

The War of the Pen and the Soekarnoism Support Body in the Visualization of Caricatures by Merdeka

Anggoro Prasetyo^{1*}, Agus Setiawan²

^{1,2}Study Program of History, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

*correspondence email : anggoro.prasetyo38@gmail.com

Received 11 June 2024; Received in revised form 20 Juli 2024; Accepted 14 September 2025

Abstrak

Artikel ini akan menjelaskan karikatur-karikatur yang dibuat oleh *Merdeka* sebagai respons terhadap perang pena yang terjadi antara *Merdeka* sebagai aktor utama bersama dengan berbagai surat kabar lain yang berpihak pada BPS (Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme). Dalam hal ini, penulis menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah yang bertumpu pada berbagai sumber, seperti surat kabar, majalah, buku, artikel jurnal, dan sumber-sumber terbitan lainnya. Kekacauan pada tahun-tahun yang menjadi sasaran penelitian mendorong para jurnalis untuk segera mencari alternatif lain hingga akhirnya mereka sepakat mendirikan Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme. Selain itu, tokoh-tokoh yang menjadi objek dalam karikatur *Merdeka* tampak janggal, khususnya dari segi anatomi. Namun demikian, *Merdeka* seharusnya tetap memperhatikan koridor penyampaian yang santun serta menghindari hal-hal yang justru dapat mengurangi, bahkan menghilangkan, bobot dari karikatur itu sendiri

Kata kunci: merdeka, badan pendukung soekarnoisme, demokrasi terpimpin.

Abstract

This article will explain the caricatures made by Merdeka as a response to the pen war that occurred between Merdeka as the main actor along with various other newspapers that sided with BPS (Soekarnoism Supporting Agency). In this case, the author will use historical research methods that rely on various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, books, journal articles, and published sources. The chaos in the years that was the target of the research made journalists aware to immediately look for other alternatives until they agreed to establish the Soekarnoism Support Agency. Apart from that, the characters that are the objects in Merdeka's caricatures seem odd, especially in terms of anatomy. However, Merdeka should still pay attention to the corridors of polite delivery and avoid things that could actually reduce or even eliminate the weight of the caricature.

Keywords: merdeka, soekarnoism supporting body, guided democracy.

INTRODUCTION

The *Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme* (BPS, or Soekarnoism Support Body) was a significant phenomenon in Indonesia's press and political history during the 1960s. Its establishment on 1 September 1964 in Jakarta was closely tied to the climax of the so-called "war of the pen" (*perang pena*) a polemic between newspapers such as *Merdeka* and *Harian Rakjat*, the official organ of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). This

debate revolved around issues including the simplification of political parties, unilateral actions, the Manipol-Usdek doctrine, and the broader ideological struggles of Guided Democracy.

BPS brought together a coalition of anti-communist newspapers *Warta Berita*, *Garuda*, *Revolusioner*, *Berita Republik*, *Karjawan*, *Pelopop*, *Semesta*, *Berita Indonesia*, *Sinar Harapan*, and *Duta Masyarakat*, later joined by *Selecta*, *Ragi Buana*, *Mimbar Indonesia*, *Antara*, as well

as state media such as TVRI and RRI. Beyond the press, it also gained support from ministries, the National Front, the police, the military, and organizations such as HMI and SOKSI. *Merdeka* itself, under the leadership of figures like B.M. Diah, played a central role, with staff such as Asnawi Idris, Hiswara Darmaputra, and the young Harmoko actively participating.

Harmoko's career within *Merdeka* reflects the complex intersections between journalism, caricature, and politics during this era. Starting as a proofreader, he advanced to graphic designer, journalist, and political cartoonist. His caricatures, often sharp and satirical, targeted *Harian Rakjat* and the PKI, aligning with *Merdeka*'s editorial stance. Together with colleagues, he engaged not only in written debates but also in pamphlet wars and even street-level propaganda campaigns, highlighting how journalism extended beyond print into public political performance.

The ideological struggle between BPS and pro-communist media also illustrates the contestation over Pancasila, Nasakom (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism), and the trajectory of Indonesia's revolution. Writers such as Sajuti Melik contributed serialized essays *Beladjar Memahami Soekarnoisme* to shape public interpretation of Soekarno's ideas, while *Harian Rakjat* accused opponents of distorting official doctrine. The debates escalated from press

polemics to mass mobilization, pamphleteering, and caricature wars that polarized urban society.

Although the government eventually dissolved BPS, leading to the closure or suppression of its affiliated newspapers, the episode remains historically important. It highlights the role of the press as both a cultural and political actor, shaping public opinion while reflecting the broader dynamics of Guided Democracy. In particular, caricature functioned not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a vehicle of propaganda, critique, and ideological contestation.



Figure 1. Clippings from *Merdeka* on the dissolution of BPS and the government's decision as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Highest Operations Command to freeze the Murba Party. (Source: *Merdeka*, January 7, 1965 & December 18, 1964)

This study, entitled *Ambition and Calling: The War of the Pen and the Soekarnoism Support Body in Merdeka's Caricatures*, seeks to analyze how *Merdeka* responded to these polemics through visual satire. It focuses on three central questions: the condition of the

press under Guided Democracy in the 1960s, the strategies employed by *Merdeka* in visualizing its critiques of BPS, and the broader consequences of such interventions for Indonesian political culture. By situating caricature within both historical and political contexts, this research underscores its dual role as a mirror of contemporary society and as an active instrument of ideological struggle.

METHODS

The method employed in this research is the historical method, which consists of four stages: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. In the first stage, the researcher collected contemporary and relevant sources related to the topic from several institutions, including the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, LP3ES, the Central Library of the University of Indonesia, the Freedom Institute Library, Kompas Research and Development Center, the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as private collections, and through online platforms such as JSTOR for accessing journal articles. After gathering the sources, the second stage criticism was carried out to evaluate the credibility of the sources through cross-examination and comparison. In the final stage, historiography, the analyzed facts were synthesized into a coherent and reliable narrative while maintaining historical

substance and context. Additionally, semiotic methods and techniques were employed as an analytical framework to interpret the messages conveyed by *Merdeka* through its caricature visualizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Guided Press

The Presidential Decree emerged as both a legal consideration and a breakthrough that granted the government greater authority. However, this decree also marked a turning point that ushered the press into a dark and repressive era. This was visualized through a series of ordinances, particularly regarding permits for paper distribution and publishing licenses. Sukarno's speech, "*The Rediscovery of Our Revolution*", was popularized by the government as the political slogan *Manipol/Usdek*, an acronym that served as the brand and ideological marker of state philosophy. The press was compelled to publish the speech in fifteen serialized installments, from 12 December 1960 to 18 January 1961, with the stated purpose of enlightening the public (Smith, 1983). The acronym itself became the principal reference point that dictated and distorted freedom of expression and creativity. Its proponents interpreted it as a form of *Manifest Destiny*, while critics regarded it as a *Manifold Irony* (Smith, 1983). Other presidential speeches were

not only broadcast through state propaganda but also quoted and reproduced as front-page news in national newspapers (Suwirta, 2008).

Continuous shortages of foreign exchange meant that the supply of newsprint was inadequate, so most dailies were reduced to only four pages measuring 45 × 60 cm, divided into eight or nine columns (Lee, 1971). Permission to expand to eight pages was granted only on special occasions, such as independence celebrations or ceremonial events (Lee, 1971).



Figure 2. *Suara Islam*, led by Jahja Ubeid with military support under Nasution's orders, published a caricature titled *Two Dances in One Rhythm*, equating G30S and Malaysia as both spreading discord and causing loss of life.

(Source: *Suara Islam*, 1965)

At the same time, newspapers and magazines were required to comply with the nineteen articles of the Peperti (Supreme War Authority) Regulation No. 10/1960 in order to obtain publishing licenses, effectively enforcing absolute submission to the government. Some newspapers, such as *Abadi* and *Nusantara*, chose to shut down, while others, such as

Surabaya Post and *Suluh Indonesia*, accepted the restrictions, which they considered a form of "orderly regulation" (Lubis, 1978). These differing responses escalated tensions, eventually drawing international attention through the International Press Institute (IPI) and its reports, particularly concerning *Pedoman* and *Indonesia Raya*.

Mochtar Lubis, editor of *Indonesia Raya*, was imprisoned upon his return to Indonesia on 14 July 1961 after daring to expose government repression of the press at an international conference in Tel Aviv on 20 May 1961, an event chaired by *The Economist* in London (Lubis, 1987; Smith, 1983). While imprisoned, Mochtar Lubis wrote and published the social critique novel *Twilight in Djakarta* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1964) (Smith, 1983). Beginning in 1963, other *Indonesia Raya* journalists, such as Sam Soeharto, were also detained, even though the charges were unrelated to the newspaper itself, except for the fact that he was recognized as a former cartoonist of *Indonesia Raya* (Surjomihardjo et al., 2002). Meanwhile, some journalists continued their careers after the government shut down *Indonesia Raya*: Kartaningtyas Sidharta became a commentator at Radio Republik Indonesia in Jakarta, while Liem Seng Tee became a reporter for the economic and trade bulletin *Business News* (Surjomihardjo et al., 2002). By the mid-1960s, Mochtar, along with Rosihan Anwar, contributed to

Mahasiswa Indonesia while also smuggling his writings into *Kompas* and *Sinar Harapan*, as well as playing an active role in the militant student daily *Harian Kami*. Cultural and literary magazines such as *Mimbar Indonesia* continued to attract public attention for their independent character, alongside other publications such as *Bintang Merah*, *Siasat*, *Mutiara*, *Basis*, *Konfrontasi*, *Zaman Baru*, and *Duta Suasana*, as well as later 1960s journals such as *Pandji Masyarakat*, *Sastra*, and *Gema Islam*. These platforms offered artists, writers, intellectuals, and translators the opportunity to express ideas and develop cultural discourse without immediate fear of state interference. *Mimbar Indonesia* was cosmopolitan in nature, publishing reports, essays, dialogues, letters, and visual works such as cartoons, advertisements, paintings, sketches, and especially photographs. It also focused heavily on the development of Indonesian music. Together with *Zenith*, its monthly cultural supplement, the magazine also received translations from Dutch newspapers through Sticusa (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking), curated by Hans Bague Jassin. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Press Photo Service (Ipphos), the nation's first photo agency, regularly supplied images to *Mimbar Indonesia*, while its own illustrated magazine, *Ipphos Report*, continued to appear despite difficulties similar to those faced by other cultural

journals of the late 1950s and early 1960s (Liem & Lindsay, 2011).

Not all journals survived. *Pedoman*, affiliated with the Socialist Party of Indonesia, was banned along with all its supplements *Pedoman Minggu*, *Pedoman Wanita*, *Pedoman Anak*, and *Pedoman Sport*. Similarly, *Konfrontasi*, a cultural journal, was forced to cease publication in its double issue No. 36/7 (May/August 1960) after two years of delays in securing printing permits and paper supplies (Foulcher, 2012). In earlier editions (No. 34, Jan-Feb 1960), the journal had already been delayed due to technical issues (Foulcher, 2012). Rosihan Anwar, editor of *Pedoman*, continued to write under various pseudonyms in journals such as *Gema Islam* (Al-Bahist), *Pembina* (Mualiq, Muballigh, Muwahid), *Aman Makmur* (Muttaqaid), and *Muara* (Abu Luthfi). Together with Soedjatmoko, Onghokham, and Soe Hok Gie, he engaged in study clubs led by Maruli Silitonga, a former State Secretariat employee and head of the Socialist Student Movement (Widyanto, 2023; Anwar, 2010). These regular discussions, often held at the residence of Margono Djojohadikoesoemo in Matraman, East Jakarta, involved figures such as Petrus Kanisius Ojong, Zainal Zakse, and Frans Peransi (Widyanto, 2023; Anwar, 2010; Said, 1992). At Soe Hok Gie's invitation, Soedjatmoko also gave public lectures on the role of intellectuals and their failure

to address pressing national problems (Widyanto, 2023).

Why did they discuss modernization? Because they were deeply concerned about the nation's future. They sought to formulate concepts for the post-Sukarno era, believing that, despite his dominance and support from the PKI, NU, and PNI under Guided Democracy, Sukarno's political order would eventually collapse. Thus, they prepared themselves for the changes to come. Modernization, as they saw it, was a total process encompassing not only economics but also social, cultural, and political transformation. They debated works such as Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* and Albert Hirschman's *The Strategy of Economic Development*. Barbara Ward's definition of modernization particularly resonated with them: "The purpose of modernization is to raise the people's standard of living and give them hope for a better life" (Anwar, 2010).

The participants immersed themselves in newly circulating literature in Indonesia, including works by Barbara Ward, Daniel Lerner, Eric Hoffer, Walt Whitman Rostow, and Clifford Geertz's *Agricultural Involution*. Meanwhile, economist Soemitro Djojohadikoesoemo, moving across Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Zurich, and London, coordinated the underground *Gerakan Pembaruan* (Renewal Movement), a

clandestine anti-government network involving Soe Hok Gie, Henk Tombakan, Jopie Lasut, Charlie Luntungan, Soeripto, Medan Sirait, and Boelie Cornelis Londa (Sutrisno et al., 2009; Tempo, 2022; Hill, 2011).

Repression extended further. Charles Tambu, a Sri Lankan-descended diplomat-journalist, published the final issue of the *Times of Indonesia* on 31 October 1960. The government curtailed paper supplies for *Pandji Masjarakat* before banning it outright on 17 August 1960, following the publication of Mohammad Hatta's essay "Our Democracy" on 1 May 1960 under Buya Hamka's editorship (Historia, 2018). Hatta was subsequently denied a passport to attend the *Conference on Economic Cooperation and Partnership* in Salzburg, Germany (Noer, 1990). By 1963, approximately 800 journalists had lost their jobs as dozens of publications were shut down (Smith, 1983). The government simultaneously intensified campaigns urging journalists to align with Manipol and established supervisory bodies for press control (Smith, 1983).

PIA (Persbiro Indonesia) incorporated Peperti regulations into its editorial guidelines under the instructions of Mohamad Nahar on 20 October 1960 (Lubis, 1978). PIA later merged with APB (Asian Press Board, formerly Arabian Press Board) and INPS (Indonesian National Press and Publicity Service) into *Antara* under

Presidential Decree No. 307/1962, centralizing state control. This merger resolved internal disputes within *Antara* but led to the resignation of Asad Shahab, founder of the Arabian Press Board, who went on to establish *Pembina*, a weekly magazine. Other publications such as *Intisari* and *Semesta* emerged under similar circumstances, supported by PT Kinta, which also backed *Suluh Indonesia*, *Sinar Harapan*, and *Berita Yudha* (Lee, 1971). Meanwhile, cultural magazines such as *Sastra* managed to survive confrontations with Lekra until 1964, when it was closed down alongside the banning of *Manifes Kebudayaan*, a movement advocating independent artistic creation (*l'art pour l'art*).

The repression also extended into student publications. Many campus magazines were forced to cease operations due to political and economic pressure. Still, some survived, such as *Mahajaya* (1961) in Jakarta, and *Pembina* (1960), *Berita-berita ITB* (1961), and *Gelora Teknologi* (1964) in Bandung (Siregar, 1983). The Indonesian Student Press Association (IPMI) resisted by refusing to adopt Manipol into its organizational statutes. Such resistance epitomized the growing mantra: “*politics as the commander*.”

The absence of a free and critical press caused an involution of ideas and perspectives in the 1960s (Suwirta, 2008). Newspapers devoted much of their space

to ideological rhetoric, repetitive slogans, and government statements rather than realistic policy analysis (Suwirta, 2008). For those capable of reading between the lines, this void became a source of deep concern, eventually culminating in the establishment of BPS (*Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme*), whose founding ideas were drawn from Sajuti Melik's writings.

Newspapers during this era affiliated with political parties within the nationalist, religious, or communist camps (Surjomihardjo et al., 1986). This alignment was further institutionalized by Ministerial Decree No. 29/SK/M/65 of 26 March 1965, which required all newspapers and periodicals to affiliate officially with political parties or mass organizations, with a three-month deadline for compliance (Said, 1987). As a result, eighty newspapers and magazines came under the umbrella of nine political parties and organizations. Muhammadiyah published *Mertjusuar*, while Sarbumusi (Sarekat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia) issued *Duta Revolusi*. *Pembina* affiliated itself with the Armed Forces Information Service, under the protection of Brigadier General Sugandhi. Meanwhile, the Catholic Party sponsored *Kompas*, founded by Jakob Oetama and Petrus Kanisius Ojong, as part of the broader trend of parties seeking their own newspapers (Parera, 1985). Military leaders also backed papers such as *Suara Islam*,

involving figures like Subchan Z.E. and Arudji Kartawinata (Nasution, 1989).

After the events of 30 September 1965, *Pepelrada Jakarta Raya* issued a ban on all newspapers, including *Kompas*, though some such as *Angkatan Bersendjata*, *Berita Yudha*, *Pelopor*, *Duta Masjarakat*, *Nusa Putra*, *Indonesian Herald*, and *Djakarta Daily Mail* were eventually allowed to resume publication (*Kompas*, 1965). Women's and organizational journals also proliferated, including *Suara Perwari*, *Wanita Sadar*, *Suara Wanita*, *Mekar*, *Wanita Indonesia*, *Saraswati*, and *Wanita Persahi*, serving primarily to guide and consolidate their respective memberships (Sidharta, 1981). Newspapers in the regions were required to adopt names identical to their party organs in Jakarta (Serikat Penerbit Surat Kabar, 1971). This forced polarization inevitably escalated into polemics and a war of words between pro-communist newspapers and their opponents.

Caricature Visualizations of the Soekarnoism Support Body by *Merdeka*

In the political press of the 1960s, caricature occupied a position of significant importance, equal to that of news reports, editorials, and campaign advertisements. Far from being merely humorous illustrations, caricatures functioned as sharp weapons of political communication, condensing critique, commentary, and ideological positioning

into single images that could be immediately grasped by readers. The craft of the caricaturist combined intellectual acuity, technical skill, psychological insight, and a keen sensitivity to topical issues. Unlike posters or photographs, which often relied on explicit textual framing, caricatures derived their power from visual symbolism and exaggeration, enabling them to critique individuals or groups without directly naming them. In this sense, caricature represented a form of coded yet accessible political discourse, simultaneously entertaining and polemical.

Drawing from earlier traditions of press polemics, *Merdeka* utilized caricature as a central medium in its ongoing war of words with *Harian Rakjat*, the Communist Party's newspaper. This "war of the pen" was not limited to verbal sparring in articles or editorials; it extended into the visual realm, where the power of symbolism amplified political antagonisms. *Merdeka* routinely portrayed *Harian Rakjat* through metaphors of animals, puppets, or grotesque bodies figures that conveyed cowardice, duplicity, and absurdity. For example, one caricature (10 November 1964) depicted a deformed figure labeled a "yellow paper" (*koran kuning*), with three left arms pointing accusatorily, inscribed with the words "slander," "accuse," and "distort," while another hand clutched a scroll marked "stubborn." Its two feet bore the

words “inconsistent” and “flip-flop.” Through this imagery, *Merdeka* suggested that its opponents trafficked in sensationalism, lies, and relentless attacks divorced from factual reality.



Figure 3. This caricature depicts the pen war, showing the “Progressive National Press” with the “Tavip” pen against the “Yellow Press (Koku)” filled with slander and hypocrisy.

(Source: *Merdeka*, November 11, 1964)

Another striking caricature (11 November 1964) intensified this allegory. Here, a calm and smiling figure his body drawn in the shape of a newspaper titled *Progressive Left National Press* confronts a bizarre beast named *Koku* (*Koran Kuning*). The beast, part-human and part-animal, accuses its rival with the cry “Yellow!” while simultaneously typing out slanderous accusations such as “slander, accuse, obstruct, insult.” Books titled “*Obstruction*” and “*Divide and Rule*” lie beside its typewriter, underscoring its manipulative agenda. The caption “*Yellow Accuses Yellow*” exposed the hypocrisy of these attacks, turning the weapon of accusation back upon the accuser. In this way, *Merdeka* visually delegitimized its

rival’s authority, framing it as both morally bankrupt and politically absurd.

Caricatures also served to elevate the mission of *Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme* (BPS), the organization founded to rally support for Sukarno’s political vision. In one powerful illustration (16 December 1964), a heroic figure dressed as a “true Manipolist and Pancasilaist” decapitates a snake labeled “counter-revolution” while simultaneously spearing a crocodile inscribed “neocolonial, subversive, hypocrite.” The figure stands firmly aboard a boat emblazoned with the letters *B.P.S.*, symbolizing the organization as a vessel of revolutionary struggle. This visual narrative encapsulated BPS’s claim to be the vanguard of the revolution, actively combating both internal counter-revolutionary elements and external neocolonial threats.

Equally significant were caricatures that depicted BPS’s grassroots mobilization. One image (17 December 1964) portrays three men in white clothing energetically scrawling slogans across urban walls: “*BPS, Tool of the Revolution*,” “*Long Live BPS*,” “*Advance BPS!*” and “*BPS Helps Crush Malaysia*.” Opposite them, a figure dressed entirely in black has just underlined the phrase “*Disband BPS*,” symbolizing the opposition. By juxtaposing these images within a single frame, the caricature dramatized the ideological confrontation

taking place not only in newspapers but also in the very streets of Jakarta particularly in Jatinegara, Senen, and Kota. Here, caricature functioned as a mirror of lived propaganda, capturing the immediacy of pamphlet wars and graffiti battles that animated the city's public spaces.

Taken together, these caricatures reveal *Merdeka's* dual strategy: on the one hand, delegitimizing opponents such as *Harian Rakjat* by associating them with deceit, hypocrisy, and counter-revolution; on the other, glorifying BPS as the militant and authentic defender of Sukarno's revolutionary ideals. Animal metaphors, grotesque distortions, and symbolic contrasts between light and darkness (white versus black clothing) reinforced the moral dichotomy between revolutionary virtue and reactionary vice. Such imagery not only entertained readers but also mobilized them, shaping public consciousness in alignment with the ideological mission of Guided Democracy.

Ultimately, *Merdeka's* use of caricature underscores the press's role as a battlefield of symbols during the volatile mid-1960s. By transforming political debates into visual allegories, *Merdeka* sought to sharpen public perception, encourage critical scrutiny of manipulative narratives, and consolidate mass support for the revolutionary project embodied in Sukarnoism and institutionalized through BPS.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion presented above, several conclusions can be drawn. Since the issuance of the Presidential Decree, the nation entered a new chapter marked by darkness, restriction, and repression. The government at that time displayed an ambivalent and inconsistent stance toward the press: on the one hand, it did not tolerate any form of criticism voiced by journalists; on the other, it permitted even endorsed reporting that aligned with and supported government policy, thus reducing the press to an obedient instrument of power. Faced with such an environment, journalists sought various means not only to continue disseminating information to the wider public but also to maintain their freedom to critique the government. Considering the overwhelming strength of their opponents, these journalists eventually agreed to form the *Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme* (BPS).

In principle, the strokes of the pen that gradually shape a caricature tend toward the strange, the grotesque, and the exaggerated, creating impressions and meanings that are inherently deformative. This understanding differs from that of the editorial cartoon, which emphasizes visualization as a narrative device to highlight critical engagement with the context of events. In this respect, caricature served as a complementary element of the newspaper, where

Merdeka frequently highlighted and criticized events not only through written articles but also through visual satire. While some might regard *Merdeka's* caricatures as bold and daring, its manner of depiction was often laden with crudity, vulgarity, and sarcasm, resulting in works that could be judged as lacking in refinement or sophistication.

Reflecting on *Merdeka's* criticisms directed at the Soekarnoism Support Body, the author recognizes that these caricatures sharpened the divisions between opposing factions by emphasizing abnormal features in their targets. This stands in contrast with the caricatures produced in *Merdeka's* confrontations with *Harian Rakjat*, which often left impressions of strangeness, vulgarity, and wordiness. Moreover, *Merdeka's* caricatures could also be perceived as cruel: while they did not depict horror, bloodshed, or explicit intimidation, their imagery nonetheless struck at and undermined the psychological and moral standing of their adversaries. This quality had been particularly evident since 1963, when *Merdeka's* caricatures grew increasingly sharp and merciless.

In other words, while caricature served as a legitimate medium of political critique, *Merdeka* should have remained attentive to and upheld the principles of civility in expression. Failure to do so risked diminishing, if not entirely undermining, the weight and value of

caricature as a meaningful instrument of political communication.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, A. (1975). Anatomy of the Political Cartoon. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 2(4), 273-279.
- Ali, F. dan Novianto, K. (1997). *Politik Komunikasi Harmoko: Dari Rakyat ke Panggung Politik*. Intermedia
- Anwar, R. (2010). *Sejarah Kecil "Petite Historie" Indonesia Jilid 4*. Kompas
- Boesje, M. dan Rudjito SK. (ed.). (1989). *50 Tahun Harmoko: Menatap dengan Mata dan Hati Rakyat*. Pustaka Kartini
- Chaniago, J. R., dkk. (1985). *Ditugaskan Sejarah: Perjuangan Merdeka 1945-1985*. PT Merdeka Sarana Usaha
- Dinuth, A. (2019). Kartun sebagai Cermin Intelektualitas. *Prisma*, 38(1), 76-82
- Duta Revolusi. (1965, Oktober 9). *Peristiwa Madiun terulang di ibukota*. Duta Revolusi
- Foulcher, K. (2012). Bringing the world back home: Cultural traffic in Konfrontasi, 1954-1960. dalam Jennifer Lindsay dan Maya Hian Ting Liem (eds.), *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965* (31-56). Brill.
- Hill, D. (2011). *Jurnalisme dan Politik di Indonesia : Biografi Kritis Mochtar Lubis*. Jakarta : Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia
- Irsyam, T. W., dkk. (ed.). (2005). *Sketsa Perjalanan Bangsa Berdemokrasi*. Departemen Komunikasi dan Informatika
- Kemnitz, T. M. (1973). The Cartoon as a Historical Source. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 4(1), 81-93
- Kompas. (1965, Oktober 7). *SUDAH BOLEH TERBIT*. Kompas
- Lindsay, J. dan Liem M. H. T. (eds.). (2011). *Ahli Waris Budaya Dunia : Menjadi Indonesia 1950-1965*. KITLV Press
- Lee, O. H. (1971). *Indonesian Government and Press during Guided Democracy Era*. Inter Documentation Company

- Lubis, M. (1978). Etos Pers Indonesia. *Prisma* 11, 31-39
- Lubis, M. (1987). *Catatan Subversif*. Jakarta : Yayasan Obor Indonesia dan PT Penerbit Gramedia
- Merdeka. (1963, Oktober 1). *Sedjenak mengintip dapur „Merdeka”*. Merdeka
- Merdeka. (1964, November 10). *R.I. Siapkan Djawaban Terhadap Tuduhan Kuala Lumpur Di D.K. P.B.B. Merdeka*
- Merdeka. (1964, November 11). *Presiden Sukarno Peringati Tengku : 50 Negara KTT Non- Blok & Seluruh NEFOS Menentang “MALAYSIA”*. Merdeka
- Merdeka. (1964, Desember 16). *Wkl. PM II Dr. J. Leimena Peringatkan : D jangan Main² Dengan Harga Barang² Kebutuhan Rakjat*. Merdeka
- Merdeka. (1964, Desember 17). *Penimbunan Gula Pasir Mungkin Dilakukan Alat² Subversif*. Merdeka
- Merdeka. (1964, Desember 18). *KOTI Bubarkan „Badan Pendukung Soekarno- Isme”*. Merdeka
- Merdeka. (1965, Januari 7). *Keputusan Presiden- Panglima Tertinggi ABRI-KOTI: Kegiatan² Partai MURBA Dilarang Untuk Sementara*. Merdeka
- Nasution, A.H. (1989). *Memenuhi Panggilan Tugas : Kenangan Masa Orde Lama*. CV Haji Masagung
- Njoto. (1965). *“BPS” Aksi Reaksi*. PT Dian Rakjat
- Noer, D. (1991). *Mohammad Hatta : Biografi Politik*. LP3ES
- Notonegoro, S. I. (1977). *Sejarah Pers Indonesia*. Dewan Pers
- Pandoe, M. D. (2001). *A Nan Takana (Apa yang Teringat): Memoar Seorang Wartawan*. Penerbit Buku Kompas
- Parera, F. M. (1985). Menegakkan Keadilan Sosial: Visi dan Pengalaman P.K. Ojong. *Prisma* 7, 72-88
- Pauker, G. J. (1965). Indonesia in 1964: Toward a “People’s Democracy”? *Asian Survey*, 5(2), 88-97.
- Reeve, D. (2013). *Golkar : Sejarah yang Hilang, Akar Pemikiran, dan Dinamika*. Komunitas Bambu
- Said, T. (1987). *Sejarah Pers Nasional dan Pembangunan Pers Pancasila*. Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia
- Said, T. (1992). *H. Rosihan Anwar: Wartawan dengan Aneka Citra*. Kompas
- Sidharta, M. M. (1981). *Majalah Wanita : Antara Harapan dan Kenyataan*. *Prisma* 8, 73-80
- Serikat Penerbit Surat Kabar. (1971). *Garis Besar Perkembangan Pers Indonesia*. Serikat Penerbit Surat Kabar.
- Siregar, A. E. (1983). *Pers Mahasiswa Indonesia : Patah Tumbuh Hilang Berganti*. PT Karya Unipress
- Smith, E. (1983). *Sejarah Pemberedelan Pers di Indonesia*. Grafiti Pers
- Suara Islam. (1965, November 16). *Instruksi Menko Hankam/ KASAB Djenderal A. H. Nasution : UNTUK MELAKSANAKAN Penertiban dan pembersihan dalam tubuh ABRI*. Suara Islam
- Sudarta, G.M. (2019). Mengolah Kritik dengan Menghaluskan Kartun. *Prisma*, 38(1), 53-8
- Surjomihardjo, A., dkk. (1986). *Demokrasi dan Proses Politik*. LP3ES
- Surjomihardjo, A., dkk. (ed.). (2002). *Beberapa Segi Perkembangan Sejarah Pers di Indonesia*. Penerbit Buku Kompas
- Suwirta, A. (2008). *Dinamika Kehidupan Pers di Indonesia pada Tahun 1950-1965 : Antara Kebebasan dan Tanggung Jawab Nasional*. *Sosiohumanika*, 1(2), 261-94.
- Sutrisno, L. B. dkk. (ed). 2017. *Soe Hok-gie*. Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia
- Tempo. (2022). *Gie dan Surat- surat yang Tersembunyi*. Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia
- Tim Majalah Historia. (2018). *Hamka: Ulama Serba Bisa dalam Sejarah Indonesia*. Kompas Media Nusantara
- Widyanto, U. (2023). Jurnalisme Makna di dalam Siasat dan Konfrontasi. *Prisma*, 42(1), 3-13