

Journal

of Indonesian Social Sciences
and Humanities



ISSN 1979-8431

Volume 6, Issue 1,
2016

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THE BANDUNG SPIRIT: Nation State and Democracy

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Abstract

This article aims to show the relevance of the Bandung Asia Africa Conference in 1955 to the current debate on democracy. It argues that the Bandung Asian-African Conference was the second massive but well-coordinated democratic movement on a global scale. It has paved the way for the production of new political space globally as well as for individual nations -- space that is more democratic in nature, where people can claim and exercise their citizenship rights. Reflecting on Soekarno's speech at the opening of the Asia Africa Conference, this article argues that there is an urgent need for a deeper involvement of political and social forces of the Global South to put themselves as the front liners in defining and making use of democracy, instead of leaving it to be dictated by Neo-liberal lines of thinking. This is so because Indonesian experience during the last 15 years or so has clearly demonstrated the very limits of liberal democracy. This article further argues the need to build a collaborative effort amongst scholars of the Southern Hemisphere to challenge the superiority of liberal ideas and practices of democracy.

Keywords: The Bandung Asia-Africa Conference 1955, nation state, democracy

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menemukan relevansi Konferensi Asia Afrika (KAA), Bandung, di tahun 1955, terhadap perdebatan kontemporer mengenai demokrasi. Artikel ini berargumentasi, Konferensi Bandung adalah gelombang kedua gerakan demokrasi yang bersifat masif dan terkoordinasi pada skala global yang melahirkan ruang politik baru, baik pada skala global maupun individual bangsa yang berwatak demokratis, dimana rakyat dapat mengklaim dan menterjemahkan hak-hak kewarga-negaraannya. Bercermin pada pidato pembukaan Presiden Soekarno, artikel ini lebih lanjut mengargumentasikan adanya kebutuhan negara-negara kawasan Selatan untuk terlibat dan menjadi garda terdepan dalam mendefinisikan demokrasi dan menjalankannya, dan tidak membiarkan diri didikte oleh pemikiran neo-liberal. Hal ini didasarkan pada pengalaman Indonesia dalam lebih dari 15 tahun terakhir ini dimana masifikasi penciptaan lembaga-lembaga demokrasi, diikuti oleh pemencaran kekuasaan yang ekskrim, serta liberalisasi, justru telah menghasilkan hal yang paradoks. Karenanya, artikel ini menegaskan adanya kebutuhan mendesak untuk dilakukan kerjasama antar para pemikir di kawasan Selatan untuk menemukan gasasan dan praktik berdemokrasi yang lebih memungkinkan bekerjanya demokrasi substantif.

Kata kunci: Konferensi Asia Afrika 1955, negara bangsa, demokrasi

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INTRODUCTION

There is no need to reemphasize the importance of the Bandung Asian-African Conference of 1955 in determining the course of global politics. As history speaks for itself, this conference brought together the social and political forces of the Global South to add their voice to global affairs by mobilizing their moral and political strengths – “*moral violence of nations*”² as Soekarno puts it - on the side of peace and independence. The conference also laid down the foundation and paved the way for the advancement of collaboration not only amongst states, but also civil society forces, by formulating their solid political stand vis a vis the powerful Global North as stipulated in the *Dasa Sila* document.

The event, the documents produced, and the surrounding political environment – as Mr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, the chair of the conference said, have served as the guiding beacon for the future progress of Asia and Africa. As we were witnessing during 1960's and 1970's, there were many instances in supporting this claim. The birth of Non-Alignment Movement, only a few years after the Bandung Conference,³ is amongst the most important one. However, it goes beyond that as demonstrated throughout the growing number of institutional collaborations among countries of the Global South. Some collaborations even went into very specific aspects and technical matters, involving both governments and civil society organizations of the Global South.

Since economic issues became the prime challenge and concern of the Non-Alignment

² As Soekarno pointed out in his opening speech, “*What can we do? We can do much! We can inject the voice of reason into world affairs. We can mobilise all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace. Yes, we! We, the peoples of Asia and Africa, 1,400,000,000 strong, far more than half the human population of the world, we can mobilise what I have called the Moral Violence of Nations in favour of peace. We can demonstrate to the minority of the world which lives on the other continents that we, the majority, are for peace, not for war, and that whatever strength we have will always be thrown on to the side of peace.*” Soekarno's opening speech on the Bandung Conference, April 1955.

³ Non-Alignment Movement was born at the first conference in Beograd, Yugoslavia, 1-6 September 1961. The conference was attended by 25 countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Yemen, Myanmar, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Arab Saudi, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yugoslavia.

Movement members during 1970s, this organization together with the Group of 77/G-77 have organized a series of meetings in pursuit of a kind of “New International Economic Order”. In 1992, as the head of this movement, Indonesia called for what was known as “a constructive North-South dialogue” based on the principles of genuine interdependence, mutual interest and benefits, and responsibility. Indonesia also took the initiative to find solutions to issues faced by Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) of the global south. The 10th Non-Alignment Movement meeting in Jakarta has also agreed to intensify the South-South collaboration based on the principle of collective self-reliance.⁴

Despite all the initiative and collaboration efforts, Soekarno was right when he said that :

“I beg of you do not think of colonialism only in the classic form.... Colonialism has also its modern dress, in the form of economic control, intellectual control, actual physical control by a small and alien community within a nation. It is a skillful and determined enemy, and it appears in many guises.... Wherever, whenever and however it appears, colonialism is an evil thing, which must be eradicated from the earth” (Soekarno: 1955).

Soekarno was right because despite the fact that colonization has officially disappeared and the Cold War has ended, the very enemy of the Bandung conference, the systems of domination by the powerful in the world order persist. Injustice has appeared in more sophisticated forms and larger dimensions⁵. Wars as in the case of Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria amongst many others and the use of violence (terrorism) continue to threaten humanity.

THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Backed by the troika of the World Bank-IMF-WTO, the G-7 countries (Vision of Bandung,

⁴ ‘South-South Collaboration Center’ was held by Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam as the mandate of Cartagena's Conference.

⁵ It was called by Soekarno (1955) on his analysis of colonialism as “The Life-line of Imperialism”: “*I had occasion to make a public analysis of colonialism, and that I then drew attention to what I called the “Life-line of Imperialism”. This line runs from the Straits of Gibraltar, through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan. For most of that enormous distance, the territories on both sides of this lifeline were colonies, the peoples were unfree, their futures mortgaged to an alien system. Along that life-line, that main artery of imperialism, there was pumped the life-blood of colonialism.*”

n.d.) have systematically imposed a particular economic model throughout the world in the name of neo-liberal economic reform. Decisions to privatize public holdings, deregulate the economy, cut down subsidies, and reduce labor rights are not just ‘economic’ decisions as the proponent of Neo-liberal camp has argued, but are profoundly political. As the UNDP Human Development Reports and other documents have shown, these reforms have aggravated existing inequalities, leading to a transfer of wealth from the poor and middle classes to the rich. The gap between the top 20% and the bottom 20% in the world has increased from 30 : 1 in 1960 to over 92 : 1 now days (Darwis, 2006).

The problem of inequality is not only limited to class but is spatial as well. As most of the data and research revealed, the gap amongst regions within individual countries of the Global South is getting worse. Even the gap between Asian and African countries is widening as suggested by the study of Bernadette Andreosso-O’Callaghan and Jean-Pascal Bassino on the socio-economic evolution of ‘Bandung’ Asian-African countries from 1960 to 1999. Their research concluded that the ‘Bandung’ African countries were relatively richer than the ‘Bandung’ Asian countries in 1960. However, economic growth has tended to be much more vigorous over the 1960–1998 period in Asia than in Africa, leading to the widening gap between the two over the period as demonstrated through both economic and human development indicators (Darwis, 2006). Whether or not the emergence of the above phenomenon is due to any specific policy is still a debatable one. But it is proof that some of the objectives of the Bandung Declaration have failed to materialize.⁶ The same phenomenon is also taking place within nations. The worsening of disparities amongst regions in Indonesia, especially between eastern and western parts of the country are one example.

⁶ The objectives of Bandung Declaration was mentioned by Soekarno (1955) : “I hope that it will give evidence of the fact that we, Asian and African leaders, understand that Asia and Africa can prosper only when they are united, and that even the safety of the world at large can not be safeguarded without a united Asia-Africa. I hope that this conference will give guidance to mankind, will point out to mankind the way which it must take to attain safety and peace. I hope that it will give evidence that Asia and Africa have been reborn, that a New Asia and New Africa have been born!”

Instead of focusing my discussion on the above mentioned topics which are very much the field of international relations and economics, I would rather pay attention to the least recognized theme of the Conference, that is democracy. If we define democracy as “*popular control of public affairs based on political equality*”; as many scholars of substantive democracy have argued (Beetham, 1999; Harris, Stokke & Tornquist, 2004; Tornquist, 2009) and the high quality of “*participation, authorization, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and solidarity*” of Beetham (1999) and agree that these are the core ingredients of democracy, then the Bandung Asian-African Conference is the second massive but well-coordinated democratic movement on a global scale. The first, would be the Westphalia Peace Agreement, October 24, 1648, almost 370 years ago.⁷

It is so because, despite the differences between the two events – the first is the end of religious-driven wars while the second is the process of decolonization, the outcome was parallel: the birth of nation state, the only political institution that provides the reason as well as political space and institutional arrangement for the working of democratic principles. I do believe that there would be no popular control without nation-state. There would be no public affairs without nation-state. There would be no political equality without nation-state. By the same token, it is unimaginable to think about the interlinking amongst popular control, public affairs and political equality without the presence of nation state as a prerequisite. It is important also to stress that there would be no participation, no authorization, no accountability, no transparency, no responsiveness and no solidarity without nation state. It means that, as student of political space would argue, the Bandung Conference paved the way for the production of new political space (Lefebvre, 1991) at the global level as well as at the level of individual nations - a political space that is more democratic in nature where people can claim and exercise their citizenship rights.

⁷ The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, bringing to an end to the Thirty Years’ War, which had drowned Europe in blood in battles over religion, defined the principles of sovereignty and equality in numerous sub-contracts, and in this way became the constitution of the new system of states in Europe.

From the domestic point of view, nation-state is a newly created political space; a space of power relations and contestation. A space where not only the notion of citizenship is the core of its institution and practices, but also a space where people can claim their citizenship and exercise their rights (Lay, 2009; Samadhi & Warouw, 2009). A space for demonstrations as politically active citizens take an active role in public matters, to authorize power, and to demand for accountability and transparency while maintaining their duty to both their country and fellow citizens.

IN SEARCH OF RELEVANCE

If we agree on the above argument, then the Bandung Conference will find its new relevance. It is not only to “*demonstrate to the minority of the world which lives on the other continents that we, the majority, are for peace, not for war, and that whatever strength we have will always be thrown on to the side of peace*” as Soekarno pointed out in his opening speech, but also “for democracy and on the side of democracy”. By implication, it requires an even deeper involvement of the political and social forces of Global South to put themselves as the front liners in defining and making use of democracy, instead of leaving it to be dictated by Neo-liberal lines of thinking.

The above is very important as the current development of what is called the third wave of democracy (Huntington, 1991) or democratic transition (Linz & Stepan, 1996) of Asia and Africa is very much an imposed model derived from the Liberal tradition with limited involvement of people of the Southern Hemisphere. So it is not surprising to see that this liberal practice of democracy has failed in controlling power from being misused by those who control the democratic institutions, and in producing and distributing welfare to the people (Santoso, Pratikno & Lay, 2010). As argued by proponents of substantive democracy, the third wave of democracy together with market-driven globalization has on one hand undermined authoritarianism, but on the other hand, swapped away preconditions for political advances, leading to stagnation of democracy in

many post-transition states (Harriss et.al. 2004; Tornquist et.al. 2009, 2013).

The Indonesian case has clearly demonstrated the very limits of liberal democracy. The fall of Soeharto in 1998 has paved the way for Indonesia to enter an era of what might be called re-democratization.⁸ Political development of the country during the last one and a half decades has strongly suggested that the prerequisite for democratic governance to take place has been properly fulfilled (Lay 2009, 2012). All democratic institutions of Schumpeterian type of modern democratic institutions (Schumpeter, 1972; Dahl 1989, 1998) – Parliament, party, and the election – were restored, even multiplied. This changed the very nature of political institutions of the country dramatically. Parliament is now the locus of the decision making process, of oversight and of budgeting – functions inherently embedded within parliament in a democratic nation. The parliament of Indonesia, which merely used to be an institution of rubber stamping during the New Order period, is turning into a real democratic institution where policy processes take place. This is also true for political parties. The quadruple constitutional amendments which have taken place between 1999 and 2002 have brought Indonesia into a phase of party-based political activity. The impact is very clear: the rise of political parties has been on a massive scale. This has been followed by the massive presence of representative bodies, including almost one hundred thousand new representative bodies at the village level (Lay, 2012).

This massive installment of democracy institutions especially political parties and parliament has sadly not correlated positively with their contribution to the level of public trust. Political parties are claimed to be important to the practice of formal institutions, but it is

⁸ This concept has been widely used to describe the massive political changes of major Latin American countries during eighties. Re-democratization is used in this article since contemporary political development in Indonesian shown (a) the post Soeharto period is marked by the re-installation, on a massive scale, modern democratic institutions of the fifties, and (b) most of the political parties of today Indonesia are very much the revival of parties of the past, including their ideologies, pattern of organization and type of leadership.

sharply contrasted in reality. Most of the latest surveys suggest, parties, as well as parliament, are considered the most corrupt institutions in the eyes of populace. LSI's release on institutions free from corruption survey in 2011 for example, put political parties as the top ranking of corrupt institutions with 30.2% and parliament at the second (LSI, 2011 in Lay & Ambardi, 2014). A similar survey released by Indicator five years later reconfirmed the survey above. A January 2016 survey on Democracy Institution's Trust clearly demonstrates that, as expected, parties are still the institutions with the lowest trust (39.2%) while Parliament remained at the second place with 48.5%. These figures are low when compared to Corruption Eradication Commission figures which put the level of trust of 79.6%, Presidency at 79.2%, Police at 68.9%, and Court at 57.9% respectively. The inadequacy of Members of Parliament to build public trust through concrete action is presumed to be amongst the reasons for the low level of public trust in this representative body (Swasanany, 2014). While for political parties, the reasons lie in their failure to institutionalize themselves as well as to perform some basic functions especially related to representation (Tornquist, 2009). The low level of public trust - as demonstrated by the level of voter turn-out during the last couple of elections in Indonesia – has contributed significantly to the steady increase of absent voters, leading to serious the decline of participation in elections.

Paige Johnson Tan (2012) called the period of Indonesia's democratization between 1998 and 2008 as "the reign of the parties". During the Soeharto period, Indonesia had only three parties: Golkar, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, and Partai Persatuan Pembangunan. Since then these three parties have ballooned to more than 200 in the new environment of reformasi. During their formative period, parties are weak as institutions but gain their strong constitutional status with the sole power to nominate candidates for election at all levels, including nominating a presidential candidate. This contradictory situation has led to dissatisfaction. Tan notes that after 14 years, arrows are moving in many different directions

on party institutionalization. In some ways, parties have strengthened, built impressive organizational strength but in other ways, resisted institutionalization. In short, parties are fluctuating in their strength.

Indonesian experience with democracy is not limited to the massive installation of democratic institutions as discussed but also relates to a massive dispersion of power. As decentralization effectively took place in 2001, the locus of power has dramatically multiplied. As a consequence, political power has moved away from old political agencies and locus into new ones, from central to local, leading to a more democratic type of power relationship amongst agencies and locus. Migration of power has two types. The first is migration of power exclusively within the various levels of state structures; it is an intra-bureaucratic type of transfer of power. Following the implementation of the politics of decentralization, the locus of power is no longer in Jakarta, but is dispersed to local areas. More than 500 districts and cities, and 34 provinces in the country now enjoy a substantial amount of power to run their local affairs, something that the country had been suffering with for more than 30 years. While Jakarta retains strategic power related to defense, foreign policy, fiscal and monetary policy, religion, and legal affairs. At the local level, power is shifted horizontally from old centers to newly created political space – new *propinsi*, *kabupaten* and *kota*. The creation of a new local government entity, known as *pemekaran wilayah* (or re-districting in American terms) during the last 15 years or so has served as a new political space as well as new political locus of power in local areas (Surya, 2006; Suaib, 2006; Djohermansyah, 2006; Ratnawati & Djaweng, 2005; Ratnawati, 2007; Hanif & Catur, 2007; Santoso & Lay, 2007; Santoso & Mas'udi, 2008; Pratikno, 2008). Since the very beginning of *Reformasi*, more and more previously remote political areas of the local periphery gain power.

Secondly, power has also moved away from bureaucracy to non-state political actors. The long concentration and centralization of power in the hands of state bureaucracy, including the military has ended. Power is now distributed

to political parties, politicians, markets as well as business communities and organized civil society who are new local political players. Moreover, power is also in the hands of the pre-modern structure of community, a structure that is based on consensual authority rather than law as known in the concept of modern-state. This "traditional" structure is recognized as the role of stake-holders in managing politics and power which used to be monopolized by the state. This shift, together with the decentralization processes, brings about local democracy both as a value system and a process into the core of the discussion, even among layman (Lay, 2012). Apart from democratic argument, the shift of power from state to non-state actors has its academic ground on the concept of (good) governance.

Apart from studies that revealed the superiority of old institutions over modern ones as discussed above, some important studies are showing that both traditional and modern institutions are not always in a competing situation. They in fact, have worked together to serve their own interests through a kind of "hybrid institution and practices". Samuel and Nordholt argued that power structure in Indonesia has been characterized by the working of formal institutional mechanisms together with various types of informal networkings. As in the case of Thailand and India, both have seen that the political domain and the formal economy have always been connected to illegal economic activities and criminality where bureaucracy, politicians, military people, police and criminals have built a kind of mutual relationship (Lay, 2012). Consequently, there is no clear cut difference in character of these actors based on their profession. Furthermore, they argued that the type of democracy built is a kind of disjunctive democracy characterised by democratic electoral process together with political violence and criminalization of political institutions and the state. As in the case of the Philippines, the persistence of the problems of law enforcement, corruption, and organised crime have paved the way for a local strongman to take charge and the increased use of violence against the lower class.

The latest point has been a study by Armuji (2004). His study spells out the rise of *Jawara*, a local organised criminal society that has a very long history in the city of Cilegon, in the province of Banten, as a new coercive force in the face of declining state legitimacy in the local area and economic crisis. This study reveals that the *Jawara* have taken over the coercive roles of the New Order's military function during the early period of *reformasi* before the local state of Cilegon retained its role once again. A broader study by Hidayat (2007) across the whole area of Banten said that *Jawara* had transformed itself into a kind of local shadow state, undermining the function of the local state. *Jawara*, due its ability and monopoly over coercive force, is in fact the most significant political force in the decision making process in Banten province, including in budget allocation for projects.

The strong tendency to use violent force in political processes makes Indonesianists like Hefner (2005) see the future of Indonesian democracy through a pessimistic lens. According to him, community as well as social associations within local Indonesia are not only non democratic in nature, but also have a strong tendency to sectarianism. This kind of society is far from being a democratic one.

Another important political development in Indonesia during the more than 15 years since *reformasi* has been political liberalization. There has been significant political liberalization, such as the release of most of the political prisoners held at the beginning of reform, toleration of opposition, less censorship of the press, and greater space for autonomous organization of the working class and other social groups to voice their views publicly. It is also true that suppression and strictly regulated participation, which were the rules of the game under Soeharto's regime are over. Greater democratic space for the people to participate and express their views and opinions is guaranteed. Moreover, more access and chances are given for demonstrations as more politically active citizens enter into the public arena (Lay, 2010). Minority groups, especially Indonesians of Chinese descent, that used to be on the sideline of politics are now entering politics, even at

the very local level. Some of them are now enjoying their new political status as *bupati*, head of district, mayor or even governor, as demonstrated clearly from the case of current governor of Jakarta, while others are posted as members of parliament both at national and local levels. Some have even become part of national politics as ministers. Even the political prisoners of the past and their relatives that used to be banned from politics during New Order period are enjoying the same chances and access to public and political positions. Their rights to elect and be elected are now guaranteed by law.

However, since the very beginning, a substantial number of scholars are aware that it is possible for political liberalization to take place either in a democratic regime or in an authoritarian one, and that political liberalization, though an important step toward democratization is not a guarantee. Political liberalization is a prerequisite for democracy, but there is a need for both structural and constitutional changes in order to enter into the world of consolidated democracy. For many scholars, therefore, the fall of Soeharto does not necessarily pave the way for democracy to take place. It is still an up-hill struggle (Tornquist, 1998; Linz & Stepan, 1998).

Despite all the aforementioned development, as past experiences of 1950s demonstrated, the massive installment of modern democratic institutions, the massive dispersion of power, and political liberalization, assumed to be the pre-conditions for an effective democratic governance to take place, there is still a failure to meet public expectation. For most researchers, 15 years of re-democratization has been understood as a kind of chaotic-involution at both implementation and ideas levels. This, the argument goes, provides the reasons for the syndrome of dead-locked democracy to take place, failure to establish effective democratic governance which is capable enough in producing and delivering political goods (Wanandi, 2002; Emmerson, 2001).

Most of the researchers have suggested that a decade of Indonesian re-democratization has demonstrated paradox results. On one hand,

the massive installation of modern democratic institutions has reached its saturation point, on the other, the process of democratic consolidation is in its early stages. It is also true that the massive dispersion of power throughout the nation and the process of decentralization has multiplied the political agencies and locus of power in the country, but political representation remains a core problem. Finally, despite the political liberalization which has been enjoyed by most Indonesians, political engagement, control, and access to demonstrations by the public remain problematic.

The latest research and publications on contemporary Indonesian politics reveal the above paradoxes. A national survey conducted by Demos demonstrates the phenomenon of deficit democracy in the midst of massive installation of modern democratic institutions (Priyono, 2008; see also Lay, 2012). Latest research-based publication by Demos, while urging for the building of a political block as an alternative to face the current tendency, re-confirms the persistence of the problem of representation within which the old oligarchy forces remain the central player in mediating demonstrations and public affairs (Samadhi & Warouw, 2009). This oligarchy power not only survives during the democratic era, but also through democratic mechanisms and means. Robison and Hadiz have spoken about the phenomenon of hijacking the process of *reformasi* by old political forces (Robison & Hadiz, 2004). They argued that institutional redesigning through a neo-liberal scheme has not paved a better way for demonstrations to have better access to public affairs. On the contrary, this new political and power structure has functioned more for oligarchy powers of the past to remain at the center of Indonesian politics. *Reformasi*, therefore, failed to create democratic space for the birth of new a political institution and power structure in favor of democratic order; it also failed to consolidate new democratic forces. It, tragically, has ended up as a process of consolidation of old political power, tragically leading to a hijacking of democracy.

In the broader picture, a study by Norholdt (2004) has come to the conclusion about the

continuation of the old political practices in today's Indonesia. A practice that is deeply rooted in the past. Norholdt says that the reform era is marked by "*strong continuities of patrimonial patterns*" or, to put into Harris, Stokke dan Turnquist (2004) words, "*changing countinuites*". This patronage type of political practice has frequently reappeared in different kinds of symbolic manner but with the same essence in phases of Indonesian political development.

So it is not surprising to see that despite some positive outcomes of decentralization, such as restoring the sense of ownership to people of the outer islands, allowing a new middle class to emerge at local areas that contribute to hold the nation together (van Klinken, 2014), allowing many best practices to emerge, and democratizing national leadership, many people including scholars are still skeptical about this policy (Sulistiyanto dan Erb, 2009). The simple fact is that decentralisation has ended up with widespread of corruption in local areas, violent conflict (Tamagola, 2006; Klinken, 2007; Hadi & Widjajanto, 2007) and repression of local communities which is more than enough for researchers to doubt the very notion of decentralisation.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion so far suggested that the Bandung Conference of 1955 was crucial to the momentum for the massive production of new political spaces at both the global and the individual nation state where demonstrations as politically active citizens can claim and exercise their citizenship rights. However, as demonstrated throughout the Indonesian case, the production of democracy-related knowledge and practices have been dictated by the neo-liberal line of thinking, ending with a very disappointing results.

It is a very much a phenomenon of the countries of the Southern Hemisphere that have been colonized long enough by the powerful idea of liberal democracy. It is about time for people of Asia and Africa to engage in the production of democratic discourse and its practices alike. It is about time for people of the Global South to move from their passive

position as merely the consumer of democratic discourse and practices dictated by the liberal thinking to be an active force in producing and delivering a more substantive democracy within which people can have control over public affairs based on political equality. In this respect, the spirit of Bandung Conference will find its new relevance. It provides the basis for intellectuals of the Southern Hemisphere to work hand in hand in producing and disseminating a more suitable and contextual model of democratic thinking and practices, without jeopardizing the basic principles of democracy.

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