

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 13, Number 1, 2006



COMMUNISM DEBATED AGAIN:
THE MUSLIM RESPONSE TO THE IDEA OF REVOKING THE 1966
ANTI-COMMUNISM IN POST-SOEHARTO INDONESIA

Ahmad Suhelmi

KERAJAAN-ORIENTED ISLAM:
THE EXPERIENCE OF PRE-COLONIAL INDONESIA

Jajat Burhanudin

THE REVITALIZATION OF ISLAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
THE CASES OF DARUL ARQAM AND JEMAAT TABLIGH

Alexander Horstmann

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies

Vol. 13, no. 1, 2006

EDITORIAL BOARD:

M. Quraish Shihab (UIN Jakarta)

Taufik Abdullah (LIPI Jakarta)

Nur A. Fadhil Lubis (IAIN Sumatra Utara)

M.C. Ricklefs (Melbourne University)

Martin van Bruinessen (Utrecht University)

John R. Bowen (Washington University, St. Louis)

M. Atho Mudzhar (IAIN Yogyakarta)

M. Kamal Hasan (International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Azyumardi Azra

EDITORS

Saiful Mujani

Jamhari

Jajat Burhanuddin

Fu'ad Jabali

Oman Fathurahman

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITORS

Heni Nuroni

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADVISOR

Cheyne Scott

ARABIC LANGUAGE ADVISOR

Masri

COVER DESIGNER

S. Prinka

STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492) is a journal published by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta (STT DEPPEN No. 129/SK/DITJEN/PPG/STT/1976) and sponsored by the Australia-Indonesia Institute (AII). It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular, and South-east Asian Islamic Studies in general, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines.

All articles published do not necessarily represent the views of the journal, or other institutions to which it is affiliated. They are solely the views of the authors. The articles contained in this journal have been refereed by the Board of Editors.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has been accredited by The Ministry of National Education, Republic of Indonesia as an academic journal (SK Dirjen Dikti No. 23a/DIKTI/2004).

Communism Debated Again: The Muslim Response to the Idea of Revoking the 1966 anti-Communism in post-Soeharto Indonesia

Abstraksi: Artikel ini menyuguhkan satu kajian komprehensif tentang sikap dan pandangan sejumlah elit politik Muslim terhadap rencana Abdurrahman Wahid saat menjadi presiden Indonesia (1999-2001) untuk mencabut ketetapan MPRS 1966, No. XXV, yang melarang komunisme hidup di bumi Indonesia. Sejalan dengan semangat keterbukaan di era reformasi, Gus Dur (sebutan akrab Abdurrahman Wahid) berpandangan bahwa ketetapan MPRS tersebut bertentangan dengan hak asasi manusia (HAM).

Dalam konteks Indonesia, kajian tentang isu ini tentu sangat penting. Respon sejumlah elit politik melahirkan kontroversi, yang kemudian membelah elit politik ke dalam dua kelompok utama, yang masing-masing mendukung dan menolak gagasan dan susulan Gus Dur. Lebih dari itu, kontroversi dan konflik tersebut membuat Gus Dur di-impeach, dan akhirnya bahkan harus turun tahta dari kursi kepresidenan. Hal ini berarti menunjukkan bahwa penabutan ketetapan tersebut merupakan hasil akhir pertentangan keras di kalangan elit politik Indonesia setelah jatuhnya rezim Soeharto.

Menyangkut dua kelompok di atas, mereka yang mendukung gagasan Gus Dur jelas berasal dari elit PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa) dan sejumlah tokoh aktiois yang berhaluan kiri. Seperti halnya Gus Dur, elit yang bersikap mendukung berargumen bahwa ketetapan tersebut bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dan keadilan. Alasan lain adalah bahwa ketetapan tersebut merupakan produk historis Indonesia, dan karenanya tidak bisa diberlakukan secara terus-menerus. Di tengah suasana keterbukaan pada masa reformasi, ketetapan tersebut kehilangan signifikansinya. Oleh karena itu, ketetapan tersebut sangat berasalan untuk ditinjau kembali, sehingga dari sana proses rekonsiliasi sosial akibat stigmatisasi komunis—yang telah berlangsung lama dan menjadi perhatian Gus Dur—bisa dilakukan.

Sementara mereka yang menolak usulan Gus Dur di atas lebih beragam, termasuk sejumlah tokoh Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). KH. Hasyim Muza-di, ketua PBNU, adalah salah seorang yang tidak sepenuhnya mendukung Gus Dur. Baginya, pencabutan Tap MPRS bukan kewenangan presiden, tapi MPR. Penolakan lebih tegas diketengahkan tokoh NU lain, KH. Yusuf Hasyim, paman Gus Dur. Dia berpendapat bahwa usulan Gus Dur untuk mencabut ketetapan MPRS sangat tidak beralasan. Berdasarkan pengalamannya sebagai ketua GP Ansor pada 1965—salah satu organisasi under-bow NU yang terlibat dalam gerakan anti-Komunis—dia memberi kesaksian bagaimana PKI, yang mengusung ideologi komunisme, terlibat dalam gerakan yang memakan korban besar di kalangan bangsa Indonesia. Dan Gus Dur tidak mengalami secara langsung peristiwa tersebut, karena saat itu dia tengah belajar di Baghdad, Irak.

Kelompok selanjutnya yang termasuk dalam barisan penentang gagasan Gus Dur adalah mereka yang secara politik berbasis Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB). Dalam hal ini, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, ketua umum PBB, merupakan salah seorang tokoh terdepan yang secara lantang menentang usulan Gus Dur mencabut Tap MPRS tentang komunisme. Bagi Yusril, komunisme sangat bertentangan dengan Islam, secara ideologis dan praktik politik. Karena itu, pencabutan ketetapan MPRS tersebut sangat bertentangan dengan aspirasi umat Islam Indonesia. Lebih lanjut, ketidaksesuaian antara Islam dan komunisme itu pula yang menjadi argumen Amien Rais, tokoh lain dari Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) yang menolak usulan Gus Dur di atas. Seperti halnya Yusril, Amien berpendapat bahwa usulan Gus Dur tersebut tidak hanya menyangkut persoalan politik di MPR, tapi juga masalah akidah Islam (tauhid).

Dengan demikian, kontroversi di sekitar gagasan Gus Dur di atas menunjukkan bahwa masalah komunisme/PKI masih merupakan isu sangat sensitif, bahkan di alam reformasi yang menjunjung tinggi keterbukaan politik. Hal ini terefleksikan dengan jelas dalam kekhawatiran sebagian besar kaum Muslim atas kembalinya komunisme dan PKI seperti pada 1965. Di samping itu, kontroversi tersebut juga bisa dilihat dari sudut pandang politik, yakni sebagai pertentangan antara pihak eksekutif (Presiden) dan legislatif (DPR). Sudut pandang lain untuk menjelaskan kontroversi di atas adalah bahwa kekhawatiran terhadap komunisme bisa dengan mudah dieksploitasi untuk kepentingan elit politik tertentu: bagi mereka yang mendukung Gus Dur, isu ini digunakan untuk menarik simpati dan dukungan politik dari mereka yang menjadi korban kebijakan politik khususnya oleh Orde Baru; sementara bagi mereka yang bersikap sebaliknya, isu ini menjadi kampanye politik untuk melengserkan Gus Dur dari kursi kepresidenan Republik Indonesia.

Communism Debated Again: The Muslim Response to the Idea of Revoking the 1966 anti-Communism in post-Soeharto Indonesia

الخلاصة: تقدم هذه المقالة دراسة متكاملة عن مواقف وآراء لنخبة السياسيين المسلمين في اقتراح عبد الرحمن واحد كرئيس الدولة الإندونيسية (١٩٩٩-٢٠٠١م) لإبطال قرار المجلس الاستشاري المؤقت رقم ٢٥ سنة ١٩٦٦ الذي يفيد بحظر الشيوعية في أرض إندونيسيا. ومع روح الانفتاح في عصر الإصلاح، يرى "غوس دور" (اسم مشهور لعبد الرحمن واحد) أن ذلك القرار يخالف مبادئ حقوق الإنسان.

لا شك أن هذه الدراسة على الصعيد الإقليمي المحلي لإندونيسيا مهمة للغاية حيث أن ردود السياسيين على الاقتراح أثارت الاختلافات في الآراء قسمتهم إلى المجموعتين: الراضين والمؤيدين له. لا سيما أن هذا الاختلاف والصراع تسبب في إقالة "غوس دور" من منصبه رئيسا للدولة. هذا يشير إلى أن إلغاء القرار يعتبر نهاية الصراع الشديد بين السياسيين في إندونيسيا بعد سقوط حكومة الرئيس المستقيل "سوهاتو".

أما المجموعتين اللتين المذكورتين فالمجموعة الأولى هي مجموعة المؤيدين لرأي "غوس دور" هم بالطبع السياسيون من حزب "نخبة الشعب" وعدد من النشطين اليساريين. ويرى المؤيدون مثل ما يرى "غوس دور" أن هذا القرار يخالف المبادئ الإنسانية والعدالة. وحتهم الأخرى هي أن القرار ليس سوى حالة انتجها تاريخ إندونيسيا الزمني المحدود فلا يلزم أن يكون سارى المفعول فكل زمان ومكان. يعتبر القرار المذكور وسط البيئة الانفتاحية في عصر

الإصلاح فقدت صلاحيته، فلا بد من إعادة النظر فيه حتى يتسنى للشعب البدء بالمصالحة الاجتماعية بعد الفضائح الشيوعية التي قد استغرقت زمانا طويلا.

أما المعارضين لاقتراح "غوس دور" فهم كثيرون ومتنوعون منهم عدد من الشخصيات العامة في جمعية "ههضة العلماء" مثل كياهي هاشم موزادي، رئيس الجمعية، الذي لم يؤيد رأى "غوس دور" وقال إن إلغاء قرار المجلس الاستشاري ليس من تخصصات رئيس الدولة، بل من المجلس نفسه. وكذلك الرفض الصريح لرأى "غوس دور" من كياهي يوسف هاشم هو عم "غوس دور" أنه قال إن ليس له (غوسدور) أي مبرر لإلغاء قرار المجلس لأن خبرته وشهادته كرئيس الحركة الشبابية "أنصار" التابعة لجمعية "ههضة العلماء" التي تعرف بمعارضة الشيوعية قد أثبتت أن هناك ضحايا كثيرة من الشعب بسبب الحزب الشيوعي وأفكاره. هذا ما لم يعرفها "غوس دور" ولم يشاهدها مباشرة، لأنه كان ف وقتئذ طالبا في إحدى الجامعات العراقية في بغداد.

ومن المعارضين والرافضين لاقتراح "غوس دور" هم السياسيون من حزب "بولان بيتانج" (القمر والنجوم) وفي مقدمتهم السيد "يوسريل ماهيندرا" ، رئيس الحزب، الذي يرى أن إلغاء قرار المجلس الاستشاري بشأن الشيوعية يخالف الإسلام فكريا وعمليا وسياسيا، كذلك أنه ضد طموحات الأمة الإسلامية في إندونيسيا، وبنفس الحجج رفض "أمين رئيس"، من حزب "الامانة القومية" راي "غوس دور" أيضا وقال إن اقتراح "غوس دور" لا يتعلق بمشكلة سياسية للمجلس الاستشاري فحسب، بل يمس قضية العقيدة الإسلامية أيضا.

This article analyses the responses of the Muslim political elite to President Abdurrahman Wahid's proposal of revoking MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966, which sought to stifle the spread of Communism and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The proposal provoked controversy which divided the Muslim political elite into two groups; those who supported the President's proposal and those who opposed it.

The conflict then flourished and eventually contributed to President Wahid's impeachment. This shows that the controversy over the cancellation of the Decree was a direct result of the fierce battle among political elites after the fall of Soeharto's regime. The article is divided into several sections covering such issues as: how and why President Abdurrahman Wahid intended to revoke the Decree; the pros and cons of revoking the Decree; the heated debates regarding the issue of communism; and the various responses of the Muslim political elite to the revival of Communism and PKI.

The Genealogy of Debates

In 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid was elected president after heated arguments and a political battle in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) led by Amien Rais.¹ Wahid officially replaced Habibie who had held the presidency since 21 May 1998.² Megawati, whose party obtained the highest vote in the general election, had to be satisfied with her being elected the next day as Vice-president. For Islamic organizations, Wahid's election as President created a great deal of optimism that Indonesia would successfully move beyond its multidimensional crises under the leadership of someone they viewed to be a pious traditional Muslim.

Wahid disappointed the political elite who had supported him in his bid for the presidency. Their optimism faded away along with the escalation of the socio-political conflicts both at the political and "grassroots" levels, which were, in part, caused by Wahid's volatile political attitude and policies. Expected to be a "problem solver" for the nation's multidimensional crises, Wahid turned out to be a "trouble maker" who aggravated the situation. Political tensions caused by the old centralistic and hegemonic political

system resurfaced which, to borrow Emile Durkheim's phrase, paved the way for "an anomic" situation. Transition to democracy, it was feared, would fail and anarchy would follow.³

Since he became President, Wahid frequently made statements and produced policies, which brought about political controversies in Indonesia. He reshuffled members of the cabinet several times without clear reason and fired some ministers from the "Central Axis" who had backed him in his running for the presidency. He also replaced *Kepala Kepolisian Republik Indonesia* (Indonesian Police Chief, Kapolri) without the parliament's consent and intervened in TNI's internal matters. The Indonesian Legislative Council (DPR) felt that their powers as the legislative council had been undermined. Prior to the end of his term as President, when DPR initiated moves to impeach him, Wahid produced a presidential decree for the dissolution of the DPR and MPR.⁴ Consequently, political conflicts grew worse, rupture in cabinet was inevitable and suspicion among the military elite became widespread.⁵ Groups and individuals that opposed him became slowly but surely became more vocal. His reputation as a democrat, "a nation unifier", "a well-behaved politician," began to fade away. Some political observers even considered his leadership as signifying a "failure" of Islamic politics in the post-New Order era.⁶

The fate of his presidency, however, was sealed by his suggestion to revoke the MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966. This chapter analyzes his idea of revoking the Decree and the opposition it unleashed among the Muslim political elite.⁷

The MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966 was produced following the assassination of six revolutionary generals on the night on September 30, 1965, which was allegedly masterminded by PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) members and sympathisers. The incident is known as G 30 S PKI bloody *coup d'état* which was followed by the massacre of the Communist party members and its sympathizers. Communism and PKI came to be considered as eternal threats to the state and Muslims, and calls for the banning of communism and the political party grew. This resulted in the promulgation of the MPRS Decree and the repression of the ideology and activities of the Communists.

The New Order misused the Decree to retain power for more than three decades (1966-1998). During the New Order's reign, people allegedly involved in the G 30 S PKI suffered from oppression and unjust treatment, as did their descendants. Thousands of people associated with PKI, its sympathizers and those who were accused of becoming Communists lost their rights and dignity. Some of them were sentenced to death, imprisoned and exiled to Buru islands⁸ with or without trial. In the name of national security, thousands of the PKI descendants have been deprived of their rights for employment and opportunities to become civil servants. They were, essentially, considered "environmentally unclean."⁹

The Decree became an indispensable tool of the New Order regime in maintain full political control. The New Order used the "environmentally unclean" stigma against all political enemies, including "hard line" Islamic organizations.¹⁰ The situation began to change, however, with the downfall of Soeharto's New Order. The abuses and illegal prosecutions were publicized, which spurred growing numbers of opponents to the both the regulations and the New Order to demand a review — or even the revocation — of the MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966, amongst other decrees. In the end it was Wahid who initiated the move to revoke the Decree.

The idea to revoke the Decree was first stated by Wahid in a program *Secangkir Kopi Bersama Gus Dur* on state-owned national television (TVRI) on March 14, 2000. He offered an apology to the families of PKI members who were slaughtered by NU's Banser (Multi Function Front) members between 1965 and 1966. He then made public his intentions to revoke the Decree, which he considered undemocratic and against human rights. He reinforced this belief on a number of occasions following his appearance on TVRI; in a plenary session of *Istana Negara* (Presidential Palace) in Jakarta, during his meeting with graduates from Universitas Islam Malang in East Java (March 26), after *Jum'ah* (Friday) prayer at Masjid Al-Munawwaroh, Ciganjur, South Jakarta (March 31), in his visit to Kedung Ombo in Central Java (April 4), after *Jum'ah* Prayer in Masjid Raya, Klaten Central Java (April 21), and when he met President Castro in Havana, Cuba.

Wahid had for long been thinking about revoking the Decree¹¹ and was sympathetic to the victims of the Decree, particularly those of the events of the 1965-1966. Additionally, given his liberal cosmopolitan way of thinking, he was appreciative of Marxism-Leninism and believed that Islam and the Leftist ideology may have a "common denominator."

In his article entitled *Pandangan Islam terhadap Marxisme dan Leninisme (Marxism and Leninism: An Islamic Perspective)* (1980), Wahid stated that Indonesian Muslims' rejection of Marxism-Leninism was actually an anomaly which could only be described by the historical fact that Communists (PKI) had twice betrayed the Republic of Indonesia in 1948 and 1965. Wahid said that in the 1948 Madiun incident, Muslims vehemently opposed PKI for two reasons: firstly, PKI tried to undermine the establishment of Indonesia on the basis as a mostly Muslim nation. Secondly, a number of local NU ulama and prominent Muslim figures were assassinated during the PKI revolt in Madiun. These two reasons, Wahid argued, show that the rejection of Marxism-Leninism is merely political, not ideological.¹² He also stated that Indonesian Muslims no longer have ideological aspirations given the fact that they accepted Pancasila as their ideology. President Wahid argued further that while Marxism-Leninism had been rejected by Muslims around the world, it was in fact accepted in practice.¹³ He gave examples of how Marxism-Leninism was adopted by Muammar al-Gaddafi, the Libyan leader. Gaddafi legally prohibited the ideology, but in practice, he took Marxism-Leninism as part of his political ideology.¹⁴

Wahid further explained that the social vision of Marxism-Leninism and Islam is similar, which indicates the possibility of a "meeting point" for the two ideologies. This is exemplified by the fact that both advance the spirits of egalitarianism and populism. This is what "connects" Islam and Marxism-Leninism, in the perspective of people like Gaddafi and Masoud Rajavi, which prompts them to support communism to some extent, in spite of the fact that they publicly opposed Communism as an ideology and imprisoned Communist leaders.¹⁵

Besides maintaining that the Decree contradicted basic human rights principles¹⁶, Wahid gave further justifications for revoking the Decree. *First*, the Decree, which prohibited the spreading of Marxism-Leninism/Communism, was unconstitutional.¹⁷ In the preamble of the 1945 Constitution, it was stipulated that every citizen was free to subscribe to their belief. Apart from that, as stipulated in article 28 of the Constitution, "the State guarantees people's freedom to subscribe to their religion and belief."¹⁸ The Constitution is superior to any law, regulation or decree. All rules and laws, which are not in accordance with the Constitution, must be revoked. In this case, Wahid was of the opinion that the MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966 contravened the basic principles of the 1945 Constitution. Besides, Wahid argued, not a single article in the Constitution mentioned the word "Communist" or "PKI"¹⁹, and thus it did not prohibit either of the two. Based upon these reasons, constitutionally, revoking the Decree of was a must. The human rights nuance was so inherent in the formulation of the Constitution, thought Wahid, because the founders of the nation were people who respected different opinions, beliefs and ideologies.

On several occasions, Wahid referred to his father, KH Wahid Hasyim, one of Indonesia's founding fathers and a religious scholar, who often welcomed a prominent PKI figure, Tan Malaka,²⁰ to his house during the independence revolution. The different ideology between his father and Tan Malaka did not make them enemies in politics. They were friends and respected each other in spite of their ideological differences.²¹ This historical justification, although pointing to a somewhat cooperative relationship between Islamic political groups and the Communists,²² does not give us the full picture of the history between the two; the relationship was in fact far from free of serious conflict and antagonisms as exhibited in the conflicts between the elites of Sarekat Islam and PKI in the pre-independence era, the Madiun uprising and the G 30 S PKI 1965 affairs.

Second, rules and regulations including the MPRS decree are a product of history. They are thus limited to the place and time of their implementation. That is why all rules and regulations should

be reviewed from time to time, to ensure that they are still relevant.²³ A rule or regulation should not be retained for ever, especially when there are significant historical changes indicating the change of people's attitude and behaviour toward a regulation. Implicitly, Wahid believed that these changes indeed occurred with the downfall of Soeharto and his New Order regime. Public attitudes and behaviour toward all laws of the New Order changed accordingly. People wanted the old regime policies to be replaced with new laws which were more democratic and responsive to the demands of human rights.

Third, a democratic country is one which does not regulate every personal matter of its citizens, including matters of faith, religion and ideology. Wahid maintained that the government's intervention in personal matters would have negative implications for the personal lives of the nation's citizens. By revoking the Decree, Wahid believed, the government's intervention in this personal realm could be minimized, and the task of determining what ideology, faith or religion was publicly acceptable could be carried out by the people. If it corresponds with the values they professed, then people have the right to accept the ideology. If it does not correspond with it, they could reject it. They have the right to reject Communism, if it was not consistent with the values of their religion. The way they could face the growth of Communism in Wahid's opinion was by way of religious education.²⁴ Wahid's vision strongly reflected his political inclination to see the development of civil society and the necessity for the struggle for democratisation in his country.²⁵

Fourth, the prohibition of Marxism-Leninism/Communism as stated in the MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966, in Wahid's point of view, inhibits people's right to freedom of thought. That limitation would eventually cause a process of deception for the younger generation. The Decree would cause them to know nothing about Marxism-Communism. Therefore, he thinks that his effort to revoke the Decree is a struggle for freedom of thought.

Fifth, the Decree also does not separate legal rights from political ones possessed by the citizen. As a consequence, a member of PKI or someone accused of being PKI not only loses his/her legal

rights, but also his/her political rights. Wahid thought that the two kinds of rights should be distinguished, so that a citizen could lose his/her political rights, but not his/her legal rights.²⁶

Wahid's idea to revoke the Decree was received differently. Some parties thought that Wahid, as President, wanted to give the nation the impression that he was a true democrat who was serious about upholding democracy in Indonesia.²⁷ In the process, he would surely impress the international community, convincing them that the new Indonesian President was indeed different from his predecessors. With the change of image, he was convinced that he would get sympathy and support from Western countries particularly the United States. To President Wahid, US political support was important because the US was the most influential agent on IMF's policies especially concerning financial loans to Indonesia.

Wahid's idea of revoking the anti-Communism decree was also strategic in the sense that would help restore diplomatic relationship with China, which had been ruined as a result of the G 30 S PKI incident (which aroused suspicion that China was involved in support of the Communists). Wahid was aware of the importance of establishing a relationship with China, which is a Communist country and one of the big five countries with a right of veto in the UN Security Council. It would be difficult for Wahid to establish a good diplomatic relationship with Communist countries if he was "against" the Communists.²⁸

Other parties interpreted Wahid's move as an effort to gain sympathy and political support from Leftist groups and Communists. The Leftists, especially PKI, had been treated unfairly by Soeharto for more than three decades. This move was extremely important for Wahid since in part it determined the success or failure of national reconciliation that he was struggling so hard to achieve. Wahid was well aware of the significance of reconciliation,²⁹ especially between Communists and Muslims who had been enemies since the massacre of 1965-1966. In his struggle for reconciliation, he was inspired by what Nelson Mandela³⁰ achieved in South Africa.³¹ In Wahid's view, Mandela had succeeded in reconciling his people who used to be enemies of one another, especially between the whites and the blacks.

Wahid's move to revoke the Decree was, from one perspective, part of his efforts to present himself to the world as a democrat and a "true humanist". And it worked. In a democracy, there is no discrimination based on ethnic origin, race, religion, ideology, and so on. The consequence of this is that every citizen has an equal position before the law and the Constitution.

Proponents of Revoking the Decree

Wahid's idea triggered a polemic and controversy. Those who supported the idea could be categorized into two groups: The political elite who were loyal to Wahid, and critical scholars and activists. The first category included legislators from the PKB faction such as Matori Abdul Jalil, Muhaimin Iskandar, Effendy Choirie, Taufikurrohman, Rodjil Gufron and 'liberal' factions from amongst NU youths. The second category included Franz Magnis-Suseno, Mochtar Pabotingi, Sudjati Djiwandono and Asvi Warman Adam.

General Chairman of DPP PKB (who was also vice chairman of the MPR), Matori Abdul Jalil, was in full support of the idea to revoke the Decree. In line with Wahid, Matori thought that there should not be any prohibition of any ideology in a democratic country, including Marxism-Leninism/Communism. PKB, the party he led, shared the same vision with Wahid, that is, to build a democratic system that accommodates human rights issues.³² In the same tone of defence, Muhaimin Iskandar, a Wahid loyalist and vice-chief of DPR RI from PKB, thought that the strong reaction against Wahid's idea was due to a lack of understanding on the part of the critics. To Iskandar, democracy would suffer if expression of ideas was responded to emotionally by the people. Iskandar said:

People don't really understand what Wahid expressed. Wahid expressed the idea of revoking the Decree of MPRS No. XXV/1966. And that was only an idea. Wahid has no right to revoke it, the MPR does. Why isn't he allowed to express an idea. That's not right. But people responded emotionally and accused Wahid of messing up. Then, how do we apply democracy?³³

Effendy Choirie supported the idea because he thought that Communism — realistically — did not present a real threat. Revoking the Decree did not necessarily mean that Leftist ideology would flourish in Indonesia. The proof of this was that in advanced countries like Japan and European countries, freedom of thought had not led the ideological dominance of Communism on the political scene. He also agrees with Wahid's opinion that principles of democracy and human rights demanded that the Decree be revoked. He thought that Wahid was a democrat and a humanist who wished the country to respect every citizen's belief without reservations. Besides, the idea was merely based on his tendency to defend democracy and human rights.³⁴ He stated further that Wahid enabled people to become smarter and provided space for debate, which would enlighten people. Choirie thought that Wahid had the right to express his idea of revoking the Decree.³⁵ About Wahid's apology to the Communist people, Effendy maintained that Wahid's move reflects a moral attitude of a Muslim and a civilized political leader.³⁶

Rodjil Gufron Agus Hardjono, a member of the PKB faction that supported Wahid's idea reasoned that MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966 was a temporary decree. The prohibition of Marxism-Leninism/Communism cannot be found anywhere in the 1945 Constitution. Hardjono argued that if the Indonesian people really wished for the limitation of rights, it should have been inserted in the Constitution: "Since the Constitution does not contain any such provision, the prohibition of Marxism-Leninism is illegal."³⁷ Rodjil gave one additional reason for revoking the Decree. He argues that descendants of PKI members who never got involved in rebellious and criminal acts to the nation were unfairly treated during the New Order. Their rights as citizens should be restored, and it should be done by revoking the Decree as proposed by Wahid.³⁸

The need to revoke the Decree was also based on the fact that the Decree was made by MPRS, which was not an elected body, but formed by Soekarno. Prohibitions, must be processed through constitutionally-recognized means. The revoking of the Decree had was obviously of great importance to those who were accused of

being involved in PKI because it would help them restore their tarnished reputations. Finally, said Rodjil, the proposed revocation was for the sake of national reconciliation in the future.³⁹

The President's idea of revoking the Decree, according to Magnis, was an attempt to free hundreds of thousands of people associated — often indirectly — with G 30 S PKI. Often the children and grandchildren of those involved with PKI were sentenced without fair process, had their rights been denied, and were detained cruelly. Magnis asserts that the government under Abdurrahman Wahid sought to terminate the stigma within the context of humanity, and the MPRS Decree be revoked in a way that it would not pave the way for the revival of PKI. The reason is that PKI, as a political party, is based on Marxism-Leninism, which not only rejects religion, but is also against democracy. Magnis further writes "the democratic right and the freedom of forming a political party finds itself within the parameter of the democratic principles themselves. Democracy is open to all kinds of political parties, except those attempting to purge the democracy."⁴⁰

General Chairman of PRD, Budiman Sujatmiko, approved of Wahid's idea. However, he suggested caution in revoking the Decree. Sujatmiko further suggested that three important steps were important before revoking the Decree. *Firstly*, he highlighted the importance of amending historical distortions, an effort that would need to be organized by a Committee for Historical Amendment, an independent body consisting of government and non-government elements. This body, according to Sujatmiko, would be responsible for correcting historical facts from 1945 to 1965. *Secondly*, he believed it would be necessary to introduce the idea of revoking the Decree to the society. *Thirdly*, people should be encouraged to think and state their opinions freely. The last is the most important for when this stage is achieved the matter regarding the revocation will become no longer relevant.⁴¹

Opponents of Revoking the Decree

Not long after President Wahid proposed to revoke the MPRS Decree, a number of Islamic mass organizations held protests against the President. The protests took place in several parts of

attempting to sell Nazi's banners and souvenirs is subject to court trial. Other European countries have followed suit. Nazism is strictly prohibited since the Nazis under Hitler and Kaizer had oppressed France and other European countries.⁴⁹ As a result of Wahid's idea, people began asking, 'Is it right to allow PKI, which had betrayed and hurt Indonesia twice, to again take root in Indonesia? A democratic country like the USA has never banned Communism because it was never hurt in a similar fashion.'⁵⁰

Another prominent figure of NU, Solahuddin Wahid, the former President's younger brother, Suggested that one possible approach solving the issue would be to remove the ban on Marxism-Leninism, but keep the ban on PKI itself in place.⁵¹ To Solahuddin, Wahid's proposal was inappropriate because it was ill-timed.⁵²

The chairman of PBB in DPR, Ahmad Sumargono, on the other hand, out rightly rejected the President's idea as he felt it went against the country's Constitution, specifically Chapter 29 article 1, which states that Indonesia is based on the belief on the unity of God. Accepting Communism, he argued, would thus require an amendment to the constitution. That Wahid wished to revoke the Decree, Sumargono claimed, is only "his political game".⁵³ Sumargono further argued that if Wahid did not want ex-PKI members or their families to be discriminated against, he needed only to pass a decree regulating equal rights for ex-PKI members. Communism itself, he said, could only be tolerated within an academic context. It could never be accepted in the realm of politics because this seriously contravened the country's Constitution. Accordingly, Sumargono called on the members of DPR to consider the Constitutional consequences of Wahid's idea.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Hussein Umar, the leader of DDII, judged that Wahid's remarks and policies had stirred a great deal of anger amongst Indonesians. Further to his plans to revoke the Decree, amongst his plans were to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, his intention to take Henry Kissinger, a prominent Zionist figure, as his adviser, while he was also and ardent defender of the Christian minority. What hurt the Muslims most was Wahid's proposal to revoke the decree on Communism. Hussein said that the President's proposal had a serious impact on society. Consequently,

Indonesia. In Jakarta, a crowd of FUII (Indonesian Islamic Front) members burned PKI flags to show their anger against the revoking of the MPRS decree against Communism.⁴² A similar action was undertaken by FORMAT (Forum of Brotherhood among Religious Believers), consisting of Muslim, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddhist religious organizations, demanding that the government hinder the spread of Marxism-Leninism/Communism.

PINTAR (Islamic Movement for the Homeland) did the same by burning PKI banners with the picture of hammer and sickle on them to disapprove of the President's idea. Thousands of FPIS (Front Defending Islam in Surakarta) members demanded that the DPR (the House of Representatives) not revoke the Decree and the President to apologise for siding with the Communists. To FPIS, PKI's betrayal against Indonesia was eternally unforgivable.

KH Hasyim Muzadi, the chief of NU, turned down the proposal as it would have serious political and social implications on the Indonesian way of life.⁴³ However, Muzadi agreed that the President's proposal had to be given a reasoned response,⁴⁴ not an emotional one as long as it was seen in the context of a democratic spirit. Further, Muzadi commented that, "The reason Wahid initiated the proposal of revoking [the Decree] is to make sure that democracy in Indonesia is given a fair run. Hence, we must treat the proposal in a cool headed manner and rationally."⁴⁵ The heated polemics over the President's proposal had gone beyond the context of democracy.⁴⁶

K.H Yusuf Hasyim⁴⁷ questioned President Wahid's understanding of the past events and believed that he did not fully comprehend how cruel PKI had been in the past. When PKI committed a bloodied mutiny in 1948, Wahid was still eight years old and "understood nothing". In 1965, during the second mutiny, Wahid was studying in Baghdad.⁴⁸ According to Hasyim, Wahid's idea reflected two important things: It was easy for Indonesians to forget their tragic past (unlike other countries, such as America which preserves its history in museums); and democracy, human rights, equality, and peace cannot be made the basis for revoking the Decree. As an example, he cites, France, a democratic country, which has consistently banned and condemned Nazism. Anyone

Hussein asked political parties to withdraw their political support for President Wahid. Hussein wrote:

If Islamic political parties have developed well the principles, teachings, and values of Islam in politics and are not tempted into political opportunism and pragmatism, it will not be hard for them to judge Wahid's regime. His regime has been going on for six months, with its attitude of defying the principles, teachings, and value of Islam.⁵⁵

Having seen Wahid's attitude during his tenure, Hussein was pessimistic that Wahid would be an accommodative and integrative leader. Hussein said that Islamic parties which had been on Wahid's side would still be forgiven if they admitted "their wrong outlook" by withdrawing their ministers from Wahid's cabinet and opposed the government. To Hussein, it was better than becoming ministers of a head who had gone astray from Islamic values.⁵⁶

Yusril Ihza Mahendra and Amien Rais

Among the Muslim political elite who expressed objections and criticized severely the revoking of the anti-Communism decree by Wahid was Yusril Ihza Mahendra. Mahendra was considered a new comer to Indonesia's political arena. Previously, he was only known as a lecturer and an expert in constitutional law at the Faculty of Law at the University of Indonesia. He has written many articles on state constitution, politics and history.⁵⁷ Shortly after obtaining his PhD from the Malaysian University of Science in 1993, he became a prolific writer.⁵⁸ Several years later, at a relatively young age of 41 years, he was awarded a professorship in constitutional law at the University of Indonesia. Mahendra became well-known publicly after he served as a speechwriter for President Soeharto at the State Secretary Department.⁵⁹ Mahendra put some of his political ideas into the speeches he wrote for Soeharto; he had been a part of the "inner circle" of Soeharto's power.⁶⁰

The role of Mahendra as a politician was striking during the fall of Soeharto. Being a law expert, he played an important role in formulating a smooth transitional process of presidency from Soeharto to Habibie. His career as a politician reached its peak

when he formed Bulan Bintang Party (Crescent and Star Party, PBB) in 1998. In the same year, he offered himself to be a candidate for president besides Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati in the general assembly of 1999. Finally in that year, he was appointed a Minister of Justice under President Wahid.⁶¹

Mahendra viewed Communism as an ideology incompatible with Islam. These two ideologies cannot go hand in hand in whatever way, even in terms of human rights or democracy. In regards to revoking that decree, Mahendra addressed some of his objections to President Wahid as follows. *First*, Marxism and Communism are false religions. These false religions are somewhat similar to other formal religions (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, etc) in that they can arouse fanatic sentiments among the followers and believers. In the realm of philosophy, Communism is philosophical atheism. Philosophical atheism will become dangerous if it is adopted by the Communist regime as it will be turned into political atheism, which has great potential to oppress other religions.⁶² If Communism, through the PKI, was given the chance to revive itself through the revocation of the Decree, a Communist tragedy would likely reoccur like it did in the past.⁶³ This was likely, he argued, because in the past years, PKI was one of the biggest parties in the country and in 1963 the number of Communists reached 3.7 million people. In 1955, PKI became the fourth biggest party winning a substantial number of seats in the general election. Two years later, in regional elections across Java, the party emerged as the largest vote getter. Especially in a political and socio-economic context in which there is a great deal of inequality, increasing unemployment, and severe communal conflicts, Communism is likely to grow.⁶⁴

Second, ideologically the principles and methods of achieving political goals held by the Communists are far different from democrats. Mahendra strongly supported the ideals of democracy for it offers political freedom, justice, and equality for and among the people. Democracy tolerates all kinds of political activities as far as they do not threaten the life and foundation of democracy. Within the context of political parties, democracy, according to Mahendra, "allows all parties to grow and expand, except those

which are strikingly against democratic principles like Communist party.”⁶⁵ Based on this, Mahendra was extremely sceptical about Communists’ claims of accepting a democratic system.⁶⁶

Third, according to the Constitution, a president does not have the right to propose and change a decree. In this regards, a president only serves to carry out the mandates of MPR. Based on that consideration, Mahendra suggested that President Wahid had no authority to revoke the Decree. It is MPR only that is has absolute authority to revoke a decree. Mahendra explained this as follows:

In a state system, the executive body deserves to propose a change or modification to the law, except UUD 1945 which can only be changed or amended by MPR. As to how the Constitution can be changed depends upon the legislative body, whether they disagree or not. In that way, when the executive has passed a decree, the legislature has the right to supervise and remind the executive if the Decree does not really accommodate people’s the aspiration.⁶⁷

Four, Mahendra rejected claims that the Decree violated human rights, as stated by Wahid and his proponents. Mahendra admitted that human rights are indeed universal, but maintained that in practice, the application of human rights may vary from one country to another. Hence, the implementation of the UN Charter should be considered in view of the specific social, political, and cultural context of each country.⁶⁸

Based on the above-mentioned arguments, Mahendra believed the prohibition of Communism was still necessary since it was a sort of protection for people from the danger of an ideology that threatened the nation’s interests and security. Such a consideration is much more important than just revoking the Decree on the basis that it violates human rights and democracy principles. Furthermore, the Decree could not be viewed in the context of the UN’s Charter, for by doing so we mean that countries like Germany and Italy could also be accused of violating human rights for banning Nazism and Fascism.⁶⁹ With regards to Wahid’s argument that the Decree must be revoked on the basis that injustices were being committed against family members of those involved in PKI, Mahendra explained that the rules that brought about such discrimination were the *Litsus* rules (specific investigation rules) and

the rules which prohibited PKI members and their families from becoming government employees. Thus it was these rules that needed to be abrogated, and not the Decree.

So staunch was Mahendra in his opposition to the President's idea that he offered to resign from his position as a Minister of Justice. In an interview, he said, "I don't want to be remembered in history that during my office I took part in the attempt of revoking the Decree. I do not wish to carry such a historical burden in my lifetime."⁷⁰ Mahendra's firm attitude of wanting to withdraw from Wahid's cabinet as a minister was historically very much similar to Masyumi's political attitude toward PKI and the Communist expansion in the past. Prominent Masyumi figures, such as Mohammad Natsir, Isa Anshary, Sukiman, Hamka, and Prawoto, showed bitter reactions against PKI and its political activities. This hatred was certainly spurred by PKI's efforts put an end to Masyumi. The party eventually succeeded when it approached and successfully persuaded Soekarno to disband Masyumi in 1960.⁷¹ As an Islamic party, PBB felt that it was not worth forfeiting its ideological principles just to maintain its strategic political position within the government. This move would later figure greatly in the party's success in the 2004 general elections.⁷²

Another prominent Muslim politician who opposed Wahid's proposal was Amien Rais, general chairman of PAN (National Mandate Party) and the Speaker of the MPR. Rais had long studied Marxism-Leninism and Communism⁷³ which enabled him to provide an educated response to the suggestion of revoking the Decree.⁷⁴ He said, "If we oppose Marxism, our opposition is not only because MPR prohibits it, but because we know exactly the danger and strength of Marxism. So as Muslims living in Indonesia, we precisely know what we oppose."⁷⁵

Marxism, Rais said, had many variants and kinds, depending on how it was interpreted by Marxists. Marxism in Russia exhibited some variants like the ones which Trotsky, Lenin, Stalin and the post-Stalin era developed; Marxism in Europe in between the two world wars developed by Lukacs, Korsch and Gramsci; by Che Guevarra and Regis Debray in Latin America; while in China, Mao's version of Marxism dominated. In addition, there is Frank-

furt Marxism with Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Della Volpe as the key figures, and Della Volpe Marxism and Andre Gunder Frank Marxism in Latin America. Marxism in Indonesia was different from those countries. The Marxism adopted by PKI was orthodox.⁷⁶

However, apart from the many interpretations and variants of Marxism all of them generally have the same general principles.⁷⁷ *First*, Marxism is the derivation of materialism. Karl Marx was a materialist follower of Feurbach. Because the philosophy is materialistic, Marxism does not recognize other than that which is material, that is, something which can be measured and observed.

Second, one of the main principles of Marxism is dialectical materialism, which is a belief that everything changes constantly. In this, it is assumed that a thesis must have an anti-thesis. Confrontation between the two evokes a new synthesis. From the synthesis appears another new thesis and anti-thesis, and then confrontation prevails again. The process goes on and on. This dialectical idea was fully adopted by Marx from Hegel. Then Marx turned over Hegel's dialectics by expressing that the important thing was not the idea, but the production modes, which is materialistic, so the idealistic dialectics of Hegel was changed into materialistic dialectics.

Third, Marxists believe in historical determinism. Marx was sure that in human history, the mode of production acted as the trigger for social historical changes. The social changes went through stages like primitive-Communism, bondage era, feudal era, capitalist era, socialist then Communist era. Communism was the last stage of the history of mankind, an era in which oppression of mankind ceases, and humans live in equality. Rais believed that Marx's idea was utopian.

Fourth, Marx was of the opinion that human history is the history of the class struggle. Therefore, it was necessary to initiate class struggle wherein the proletariat, labourer and the oppressed people will unite to overthrow the power of the oppressor, capitalistic bourgeois wealthy people and investors.

Fifth is the principle of the withering away of the state. According to Marx, the country, including police and military, was not

the only repressive tool for the investors, but it was also the bourgeois capitalist who repressed the proletariat. The success of the proletarian revolution as Marx believed would obliterate the repressive tools. And if the Communist society had been established, the country would automatically vanish. To Rais, Marx's theory of the vanishing state has never actually materialized in real life. The Soviet Union itself, which Rais believed was a nation inspired by Marx's ambition, was not a Communist country. Soviet leaders realized that it was impossible to form a Communist society, and that was why they called their country USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic), and not a Communist country.⁷⁸

According to Rais, it is impossible to reconcile Islam with Marxism in any form for several reasons. First, the philosophy of Marxism is based on materialism and this is contradictory to Islam. Marxist materialism considers humans as material, no more than just a thing. Marxism also considers that the world is the final destination of human life. To Islam, the world is only a bridge to the hereafter, which is the end of human life. The belief in the hereafter affects all dimensions of a Muslim's life. Marxists do not believe in the existence of the hereafter, heaven, God or hell, because "to Marx, all those are human's projections themselves. To him, God doesn't exist; God's existence is human mistaken thought."⁷⁹ On the contrary, Islam is based upon *tauhid* (the unity of God). *Tauhid* sees humans as of a different essence from any other material in this world. A human's essence is in his noble purity. Islam considers material as a derivation of the immaterial realm. Because of these fundamental differences, Rais felt that it is impossible to reconcile *tauhid* and materialism.⁸⁰

The atheistic Marxism is also contradictory to the Pancasila. The first principle of Pancasila is exactly the same as *tauhid*. This principle cannot be found in Communist countries, and in such countries, anti-religious movements are fully supported by the state because they believe that religion spoils people and hence it should be eradicated.⁸¹ Communist doctrine further teaches hatred among classes. Poor people are indoctrinated with hatred towards the rich and make them believe that their wealth is gained by exploiting the poor. This teaching is something uncommon in Islam.⁸² Rais

suggests that Marxism is also hazardous since it proclaims: "Do anything, good or bad, to achieve something." To Marxist-Communists, the measurement for determining if something is good or bad is whether the way to get something is successful or not. This is what Communist parties all over the world profess. Rais once wrote:

Communist parties around the world have the same "capital", that is what they call good, whatever makes them successful. So distinguishing the good and the bad is something easy for them; a good thing is anything that can make a country Communist, and the bad one is everything that prevents it from achieving it [i.e. this aim]. In other words, Communism possesses no morality.⁸³

According to Rais, the Communist principles have bad impacts on mankind. In Cambodia, the Communist regime slaughtered the intellectuals, youth and bureaucrats who were not Communists. Communists think that genocide is "lawful." The consequence is, "We see half of the Cambodian people turned to skeletons."⁸⁴ Islam is the opposite of Marxism. It highly appreciates morality and history has shown the Islam does not condone cruelty.⁸⁵ Rais cites the example of Yusuf Ibnu Ayyub Salah al-Din (Saladin)⁸⁶ who during the crusades treated all Christian hostages kindly.⁸⁷

Rais admits that among Muslims, there are some who thought that the teachings of Islam were in line with Marxism. To justify this, they misused a name of a prominent philosopher, Mohammad Iqbal, who allegedly thought that, "*Islam is Communism with God*". But to Rais, this is erroneous because Iqbal never gave such an opinion; Iqbal's words had been manipulated just as Prophet Muhammad's sayings were also manipulated for political reasons.⁸⁸ Consequently, Rais concludes that "the Islamic paradigm and Marxism are one hundred percent contradictory to each other and it is impossible to reconcile the two at any stage."⁸⁹

A careful analysis of Rais's critique of Marxism exhibits the influence of contemporary thinkers and activists of Islamic movements, particularly Musthafa al-Siba'i and Said Qutb of *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimin*, Abul al-A'la Mawdudi of Pakistan, Jamaat -e- Islami and Ali Shariati of Iran. Al-Siba'i criticized Marxism-Communism as an atheistic doctrine⁹⁰, while Qutb and Mawdudi argued that

only Islam — not Marxism, Socialism and Liberalism as well as Western ideologies — could create the perfect civilization.⁹¹ Shariati criticised Marxism as an ideology, which had enslaved people to their own stomachs and turned them into materialistic individuals that have no human values.⁹²

Rais did not only oppose Wahid's ideas, he also took important political measures to foil Wahid's attempt to revoke the Decree. Rais lobbied the DPR and also the MPR of which he was the Speaker. Rais asked members of the DPR to seek an explanation for Wahid's apology to PKI members. Rais thought that asking for an explanation and clarification was the DPR's duty. Rais stated at the time, "It needs to be clarified whether Wahid apologized to PKI as a PB NU leader, President or individual."⁹³

In Rais's view, the clarification was necessary to console many Muslim '*Ulama*' and their families who became victims of the Communist cruelty in the 1948 and 1965 revolts.⁹⁴ Rais maintained that what Wahid should have done was not apologize and try to revoke the Decree, but to adopt a human approach to stamping out the injustice faced by Communist activists and PKI members during the New Order era. Rais also believed that one should not be judged according to the actions of his or her parent or relative.⁹⁵ In this regards he argued that, "parents mistakes cannot be inherited by their children."⁹⁶

As the chief of MPR who possesses the authority to appoint and fire a president, Rais promised that he would never revoke the Decree. The Decree, which prohibits the spread of Marxism-Leninism and PKI, would still be retained however hard Wahid tried. He also considered the possibility of holding a Special Session of MPR to remove Wahid from the presidency. Rais's opposition to Wahid's idea is understandable because the "people will certainly be sceptical because they know it was the "Central Axis" which made Wahid a President. So, if they do not criticise Wahid, they will absolutely be blamed by people."⁹⁷

Conclusion

The reformation euphoria that has hit the post-Soeharto era has given rise to demands for serious efforts to uphold human rights principles and deal seriously with cases of injustice. In this regard, Abdurrahman Wahid insisted that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) revoke its 34 year-old decree banning Communist teachings. He maintained that the Decree violated basic human rights.

Wahid's call to revoke the Decree stirred a great deal of controversy among the Indonesian people at large. Responses to the call varied among the people, especially Muslim groups, and many of them demanded that Communist teachings remain banned. The support came from members of Wahid's National Awakening Party (PKB) and leftist activists. The arguments for Wahid's idea of revoking chiefly revolved around the need to uphold human rights, the demand for reconciliation and the call for removal of the Communist stigma. Those who rejected the idea of revocation mainly argued that the revocation would lead to the revival of the PKI, the rise of permissive Communism that would pose a threat to democracy and, possibly cause the re-emergence of social conflict.

The controversy surrounding the revocation reveals a number of important points. First, Communism and the PKI are still extremely sensitive issues in Indonesian politics and society in the post-Soeharto era, despite the enactment of the MPRS Decree No. XXV/1966 which outlawed the PKI in 1966. This sensitivity was reflected in the anxiety of Muslim groups over the possibility of the re-emergence of Communism and the PKI. Second, the fierce protests against Wahid's idea reflects a political battle between the President as an executive and DPR. Some of the Muslim political elite who responded were legislators from (and represented) Islamic parties like PKB, PAN and PBB. Third, there was a strong impression that the fear of a Communist revival could be easily exploited for the benefit of the political elite: For those who supported Wahid, the issues were exploited and used to strengthen the President's power and his political support, whereas those who were against him, exploited the issue to overthrow the President.

Endnotes

- 1 The "heated situation" in the People's Consultative Assembly's General Session occurred due to the failure to reach consensus on who should become president. The situation got even more serious when Yusril Ihza Mahendra, chairman of PBB (Star and Crescent Party) stated his willingness to be President besides Megawati, Wahid and Habibie. After a "political compromise," Mahendra eventually pulled out of contention for the presidency.
- 2 Habibie became president – by default as vice-president - on May 21, 1998 after Soeharto resigned - on his own will - after reigning for more than three decades.
- 3 Ethnic and religious conflicts in Kalimantan, Poso (Sulawesi), and Ambon, separatist movements of GAM in Aceh, OPM in Papua, and RMS in Maluku were all getting stronger; these incidents threatened the unity and social stability of the Republic of Indonesia.
- 4 The Decree failed because it was not popular. TNI, which should have been the backbone of the implementation of the Decree rejected the instruction. Certainly, his policy provided further ammunition for the MPR to oust him.
- 5 Amidst the escalating political crises, KASAD (Army Chief of Staff), General Ryamizard Ryacudu, held a call of readiness in Monas Square, Jakarta, directly in front of the presidential palace. In that call of readiness, TNI, especially Kostrad troops, aimed the cannon and heavy weapons at the palace. To many observers, this military act symbolized a 'warning' to the president not to take political measures which threatened the nation's integrity. This event reminds us of a "similar" incident on October 17, 1952 when TNI under General Nasution protested against President Soekarno by aiming the cannon at the palace. See Ulf Sundhaussen, *Politik Militer Indonesia 1945-1967*. Tr..(Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986).
- 6 See Ahmad Suhelmi, "Kegagalan Islam Politik," *Republika*, April 11, 2001. This phenomenon was not exclusive to Indonesia during Wahid's era. Similar instances of failure were observed by Oliver Roy in many Islamic countries long before Wahid became the fourth president of Indonesia. See Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 7 The apology to PKI was delivered on a TV program "Secangkir Kopi Bersama Wahid" on TVRI March 14, 2000. In the same program Wahid explained the need to revoke Decree No. XXV/1966. His wish to revoke it was repeated several times including in a plenary session (attended by almost all ministers), before his visit to Cuba in April 2000, while he was addressing the PDIP Congress in Semarang, while having a dialogue after Jum'ah congregational prayer at Masjid Al-Munawwarah in Ciganjur on March 31, and also when he was in Hong Kong on April 16, 2000.
- 8 See Pramodya Ananta Toer, *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu* (Jakarta: Lentera, 1995).
- 9 The bitter experience of Dr. Ribka Tjiptaning Proletariyati might provide us with the best example. As the daughter of former PKI figure Raden Mas Soeripto Tjondro Saputro, Dr. Tjiptaning experienced various difficulties - including intimidation, harassment and difficulties in getting job – due to the stigma attached to her family borne out of her father's membership in PKI. See Dr. Ribka Tjiptaning Proletariyati, *Aku Bangga Jadi Anak PKI* (Cipta Les-tari, 2002).

10. When the bloody events of Tanjung Priok occurred on September 12, 1983, resulting in numerous Muslim deaths and injuries, the government produced a statement that PKI was behind the incident. Similarly, in the so-called "Lampung Incident" the government claimed that the Communists were also responsible.
11. He said "I had for long been obsessed with revoking the Decree. The Decree is wrong, full of error. I already thought about this since I was in Egypt." *Interview* with Abdurrahman Wahid in his Office, Jakarta, February 14, 2005.
12. *Interview* with Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta, February 14, 2005.
13. Abdurrahman Wahid, "Pandangan Islam terhadap Marxisme-Leninisme", in *Aula*, September 1988. His article was previously published in *Persepsi*, No. 1, 1982. Later, the same article was contained in a book edited by Kacung Maridjan and Ma'mun Murod Al-Brebesy, entitled *Mengurai Hubungan Agama dan Negara* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1999), 135-145.
14. The example, according to Wahid, was Gaddafi's acceptance of the concept of "groups initiated revolution" and "revolutionary leader," which obviously were political-ideological concepts developed by Lenin. See Wahid, *Pandangan Islam terhadap Marxisme-Leninisme*, 139.
15. *Ibid.*, 141.
16. *Interview* with Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta, February 14, 2005.
17. "Wahid: Agar Tidak Menyalahi Undang-undang", *Suara Pembaruan*, May 21, 2000.
18. See article 28 UUD 1945.
19. *Republika*, April 1 and 28, 2000.
20. Tan Malaka (1886-1949) was known as a follower of Marxist Trotskyism. Rather different from other Communists who had the tendency to be anti-religion (Islam), Tan Malaka was known to sympathize with Islam. He thought that Islam had the same characteristics as Communism such as anti-liberalism, colonialism and imperialism. Because of his vision, he rejected Lenin's doctrine, which abhorred religion and refused Lenin's command to destroy Sarekat Islam (SI) because he thought SI was like PKI, that is, an anti-foreign colonialist and imperialist movement in Indonesia. See Tan Malaka, *Madilog (Materialisme, Dialektika dan Logika)* (Jakarta: Penerbit Widjaya, 1951), on his biography, see Suhelmi, *Dari Kanan Islam Hingga Kiri Islam*, 154-150; Alfian, "Tan Malaka: Pejuang Revolusioner yang Kesepian", in Taufik Abdullah et., al. (eds.), *Manusia Dalam Kemelut Sejarah* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1979), 132-173; Harry Poeze, *Tan Malaka, Pergulatan Menuju Republik* (Jakarta: Grafiti 1988). See also Ahmad Suhelmi, "Revolusi dan Islam: Perjuangan dan Pemikiran Politik Tan Malaka," in *Islam dalam Tinjauan Madilog*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2000), 69-112.
21. It has also been said that in Dewan Konstituante Sessions (parliament in the 1950's), which discussed the fundamentals of the Republic of Indonesia (1956-1959), there was a fierce argument between Mohammad Natsir, a Masyumi figure who was anti-Communist, and Aidit, a leading figure of PKI. They argued with each other on what should be the state ideology of Indonesia. Both had ideological platforms, which contradicted each other. However, the ideological difference didn't spoil their personal relationship. After the session, which was full of arguments, both of them could chat, laugh together while having coffee in the cafeteria of the Parliamentary Building. *Interview* with Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta, February 14, 2005 and *personal commu-*

nication with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, 1995.

22. This, for instance, has been shown by figures like Haji Misbach and Datuk Batuah. Misbach was a Muslim preacher in Surakarta (Central Java) and Batuah was a Muslim activist in Minangkabau. Both, McVey writes, were "Muslim Communists" who believed that Islam and Communism were inseparable. Accordingly, to Misbach and Batuah, a good Muslim is a good Communist and vice versa. See McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 156-15; Shiraishi, *The Age in Motion*, 249-298.
23. *Republika*, April 1 and 28, 2000.
24. *Ibid.*
25. The assumption that civil liberty is needed in the democratisation process of a country has been agreed upon by political experts. Larry Diamond thinks that civil society had strategic roles in every process of democratisation. See Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society, Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 5, No. 3 July 1994; and "What Civil Society Can Do To Reform, Deepen and Improve Democracy." (Paper presented to the Workshop on "Civil Society, Social Capital and Civil Engagement in Japan and United States", Tokyo, June 12-13, 2001.
26. Abdurrahman Wahid, "Pisah Hak Politik dari Hak Hukum", *Republika*, April 1, 2000.
27. *Suara Pembaruan*, June 9, 2000.
28. Masykuri Abdillah, "Memahami Gagasan dan Tindakan Kontroversial Wahid", *Kompas*, May 10, 2000.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years for his struggle against racial discrimination in his country, South Africa. After release from prison, he was elected the President of South Africa.
31. Kasiyanto Kasimin, *Mendamaikan Sejarah, Analisis Wacana Pencabutan TAP MPRS/XXV/1966* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004), 3.
32. Quoted from Muhammad Muntasir, *Kontroversi Komunisme, Dari Cacuk Sudaryanto, BPPN hingga Wahid* (Jakarta: Madni Press, 2000), 138.
33. See, "Wahid Berikan Wacana Demokrasi", *Media Indonesia*, April 10, 2000.
34. *Private Communication* with Effendy Choirie in 2002 in Jakarta.
35. Quoted from Muntasir, *Kontroversi Komunisme*, 137.
36. See, "Wahid: Sejak Dulu Sudah Minta Maaf", *Kompas*, March 15, 2000.
37. Rodjil Ghufuron, *Ketegangan Presiden dan Parlemen, Sebuah Catatan dari Senayan*, (Jakarta: F@ctual Analysis Forum, 2001), 25.
38. *Ibid.*, 25-26. See also, "Seluruh fraksi Gugurkan Keinginan PKB", *Kompas*, May 25, 2000.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Franz Magnis-Suseno, "Mencabut TAP MPRS XXV/1966", *Kompas*, April 14, 2000.
41. "Supaya Ngga Dendam, Cabutnya Pelan-Pelan", *Rakyat Merdeka*, April 10, 2000.
42. See "Parlemen Jalanan Repotkan Wahid", *Media Indonesia*, April 9, 2000. See also *Republika*, April 9, 2000 and *Rakyat Merdeka*, April 9 and 11, 2000.
43. See "Wahid Berikan Wacana Demokrasi", *Media Indonesia*, April 10, 2000.
44. "Itu Konspirasi Para Elite", *Kompas*, April 18, 2000.
45. See "Wahid Berikan Wacana Demokrasi", *Media Indonesia*, April 10, 2000.
46. *Ibid.*

47. Yusuf Hasyim is former Chief of GP Anshor NU of the 1960s and Wahid's uncle. He was actively involved in the Communist purges of 1948 and 1965.
48. *Interview* with Yusuf Hasyim in Depok, December 21, 2003.
49. Hasyim's opinion that Nazism and Hitler had hurt the French, and other European countries, has solid historical basis. When the Nazis under Hitler were in power, the French, Polish and others on continental Europe through direct occupation and the British through destructive bombing including London became victims of the crimes of Nazi Soldiers. A number of European countries were left in ruins and lots of their people slaughtered by German occupying forces. On Nazism, Hitler's leadership and the occupation of its neighbouring countries in the world war, see Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism*, translated by J. Steinberg. (London: Penguin Book, 1988); Paul Hayes, *Fascism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1973); Allan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study of Tyranny* (New York: Bantam Books, 1955).
50. *Interview* with Yusuf Hasyim on December 21, 2003.
51. Solahuddin Wahid, "Wacana atau Langkah Politik", *Kompas*, May 8, 2000.
52. *Ibid.* About Solahudin Wahid's further opinion on Communism, see Solahuddin Wahid, "Kommunisme di Indonesia Saat ini: Ancaman atau Tantangan?," a paper addressed in seminar "Penanggulangan Bahaya Komunisme di Indonesia," in Jakarta, March 22, 2000.
53. *Jawa Pos*, April 23, 2000.
54. *Kompas*, April 15, 2000. See Firdaus Syam dan Ahmad Suhelmi, *Ahmad Sumarsono Dai dan Aktiois Pergerakan Islam yang Mengakar di Hati Umat* (Jakarta: Milenia Publisher, 2004), 195.
55. Hussein Umar, "Saatnya, Partai Islam Tarik Menterinya", *Tabloid Tekad*, April 24, 2000.
56. *Ibid.*
57. See for example, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, *Dinamika Tata Negara Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gema Insnai Press, 1997); *Modernisme dan Fundamentalisme dalam Politik Islam, Studi Perbandingan Partai Masyumi dengan Jama'at Islami Pakistan* (Jakarta: Paramdina, 1996).
58. In his attempt to continue his doctoral study at USM, Mahendra received recommendations from Muhammad Natsir and Prof. Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana. Mahendra wrote a thesis entitled *Modernisme dan Fundamentalisme Dalam Politik Islam: Satu Kajian Perbandingan Kes Parti Masyumi di Indonesia dan Jama'at Islami di Pakistan*, USM Pulau Pinang, Maret 1993. His thesis advisors were Prof. Madya Dr. Syed Ahmad Hussein, Prof. Madya Dr. Loh Koh Wah and Dr. Latief Kamaluddin. His stay in Malaysia and his research in India and Pakistan seem to have shaped Mahendra's political thought. He also made contact with prominent political figures in Malaysia Dato' Sri Anwar Ibrahim who at that time, was Finance Minister under the premiership of Dr. Mahathir Muhammad.
59. *Personal communication* with Yusril Ihza Mahendra in Depok, 1996.
60. Soeharto had different 'inner circles' from one period to another during his reign of more than three decades. In the early decades, between 1966-1980's, his inner circle was dominated by the military elite, particularly army generals. In the 1990's, 'the inner circle' was dominated by civilian politicians, like Habibie, who became the vice president and then the President of Indonesia. On Soeharto's "inner circle" in the early decades of New Order, see David

Jenkins, *Soeharto and His Generals* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

61. See Firdaus Syam, *Yusril Ihza Mahendra: Perjalanan Hidup Pemikiran dan Tindakan Politik* (Jakarta: Dyatama Milenia, 2004); Firdaus Syam, *Pemikiran Politik Modernis Islam Indonesia, Yusril Ihza Mahendra dan Amien Rais* (Jakarta: Al Bayan, 2002); Yudi Pramuko, *Yusril Ihza Mahendra Sang Bintang Cemerlang, Perjuangan Menegakkan Sistem dan Akhlak Berpolitik* (Jakarta: Putra Berdikari Bangsa, 2000).
62. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, "Melarang Komunisme Tidak Bertentangan dengan Demokrasi," *Mewaspada! Bangkitnya Komunisme* (Jakarta: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), 2000), 67-68.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, "Melarang Komunisme Tidak Bertentangan dengan Demokrasi", 68-69.
65. "Komunisme Bertentangan dengan Demokrasi", *Republika*, April 7, 2000.
66. *Ibid.*
67. "Saya Tak Setuju Tap itu Dicabut," *Republika*, April 11, 2000.
68. "Presiden Tetap Usulkan Cabut Tap Komunisme," *Republika*, April 27, 2000.
69. "Komunisme Bertentangan dengan Demokrasi," *Republika*, April 7, 2000.
70. After expressing his wish to resign from his position as minister in the parliamentary session, Mahendra admitted to the writer, several ministers like Agum Gumelar (Lieutenant General, Minister of Transportation and Communication), Jusuf Kalla, Ryaas Rasyid (Minister of Regional Autonomy), Bimantoro (Police General, Indonesian Chief of Police), and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security) visited him and agreed with what Mahendra had said. In fact, Agum Gumelar gave his full support by saying that he too would resign if Mahendra went through with his threat. *Interview* with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, July 17, 2003, in Jakarta.
71. A similar fate was also shared by Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI) led by Sutan Syahrir. PSI, which had political relations with Masyumi, was broken up and banned by President Soekarno in 1960.
72. "Anggota PBB Dukung Sikap Yusril," *Kompas*, April 28, 2000.
73. Rais himself has stated that he has studied Marxism for some time, especially when he was studying in the USA. See Amien Rais, *Cakrawala Islam, Antara Cita dan Fakta* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 99; and *Membangun Politik Adi Luhung*, 67-70.
74. For a description of Rais's thinking and his criticism of Marxism, see his *Cakrawala Islam*, 99-107.
75. *Ibid.*, 100.
76. For analysis of PKI Marxism, see Njoto, *Marxisme, Ilmu dan Amalnya* (Jakarta: Teplok Press, 2003); Jeane A. Mintz, "Marxism in Indonesia," in Fank N. Nager, *Marxism in Southeast Asia: A Study of Four Countries* (California: Stanford University Press, 1965), 172; Jeane Mintz, *Muhammad, Marx, Marhaen: Akar Sosialisme Indonesia*, trans. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001).
77. *Ibid.*, 100-104.
78. *Ibid.*, 103.
79. *Ibid.*, 107. For an explanation of Marxist ideas on religion, see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Religion*, (Moscow: Prugness Publisher, 1976); David McLellan, *Marxism and Religion*, (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987); Leszeks Kolakowski, *On Religion*, (Glasgow: William Collins and Son, 1982); Patrick

Masterson, *Atheism and Alienation, A Study of the Philosophical Sources of Contemporary Atheism*, (Gill and Macmillan, 1971), 79-98.

80. *Ibid.*, 105.
81. "Sesepuh NU Tolak Pencabutan Tap MPRS XXV", in *Republika*, April 10, 2000.
82. Amien Rais, *Cakrawala Islam*, 197.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*, 106.
85. *Ibid.*
86. Yusuf Ibn Ayyubi Salah ad-Din, the Kurdish general who is well known as Saladin in the West, successfully captured Jerusalem in 1187 from the Crusaders. For his biography, see Geoffrey Hindley, *Saladin: A Biography* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1976).
87. Karen Armstrong, *Perang Suci, Dari Perang Salib hingga Perang Teluk* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2003) and *Islam: A Short History* (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2002), 93-96.
88. Rais, *Cakrawala Islam*, 105
89. *Ibid.*
90. Rais's criticism of Marxism is exactly the same as that of Siba'i. See Amien Rais, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*, 136-138.
91. See Sayid Qutb, *Masa Depan di Tangan Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur:IFSO, 1983).
92. See, Ali Shariati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, Berkeley: University of Barkeley, 1980.
93. Rais's statement in response to Wahid's saying that he uttered in "Secangkir Kopi dengan Wahid di TVRI." See *Media Indonesia*, March 22, 2000.
94. *Telephone interview* with KH Yusuf Hasyim, February 21, 2003, in Depok and *Interview* with Solahuddin Wahid, March 17, 2003, in Jakarta.
95. It is not clear how many PKI members and sympathizers were able to escape the killings of the Communists in 1965-1966. The escapees included university students, Communist party activists, state employees of the old order like Sobron Aidit and Yusuf Adjitorop. Some of them are living in Europe (France, Germany, and Netherlands), China and East European Countries.
96. *Media Indonesia*, March 22, 2003.
97. *Ibid.*

Ahmad Suhelmi is senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Researcher of Selo Soemardjan Research Centre FISIP UI, holding an M.A in Political History from Monash University Melbourne and PhD in Political Science from International Islamic University Malaysia Kuala Lumpur. Email: suhelmipolitik@yahoo.com