directly or indirectly involved in preparing, engineering, and financing the congress. Meanwhile, the National Police Chief was sued for deviating from the applicable provisions regarding the rules for notification of community activities.

However, the various efforts to resolve the dualism had not come to an end. The supporters of Megawati still occupy the PDI Central DPP office and did not want to hand the Central PDI DPP office to status quo. So, finally the incident occurred Saturday morning on July 27, 1996—known as the 27 July 1996 Incident. Central PDI DPP from Megawati supporters. Then supporters of Megawati tried to reclaim her, but there were allegations that security forces were also involved in this incident. This incident left five people dead, 149 injured, and 23 missing. In addition, material losses are estimated at 100 billion rupiah.

In the process, alternative media in Jakarta such as MARI and PIJAR, AJI, and FKPMJ helped consolidate the masses in the vortex of the 27 July 1996 incident. Especially when the pulpit was free at the PDI Central DPP office since mid-June 1996. This free pulpit was held almost every day and the masses action is always increasing (Peter Kasenda, 2013)

The last three groups focus on publishing, and each has its own alternative media which was published regularly. Meanwhile, MARI was a tactical coalition and was deliberately formed to unite various spectrums of organizations, most of which oppose and strongly criticize the government. The presence of MARI was also welcomed by supporters of Megawati. MARI also had its own alternative media which was then disseminated during the free pulpit.

In line with the research objectives, it would be explained how the four groups or organizations channeled their content on the 27 July 1996 incident

1. Indonesian People's Assembly (MARI)

Regarding MARI, the establishment of this coalition was officially declared at the Office of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) on June 24, 1996. A total of 30 organizations agreed to form MARI. Two of the 30 organizations focused on politics, namely the People's Democratic Party (PRD) and the Democratic Union Party (PUDI). In addition, this includes the Institute for Community Studies and Advocacy (Elsham), the Foundation for the Center for Human Rights Studies (Yapusham), the Indonesian Society for Humanity (MIK), PIJAR, the Independent Election Monitoring Committee (KIPP), and so on. MARI itself was founded on the initiation of Ridwan

Saidi, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, Supeni Pudjonegoro, Sunardi, and Julius Usman. At that time Ridwan Saidi was appointed as its chairman.

Ridwan Saidi said that during the free pulpit, MARI released and disseminated a statement of position that contained guidelines which also became their vision. This release was expected to consolidate and advocate the masses, as well as to demand changes. This release was entitled "Details of 4 People's Demands for Changes". The demands in the release were an demands to increase income, to increase people's economy, the consistent implementation of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and the enforcement of law and justice.

Each of these four main demands detailed the other demands. First, the demand for "Increase Income", the demands for decreasing the "A decent living wage for workers Rp. 7,000/day", "The income of the lowest class civil servants is Rp. 600,000/month", and "The income of ABRI soldiers" is Rp. 600,000. ,-/month". Then the second demand, "Improve the People's Economy", and "Increase the cost of agriculture", "Lower the price of goods & services, people's needs", "Maintain the rupiah currency 1 USD = Rp2,000, -".

Furthermore, the third demand was "Implement Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution in a Pure and Consistent manner". The other demands was "Revoke the 5 packages of political law", "Renew laws and regulations that are contrary to the 1945 Constitution", "Create a just, honest, and democratic society". The last, the demands were "Enforce the Law and Justice" and its derivative demands are "Eradicate corruption, manipulation, collusion, monopoly, and judicial mafia", "Strict action against corruptors, manipulators, and collusion", and "A trial that divides the nation".

Regarding the printing of the release, MARI relies on money from voluntary contributions. Releases were distributed almost every day after the Medan Congress. The release of MARI was distributed in the Jakarta and the target of the release was anyone.

"MARI only had that demand. All MARI members distributed the flyers. But if members wanted to publish other products, that was the right of each member. They had their own rights, we only join, not merge," said Ridwan Saidi (Interview in 2022). Ridwan added that MARI did not determine how much and how widely the release affected the community and government. They only focused on the demands in the release.

2. Information Center Foundation for the Action Network for Reform (PIJAR)

Besides MARI, at that time there was also PIJAR. PIJAR was actually founded in 1989 with dozens of student activists from a number of universities in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta. However, PIJAR only ventured into publishing not long after the banning of three media in June 1994. The PIJAR media was *Kabar dari Pijar* (KdP). The publication of KdP was intended to spread information and as communication tool between PIJAR activists and other pro-democracy activists. The second publication of the KdP in June 1994 sent TAS into prison for publishing a story entitled "Adnan Buyung Nasution: This Country Is Disrupted by a Person named Suharto". When TAS has been in prison since 1995, Marlin Dinamikanto was the editor-in-chief of KdP.

Marlin said that from the start, KdP usually led or 'raised' issues. The messages conveyed by KdP were democratization, human rights, and the environment. In Marlin's time, the contents of KdP could be 24-32 pages and the content was more diverse, from politics to agriculture.

In a year, at least KdP could be published eight times. The funding of KdP was from the contributions of PIJAR seniors. After being printed, the KdP was sold at a price of Rp3,000,- per copy. Then the sales proceeds were used for printing the next edition of KdP. Regarding the distribution, KdP was disseminated by every member of PIJAR—some of whom already had their own customers (Marlin Dinamikanto Interview, 2022).

“It turned out that there were many New Order exponents who subscribed to KdP, especially academics, universities, and non-governmental organizations. Embassies too, such as Australia and the United States... In addition, this KdP was a tool for us to move to other communities. Many people like to photocopy this product in several areas, even though we focused on Jakarta. It could reach Garut, Palembang, and so on,” explained Marlin. He added that KdP was usually reproduced by the customer so that it could be spread around 2000-5000 copies.

Apart from KdP, PIJAR also has other media in the form of a mailing list called KDPnet—which is estimated to have up to 5,000 subscribers. However, he said that PIJAR could not confirm how big the impact of their alternative media distribution would be. According to him, at the very least, PIJAR saw a silent majority—or the majority of people who were silent—who actually hoped for change in the New Order regime.

PIJAR was often said joined the MARI coalition and participated in the free pulpit at the Central PDI DPP office prior to the July 27th 1996 incident. However, Marlin confirmed that PIJAR's participation in MARI was not organizational, but individual. "Maybe there was a member of PIJAR who joined MARI and he carried the name PIJAR ... the group or organization before July 27th was indeed a bit loose in organization, but for sure, we were united by the ideal to fight and against Suharto," he said.

PIJAR itself did participate in the free pulpit at the PDI Central DPP office. However, PIJAR did not participate in oration because its focus was on setting the stage for activists and writing. However, PIJAR continued to help write statements for the action and put up banners at the PDI Central DPP office. "A lot of people shouted. Through action, the term reform appears to the public through the slogan 'Megawati Reformasi'," said Marlin. For PIJAR and other pro-democracy activists, the most important thing was to overthrow Suharto so that reforms could possible.

Marlin regreted that PIJAR did not archive of its alternative media products, both physical and digital. So, what Marlin explained about the alternative media PIJAR was based on his memory. Marlin said that PIJAR could not do the filing because PIJAR's headquarters often moved to avoid suspicion, raids, and arrests by the New Order government.

3. Alliance of Indonesian Journalists (AJI)

The establishment of AJI could not be separated from the publication of a bulletin called the Independent Journalists Forum (FOWI) in 1993. FOWI was actually born from a fad idea. A year later, FOWI became serious after the government banned Tempo, Editor and DeTIK on June 21, 1994. The second to fourth editions of the FOWI bulletins raised opinions, opposition to the motives for the 1994 ban. Since the Sirnagalih Declaration in Bogor on August 7, 1994, AJI was born and it was later agreed that the FOWI bulletin became the official publication of AJI. In the sixth edition, the title of FOWI was changed as *Independen*.

Journalists of *Independen* were asked to pay as much as they could—even at the end of 1995, AJI set a minimum membership fee of IDR 2,500 per month. Another source of funding was foreign journalists who often visit and gave donations. AJI also opened a bank account and began listing the account number in the 9th edition of the *Independen*—which was published on December 10th 1994. AJI then decided to sell the *Independen* at a fixed price. Then AJI announced to those who wanted to subscribe to send a replacement for printing costs of Rp. 5,000 for three editions—including postage. Until the 11th edition, which was published on January 31, 1995, the announcement was still included with additional information that the *Independen* could be purchased individually at a price of Rp. 1,500,-.

About the distribution, two AJI activists rode motorbikes to deliver *Independen* to 30 customers every day. Many people copied *Independen*, even could beat the movement of the AJI distributor. When the subscribers were close to a thousand people, *Independen* sent by mail.

Since 1995, *Independen* had been monitored by the government because it did not have a SIUPP and often raised topics that often considered could disrupt political stability. Even though the chairman and secretary general of AJI were arrested that year, AJI continued to act secretly from "underground". In June 1996, AJI faced a national political upheaval, where there was a seizure PDI leadership between Suryadi and Megawati. However, in the same year, AJI also published books and magazines whose contents supported the pro-democracy movement. One of them was a book about the struggle of the chairman of the PDI Megawati, which was became a symbol or representation of the undercurrents being suppressed by the government.

Then in June, the Independent also published various titles that were impossible for mainstream media to pick up on government intervention in the PDI, including: "Get Rid of Mega: Flatten the President's Road", "June 3 Coup", and "Media Asked to Corner Mega". In the article "Get Rid of Mega: Flatten the President's Road" it was stated that some ABRI factions and government officials tried to remove Megawati from PDI because they feared that Megawati would become the strongest competitor for Suharto in the 1997 elections. *Independen* noted that "it is no secret that there are elements within the government, which intends to bring down Megawati. Even since she appeared as PDI's first person, through the congress in Surabaya at the end of 1993, the harassment has never stopped." In addition, it was also noted that the ABRI Commander General Feisal Tanjung, who gave the green light to the congress, was considered "odd". Because

"usually the government or ABRI officials only give permission to official organizations, not rival organizations".

Then the headline "June 3 Coup" contained an article about the congress proposal during the PDI DPP meeting on June 3. This proposal turned DPP split between the pros and cons. It was later noted that "...legally formal, the congressional petition is clearly invalid." As for the headline "Media is also asked to corner Mega", the *Independen* reported that on Sunday, June 2, 1996, the chief editors in Jakarta were called by the Ministry of Information and ABRI Headquarters. "They were taught to write news to support the PDI Congress," noted *Independen*. "...Even though these officials don't necessarily understand journalism."

In addition, the *Independen* also published various other writings that were critical of the policies of the New Order government, among others entitled "Tommy's Car Policy", "Broadcasting Bill, Arrogance of Power", to "Conference for Evictions". The article, "Tommy's Willing Car Policy" explained how the policy of the car industry was difficult to understand, in which the proposal for national cars was assembled abroad, while foreign cars were allowed to be imported—as was Tommy Suharto's policy. Then in the article "Broadcasting Bill, Arrogance of Power", the *Independen* noted that 22 of the 58 articles of the Broadcasting Bill were regulated by PP or made by the government itself. This proved the dominance of government over the DPR legislature. "DPR seems to be asked for an empty mandate. It's up to the government to write what it contains," *Independen* quoted Marcel Beding, a member of Commission I of the DPR PDI Faction, as saying. Furthermore, in the "Conference for Evictions", *Independen* pointed out that Indonesian officials gave a speech in Istanbul, Turkey regarding the right of people to obtain housing, but in the other hand, the small people in the country were still being evicted. This edition also includes interviews or quotes from PDI, pro-democracy, and even anti-government figures, such as Sutarjo Suryogritno, Faisal Basri with the title "The National Car is Satan", and Sri Bintang Pamungkas who was one of the founders of the Indonesian Democratic Union Party (PUDI)—or a new party for the white group or golput.

Then in July 1996, ahead of the 27 July 1996 incident, AJI also released *Independen*. Still influenced by the political situation in the seizure for PDI leadership, a number of titles in this edition include: "Mega Fights and Elite Splits", "Heading Bull from Below", and "United Under Mega". The article "Mega Fights and Elite Splits" explained that apart from the widespread rejection of Suryadi as PDI chairman and Megawati's willingness to become a symbol of resistance to the regime, there seemed to be political competition at the New Order elite level. The inscription "Heading Bull from Below" noted that supporters of Megawati was widespread. Furthermore, the article "United Under Mega" revealed that Megawati, who was a symbol of resistance to the regime, also inspired the emergence of alliances such as MARI.

There was also another article entitled "Election Eligibility Sued" quoting the statement of the Independent Election Monitoring Committee (KIPP). Chairman of the KIPP Presidium Gunawan Mohamad considered that "the 1997 election process was not worth continuing". And regarding press freedom, there was a title writing "Seh-Yong Lee: Press Pushes Democratization". As in previous publications, *Independen* also

included articles from interviews with prominent figures, such as MARI Chairman Ridwan Saidi who stated that "Mega can be a symbol of the democratic seizure", and the First President of Timor Leste Xanana Gusmao who also inspired pro-democracy groups and activists to fight against the New Order regime. There was also an interview with Gunawan Mohamad, Chairman of the KIPP Presidium and former editor-in-chief of Tempo, who stated that "Mega strengthens opposition outside the system."

The series of protests and support for Megawati leadership in PDI escalated after the government officially appointed Suryadi as PDI chairman through the Medan Congress on June 20th-22th 1996. The peak of this action was when the coalition, MARI—most of whose members opposed and criticized the New Order—was formed on 24 June 1996. MARI and other pro-democracy activists made the PDI Central DPP office as a meeting place and a free pulpit. This action continued until the July 27th 1996 Incident happened. This incident led to the arrest of a number of pro-democracy activists, including AJI activist Andi Syahputra—who owned a printing press to print the *Independen*—in October 1996. Since Andi Syahputra was arrested, *Independen* temporarily stopped publishing. In addition, the unclear whereabouts of the Secretary General of AJI Satrio Arismunandar after being targeted by the government also made AJI vacuum. AJI also could not act freely.

4. Jabodetabek Student Press Communication Forum (FKPMJ)

The establishment of FKPMJ was declared on June 12, 1992, in Jakarta. Based on the Declaration of the Jabodetabek Student Press Communication Forum, student press activists in Jabodetabek need a forum to accommodate shared ideas. Therefore, FKPMJ was created. FKPMJ itself had a vision and commitment in order to mobilize solidarity, become an alternative press, improve the quality of student press and uphold human values and justice (FKPMJ Declaration, 1992). Although most of the members were the student press, FKPMJ also wanted to be a place for concrete and progressive transformation of ideas and work.

Head of the 1992-1994 FKPMJ Advocacy Task Force and one of the initiators of the establishment of FKPMJ, Bob Randilawe, said that the establishment of FKPMJ was influenced by the political situation during the New Order era. FKPMJ opposed the New Order's authoritarian and anti-democratic style of government. The presence of FKPMJ was expected to be an alternative press, considering that the press at that time was tightly controlled through SIUPP. FKPMJ also had a product in the form of a tabloid called "Solidaritas" and leaflets.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, FKPMJ was not only oriented towards the student press because this group was active in a concrete and progressive activities. Therefore, FKPMJ members would also be given political education through discussion and must read books about philosophy, history, and movements of mass—including *Madilog*, *Sarinah*, *Science in Perspective*, *Mass Action*, and *Mass Movement* (Interview Yana Supriyatna, 2021). In addition, members would also be given material on how to agitate and produce massive propaganda to the public (FKPMJ Syllabus). The forms of agitation and propaganda were writing (in the form of leaflets, pamphlets, open letters, journals, bulletins, and newspapers), oral (political speeches, free pulpits, direct

communication with the public), motion or movement (critical and provocative songs and theater), and pictures (posters and writings on the walls).

These efforts were made so that FKPMJ members could do practical work on the movement and not just discuss about it. As was typical of movement groups in the early 1990s, FKPMJ more often joined the action committee when conducting protests. In this period, an action committee usually represented a particular issue. The most frequently raised issues during this period were local issues, such as the eviction of land in an area. One of the action committees that FKPMJ participated in was the Solidarity Group for Victims of the Kedung Ombo Development (KSKPKO). Action committees like this was also participated in by the affected community along with students.

According to Bob Randilawe, such actions need to be carried out and escorted by intellectuals such as students. Referring to Antonio Gramsci, Bob said that organic intellectuals must work together with society to promote change in a world ruled by established powers—in this case the New Order regime. Therefore, the FKPMJ advocacy task force attempted to provide assistance and defense through the action committee and took to the streets. FKPMJ also did the same thing from campus to campus personally and secretly.

So, even though FKPMJ mostly conducted by student press, the issue that were raised by FKPMJ were the issue for movement activists. This was in line with the objectives of FKPMJ as stated in the 1992 FKPMJ Declaration. According to Niko Adrian, Head of the FKPMJ Advocacy Task Force from 1994 to 1997, this was what distinguishes FKPMJ from other resistance group or organization (Interview with Niko Adrian, 2022). "About publishing, we were grateful if it was published. Even if it did not get published, FKPMJ would still run," said Niko Adrian. "Yes, student press publications were a propaganda tool and yes, student press were a place to practice writing. But we did not think of publish as a professional press."

Niko added that FKPMJ often brought its own media such as "dark leaflets" that known as "Selebaran Gelap" or "SG", pamphlets or magazine that called "Solidaritas" when consolidating and advocating the masses. Media like this helped the process. This media content must be in line with the program of organization. The FKPMJ media content raised eight themes, including: democratization, pro-people, anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, to counter hegemony against state power (FKPMJ Declaration, 1992).

In addition to the media mentioned earlier, FKPMJ had also published SG ini 1994, after three press had been banned. This SG was also presented to compete with the mainstream media which was shackled by euphemisms, as well as being a propaganda tool against the New Order government or anti-government. For example, when the mainstream media did not dare to report about corruption among New Order government officials, SG was there to show about what corruption was and who the actors were. "This was then spread with vulgar language—the meaning was clear without cliché, so it goes straight to consciousness. You didn't have to interpret the meaning first," said Yana Supriyatna, Head of the Communication/Propaganda Task Force 1994-1997.

Regarding funds for the production of SG, FKPMJ relied on donations from members or sympathizers. Often also use waste paper or stencils. To print it, they

usually relied on a printing press owned by FKPMJ members. This SG could be printed 1-2 reams every 1-2 weeks. This SG usually were printed without mentioning the author's name, and it distributed in the Jakarta area. The action to disseminate the SG was carried out until 1998. Regarding the SG, FKPMJ never measured how far the SG had an impact on changing the situation. Because for FKPMJ, the most important thing was that there had to be a resistance for dominating power.

Regarding the FKPMJ “Solidaritas”, Yana said, it was not much different from SG. However, “Solidarity” tended to be more comprehensive because it raised news or even articles with richer sources and topics. This was also consist of thicker page. Meanwhile, SG as propaganda and remembering that the form was only a leaflet, at least it contains only a few paragraphs. The selection of FKPMJ media content usually began with an editorial meeting. Generally, students who follow this agenda, but sometimes there are non-student parties who also attend. Editorial work was actually not professional like commercial media and is voluntary.

In June 1996, when the issue of rejection of Megawati's leadership in PDI emerged, FKPMJ also took part in a protest action with Megawati supporters and pro-democracy activists. FKPMJ was also present and participated in the free pulpit at the PDI Central DPP office. FKPMJ took the initiative to produce SG about the political event and disseminate it. At that time, many members of FKPMJ were working under an alliance of their own, namely the Indonesian Youth Solidarity for the Struggle for Democracy (SPIPD) (Niko Adrian Interview, 2022). The SPIPD itself was also attended by young people who were not only students.

In the eyes of FKPMJ, it was clear that the New Order government viewed Megawati as a threat. “Megawati was a symbol of resistance to the New Order. She was like a petromax lamp in the dark so that insects come. Well, but someone brought the lamp, so we hope to be the people who carry the lamp together. The people who carry the lamp are the people who are the pioneers,” said Niko. For that, FKPMJ participated in echoing resistance to the regime through a free pulpit at the PDI Central DPP office.

FKPMJ actually never supported certain actors to replace Suharto. Nor was the UUDS entourage or “Ujung-Ujungnya Dongkel Suharto” or “In the end, put Shuarto Down” (Interview with Niko Ardian, 2022). Because FKPMJ expected a systematical changes. The action at the free pulpit continued until finally there was a seizure of the Central PDI DPP office between the supporters of Megawati and pro-democracy activists and the masses claiming to be Suryadi's supporters on July 27, 1996. Since then, protests had intensified and spread in various cities in Indonesia, including Ujung Pandang, Medan, Yogyakarta and Bandung. This escalation of protest action also became more widespread following the 1997 monetary crisis, and in turn contributed to Suharto's fall from his position as president in 1998.

Meanwhile, regarding the archives of writings and pictures of FKPMJ, Niko said that FKPMJ did not archive them. The reason was, this archive could endanger the individual and the organization itself. This was because the police or civil apparatus often come suddenly to raid places suspected of being gatherings for activists. Only a number of archives after the reformation were kept.

The four alternative media presented by these groups or organizations show that the enthusiasm for resistance against the New Order government was very high. Moreover, every emergence of alternative media was often accompanied or followed by protests, such as when MARI or AJI appeared. Alternative media in the form of tabloids, magazines, bulletins to leaflets, and even banners, dare to express various things that have been worried by the public, such as the economic crisis, corruption, to the intervention of the PDI by the New Order government. This media was no longer trapped in euphemisms, so it was clear in providing information about the government. The release of alternative media was usually welcomed by the exponents of the New Order. Moreover, alternative print media, which were produced by professional journalists, which were published regularly such as the *Independen* were highly anticipated. Furthermore, alternative media could be a place for political education or to consolidate the masses to mobilize the masses.

Unfortunately, of the four groups, only MARI and AJI archive their alternative media. Meanwhile, PIJAR and FKPMJ did not because of fears of sudden raids by government officials, which would allow the group to be disbanded. Not to mention, these groups often moved places for meetings or editorial work.

After the July 27th 1996 incident, the New Order government accused that the mastermind of the incident was the People's Democratic Party (PRD). The PRD had been called the party responsible for inciting riots, especially since the free pulpit in June 1996 at the PDI Central DPP office. The PRD, which was previously the "Union of Democratic People", declared itself a political party a few days before the attack on the PDI DPP office—on July 22, 1996. The PRD was called the new leftist organization. The reason, according to ABRI, was that the PRD's AD/ART did not include Pancasila as its principle. So that the PRD was accused of being a new vehicle for elements from the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Dozens of members of the PRD and its subordinate organizations were arrested and detained by the security forces, including the head of the PRD Budiman Sudjatmiko. On October 30th 1996, the government began banning the PRD and other groups. The government also called and questioned Megawati Sukarnoputri, Chair of the Indonesian People's Assembly (MARI) Ridwan Saidi, Secretary General of the Indonesian Democratic Union Party (PUDI) Julius Usman, and Chairman of the KIPP Presidium Goenawan Mohammad. In addition, the Chairperson of the Indonesian Prosperous Labor Union (SBSI) Mochtar Pakpahan and Chairman of the Indonesian Student Solidarity for Democracy (SMID) in Jabodetabek Garda Sembiring were arrested. The head of the Presidium of the Alliance of Indonesian Journalists (AJI) Santoso and the Secretary General of AJI were also targeted by the government. Furthermore, according to Komnas HAM, a total of 136 people were detained after the July 27th 1996 incident.

The formation of opinions was almost undeniable. This was because the Information Center of ABRI was highly filtering news related to the July 27th 1996 Incident. At that time, there were no objective publications or at least that matched the facts. Opinions from academics, observers to legal, social and political practitioners related to the event were barely published. In addition, any media did not dare to publish critical statements without being censored by the ABRI Information Center, which at that time was held by Brigadier General Amir Syarifuddin. Furthermore, the only official information was from the government. In short, the information related to the July 27th 1996 incident PDI DPP office Jl. Diponegoro 58 only from Puspen

ABRI, although objectivity was doubtful. Indeed, there was news from news agencies or foreign media, but it was limited to certain circles of society (FS Swantoro and Jusuf Suroso, 2018).

In addition, Suharto removed Megawati from the political scene. Then Suharto embraced conservative Islam to confront communism and discouraged the democratic opposition. The responses of Indonesian Islamic organizations to the government's accusations were diverse. Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and a number of Muslim intellectuals did not accept Suharto's intentions. They confessed their doubts, realized that the incident was engineered by the regime, and called the government accusing communism or subversion to hide the real cause of the July 27th 1996 incident—namely the obstruction of official public political channels that had been blocked by the state. Unlike them, Islamic ultraconservative groups such as the Committee for Solidarity in the Islamic World (KISDI) tended to support government measures.

Instead of strengthening Suharto's status quo, the accusations and arrests of the activists actually made the public even more antipathy to the New Order government. Since then, the July 27th 1996 incident spurred everything on. This incident was considered the starting point for Suharto's downfall. The reason was, after this incident, demonstrations or protests became increased, and spread in various big cities in Indonesia. Various groups that had been mentioned previously continued their actions, and even a number of new groups emerged. They continue to consolidate with alternative media and protest. In turn, demonstrations contributed to Suharto's overthrow in May 1998.

Conclusion

Alternative medias emerged as a consequence of the New Order regime's policy that controlling the press. This media became the antithesis of the mainstream media, which at that time could not be critical or to criticized the government. Alternative media in the form of print media often contain various headlines which were usually impossible in mainstream media. In addition, alternative media was also a place for pro-democracy groups or organizations to convey ideas to demands for change to the regime. This media became a tool of resistance against the regime and helped accelerate the process of consolidation into mass mobilization and demonstrations. This could be seen prior to the July 27th 1996 Incident.

Various forms of alternative media, such as tabloids, magazines, bulletins and leaflets, made consolidation more possible, that could lead to mass mobilization or demonstrations. In the early 1990s, alternative media were also present which were initiated by other organizations, there were Kabar dari Pijar from PIJAR as a bulletin, Independen from the AJI as magazine, and Solidaritas and SG from FKPMJ, as a magazine and leaflets. Each of them showed criticism and opposition of the regime, an anthithesist of mainstream media.

The presence of such media encourages mass mobilization strategies so that they could open the way for the entry of new political elements to the mass, which previously tended to move spontaneously. The media was also a tool to enter and influence activist circles, and help organize protests or provide political education among the mass.

Entering June 1996, their presence became widespread and bold, but tended not to be open about their organizational identity. This action was mainly triggered by the rejection of Megawati's leadership in the PDI—where on June 20th-22th 1996, the government held a Medan Congress which appointed Suryadi as the new PDI chairman. The Supporters of

Megawati and pro-democracy activists in Jakarta did not accept this, so they took an advantage this momentum to consolidate the masses through their alternative media, as had been done by MARI, PIJAR, AJI, and FKPMJ.

The appointment of Suryadi as chairman of the PDI was responded to by the free pulpit in the courtyard of the PDI Central DPP office. The groups and organizations were mentioned involved in the free pulpit. The free pulpit was apparently able to attract many people, especially political figures who were political opponents of Suharto, who demanded the abolition of the dual function of ABRI and criticized the military's actions for various human rights violations and also criticized Suharto's development policies. The free pulpit was then responded to by violent takeover of the office by the military and police.

The raid occurred after the government agreed that the free pulpit at the PDI DPP office was the beginning to commit treason against the government. Then the incident happened on July 27th 1996, in which a mob claiming to be Suryadi's supporters seized the office of the Central PDI DPP. There were allegations that this incident was engineered by the government. Meanwhile, the government considers that the free pulpit is an attempt to revive communist ideology and accuses activists of the PRD and other activist groups as masterminding the riots on July 27th 1996. This incident left five people dead, 149 injured, and 23 missing. It was also reported that 136 people were detained by the government because they were considered involved in the incident. The material losses were estimated at Rp100 billion. Furthermore, Suharto removed Megawati from the political scene. Then Suharto embraced conservative Islam to confront communism and discouraged the democratic opposition.

Instead of strengthening Suharto's status quo, the accusations and arrests of the activists actually made the public even more antipathy to the New Order government. Starting from that, the July 27th 1996 incident spurred everything on. This incident was considered the starting point for Suharto's downfall. The reason was, after this incident, demonstrations or protests became increased, and spread in various big cities in Indonesia. Various groups that had been mentioned previously continued their actions, and even a number of new groups emerged. They continue to consolidate with alternative media and protest. In turn, demonstrations contributed to Suharto's overthrow in May 1998.

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